

# DCJS

## DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center  
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety  
State of West Virginia

CORRECTIONAL POPULATION FORECAST - 2001 UPDATE

JANUARY 2002

West Virginia's correctional population has steadily increased by over 600 inmates between January 2000 and December 2001, as forecasted. Given current trends, it is expected to continue growing.

### Correctional Population Growing

Since January 2000, the correctional population, excluding Anthony Center and Diagnostic, has grown steadily from 3,403 to 4,008, increasing by an average of 25 inmates per month.

### Growth Forecasted by DCJS

In the *Correctional Population Forecast 2000-2010* report, the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center and The George Washington University forecasted the correctional population. Since January 2000, the forecasted population was lower than the actual population by an average of 17 inmates each month, only 0.44% of the actual population. (See Graph 1)

### Population Forecasted to Continue Growing

Given current trends in sentencing, admissions, and releases, the population is forecasted to continue growing and reach 4,936 by the end of 2005. (See Graph 5)

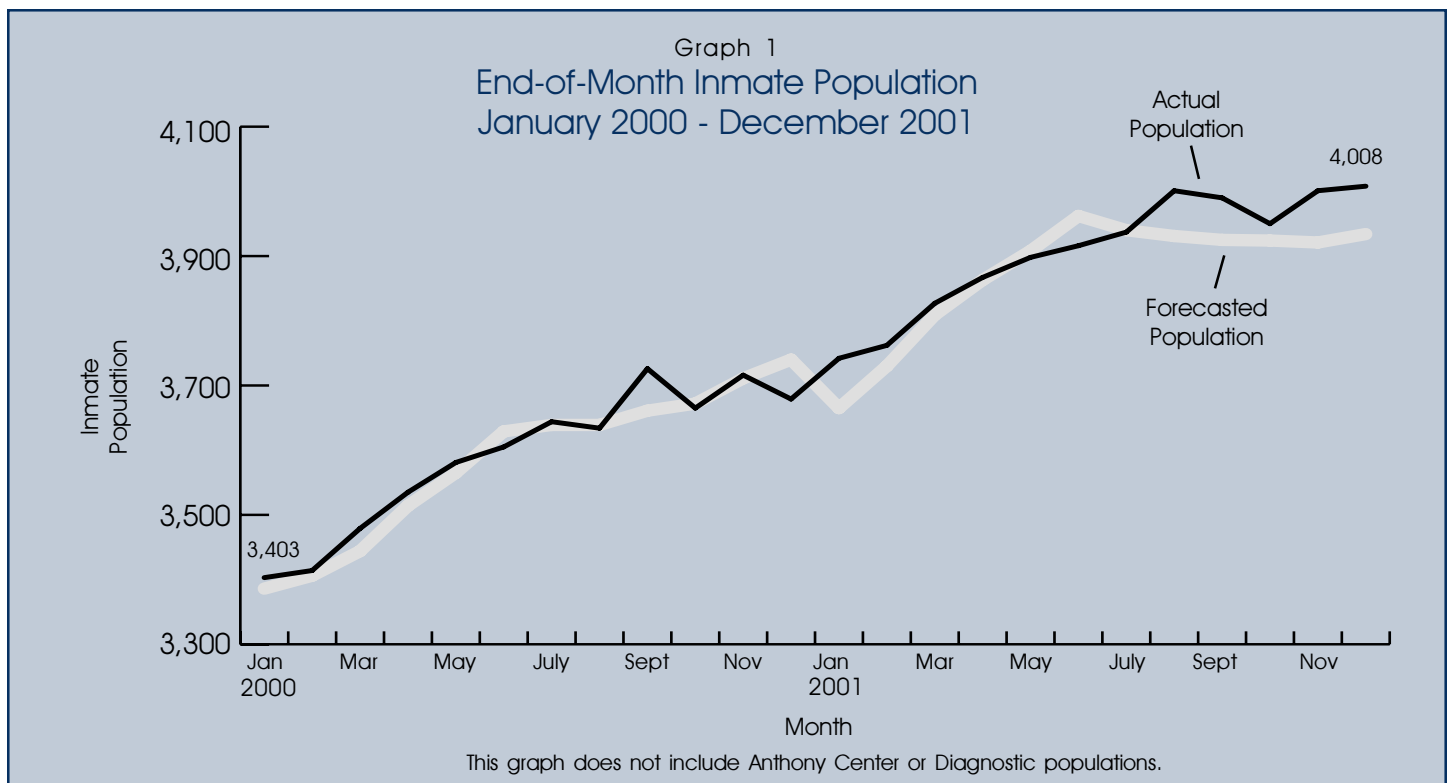
### New Commitments Increasing, Slowly

New commitments to the Division of Corrections increased as forecasted. In 1999, 1,878 individuals were committed. In 2000, this increased by 4.3% to 1,959. In 2001, this increased by 1.6% to 1,991.

Although new commitments continue to increase, the rate of increase is slower than the rate of increase during the early to mid 1990's. (See Graph 2)

### Type of Commitments Stable

The percent of new commitments by offense type was similar in 1999 and 2000. About one-quarter of new commitments were violent offenders. The apparent increase in re-admitted parolees may be due to better data collection, not a true increase. (See Graph 3)



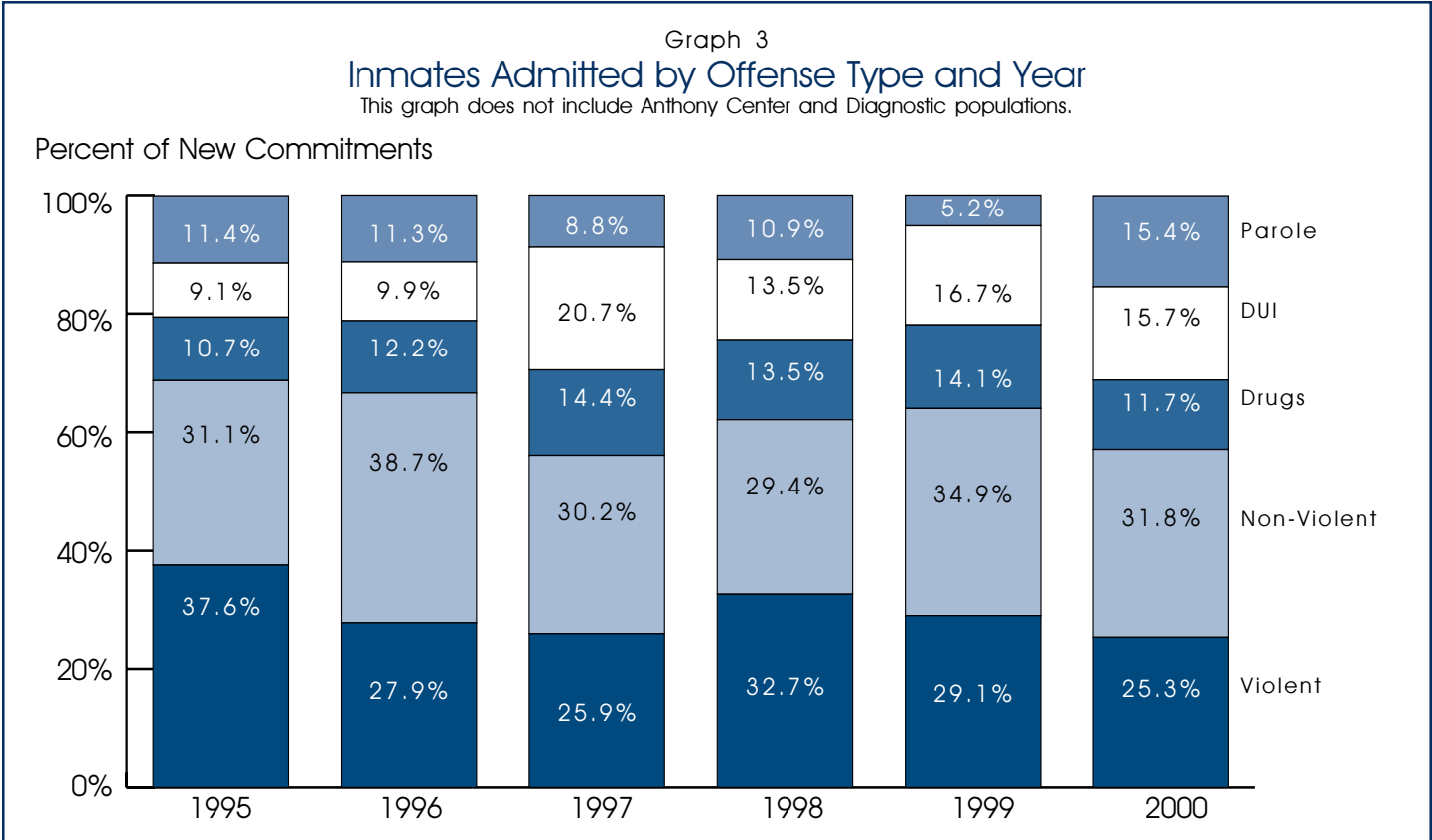
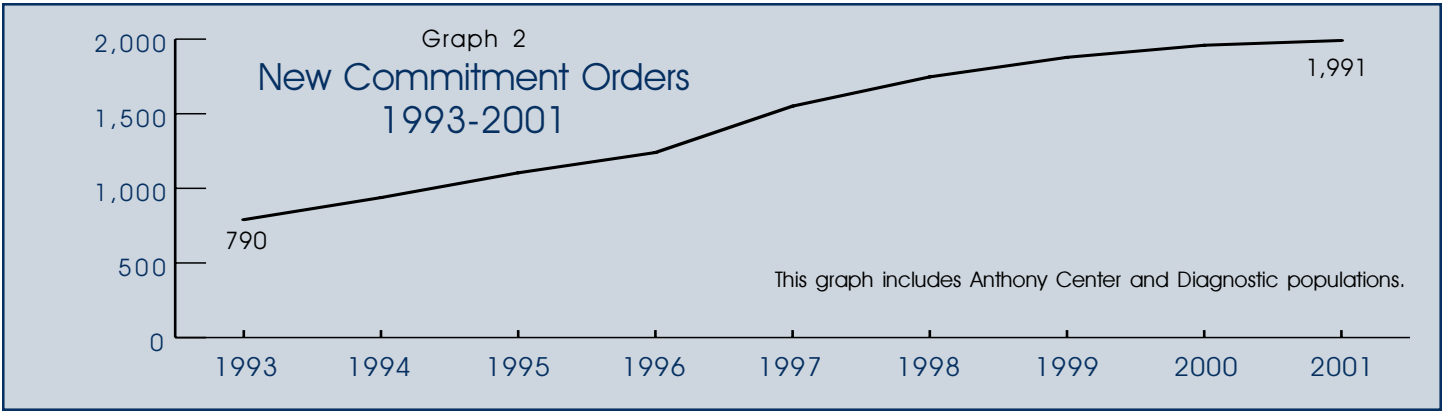
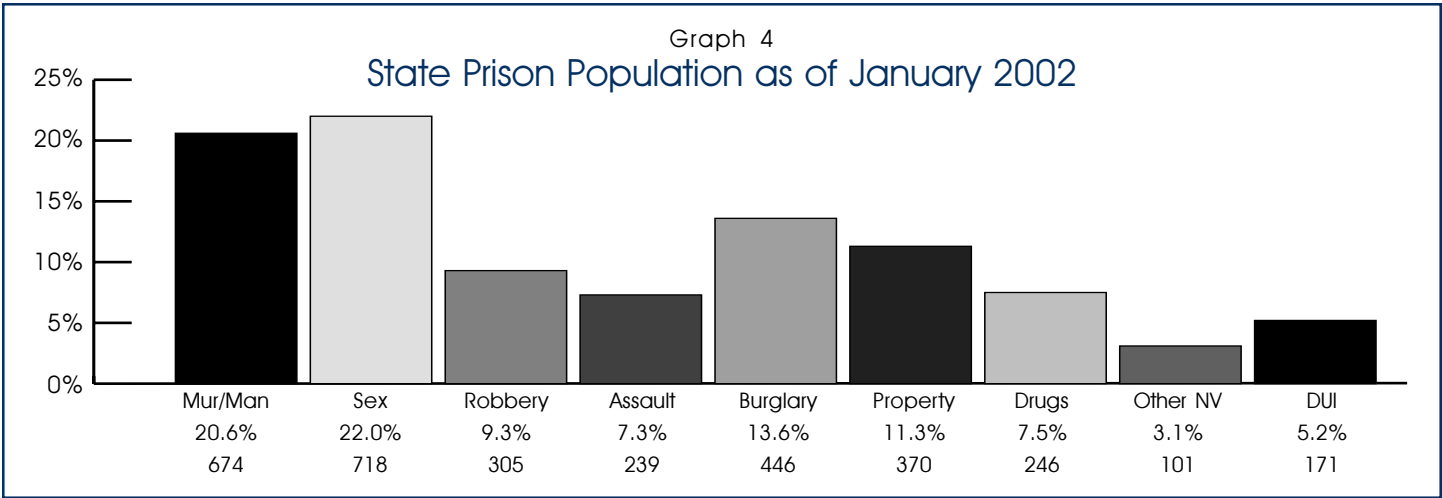


Table 1  
Average Maximum Sentences in Months by Offense Category and Admission Year

Offense Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Murder/Manslaughter	192.2	189.3	224.2	287.8	246.3	258.0
Sex Crimes	272.5	285.3	302.7	232.8	228.3	257.4
Robbery	276.0	203.1	250.2	260.3	239.0	447.0
Assault	128.0	199.0	110.3	138.9	103.1	103.6
Burglary	244.0	147.4	181.9	168.6	167.9	191.8
Property	163.4	103.0	133.5	139.5	136.9	138.3
Drugs	148.5	122.8	121.0	125.8	124.5	121.7
Other/Non Violent	176.2	86.8	165.8	88.4	67.7	63.8
DUI	43.7	38.4	36.9	39.6	37.6	41.3
Parole Revocation	169.6	176.9	161.8	157.2	146.6	170.6



**Sentences Continue to Fluctuate**

The pattern of average sentence length by offense for convicted felons continues to fluctuate from year to year, well over the national average. Sentence length in West Virginia fluctuated by an average of 10.6% per year for the past four years. This is typical of states with no standards for sentencing where sentences vary greatly by sentencing judge.

In 2000, there are noticeable increases in sentences for robbery (447.0 months) and parole revocation (170.6 months). This may or may not indicate the beginning of a trend. (See Table 1)

**Type of Releases Stable, Grant Rates Down**

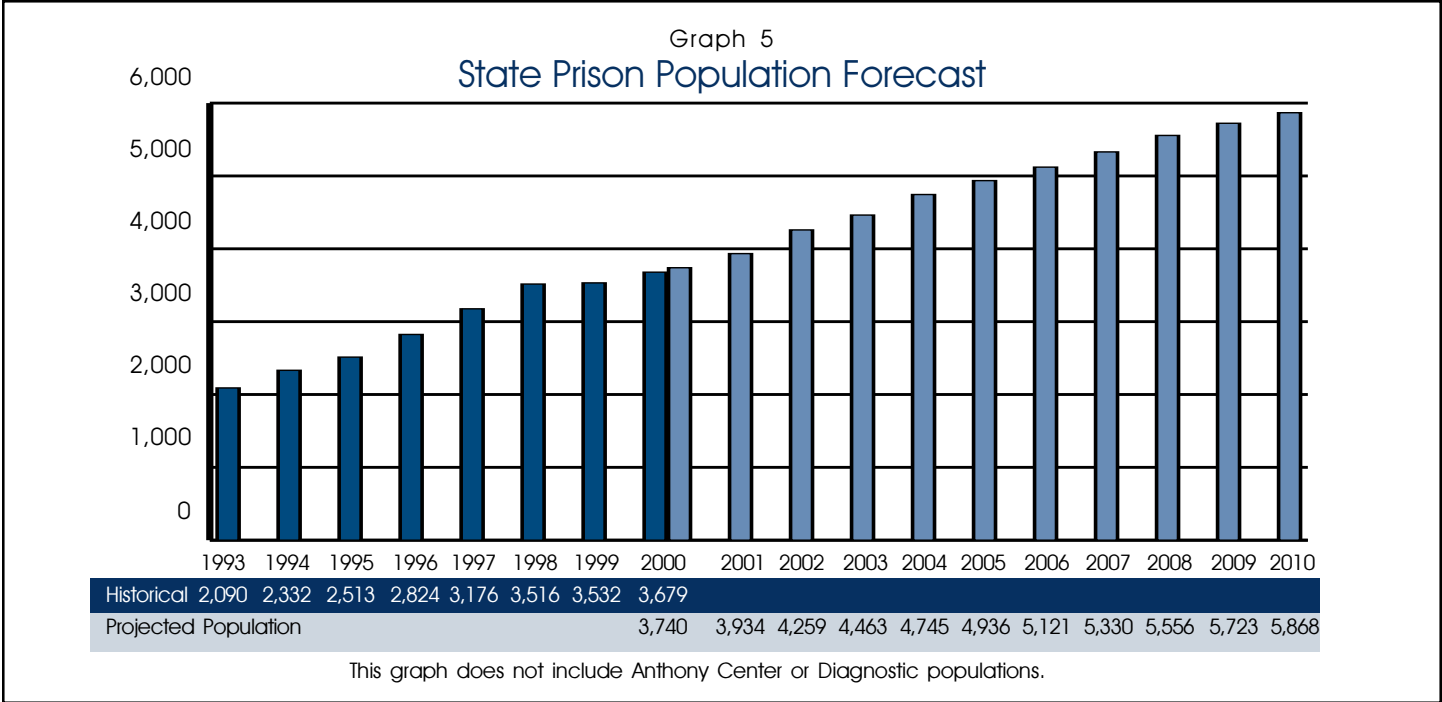
The percent of released offenders released to parole remained relatively stable. In 1999, 76.8% of released offenders were released to parole. In 2000, this decreased slightly to 73.8%.

Fewer sex offenders were released by discharge. In 1999, 54.8% of the released sex offenders were released by discharge. In 2000, 44.6% were released by discharge.

Parole grant rates, which have declined since 1999, are being monitored for their impact on the prison population.

**59.2% of Confined Felons In For Violence**

As of January 2002, 59.2% of the confined prison population were felons serving time for murder/ manslaughter, sex offenses, robbery, and/or assault. Those sentenced for burglary appear to comprise a greater percent of the population, increasing from 5.2% in 1999 to 13.6% in 2002. DUI offenders comprised 6.6% of the population in 1999 and 5.2% of the population in 2002. (See Graph 4)



## Report Highlights

West Virginia's correctional population has steadily increased in the past 2 years.

The population forecast performed well during this time period.

Given current trends, the population is forecasted to continue growing.

New commitments continued to increase, but slowly.

The percent of commitments by offense remained relatively stable.

Sentence length fluctuated by an average of 10.6% per year.

The percent of releases to parole remained relatively stable.

Over half of the confined felons are serving life sentences and/or sentences for violent offenses.

### Acknowledgments

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