

Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council

Adult Felony Trends in Illinois, 2010-2022

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Introduction

The Sentencing Policy Advisory Council was created in 2009 to collect, analyze and present data from all cogs of the criminal justice system to more accurately determine the consequences of sentencing policy decisions.¹ This report describes trends in felony sentencing in Illinois in 2010-2022, covering most of SPAC's existence as the state sentencing commission and just over a decade of changes and reforms to numerous parts of the criminal justice system. We first provide a timeline of significant legislative, judicial, and executive reforms that impacted the Illinois criminal justice system from 2010 to 2022. We then provide data covering broad trends in felony arrests, guilty dispositions, and sentences, as well as prison admissions, exits, and populations from January 1st, 2010, through December 31, 2022.

¹ 730 ILCS 5/5-8-8: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=073000050K5-8-8>

Executive Summary

- Felony arrests declined by about 27% between 2010 and 2022, although much of that decline occurred in years when the pandemic impacted law enforcement practices and policies. The decline varied by race, age, county, and offense class and type and had not returned to pre-pandemic levels as of 2022.
- Felony guilty dispositions declined by about 30% between 2010 and 2022. The decline varied by race, age, county, and offense class and type.
- The largest declines in felony arrests and guilty dispositions were in the 18-25 age group, Cook County, Class 4 offenses, and drug and property offenses. Arrests and guilty dispositions for weapons offenses increased, particularly after 2018.
- The proportion of felony sentences to probation slightly increased between 2010 and 2022, but most of the change occurred during the pandemic years and has remained at about 50-55%. Drug and property offenses increasingly involved probation sentences. Weapons offenses more often involved incarceration sentences.
- Prison admissions declined by 47% between 2010 and 2022. Both new sentence and technical violation admissions declined. The largest declines in new sentence admissions were in Black and Hispanic admissions, age 18-25 admissions, admissions from Cook and the collar counties, drug and property admissions, and Class 4 admissions. Weapons offense admissions increased by nearly 150% between 2010 and 2022.
- The prison population likewise declined by about 40%. The largest declines were in Black and Hispanic people, people age 18-35, and people from Cook County. The 55 and over age group had a fairly steady increase for most of the time period and is the only age group whose population increased.
- The prison population makeup increasingly involved people convicted of violent and weapons offenses and fewer drug and property offenses. By offense class, the prison population increasingly involved people convicted of Class X and First-Degree Murder offenses, and those subject to truth-in-sentencing.
- Prison exits showed similar patterns as admissions, declining by nearly 50% between 2010 and 2022.
- Time served for prison exits has generally been increasing from 2010-2022, although the pandemic years impacted how much time a person spent in jail or pretrial compared to prison.

Significant Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Reforms and Milestones

There has been significant change in Illinois since 2010 that has impacted all parts of the criminal justice system, from arrests to sentencing and corrections. The following is a non-exhaustive list of significant reforms and milestones that have impacted the criminal justice system and sentenced population in Illinois.

- 2010 – The Illinois Crime Reduction Act, signed in August of 2009, became effective.² The Act included the creation of Adult Redeploy Illinois and the Risk and Needs Assessment Task Force.
- 2012 – Governor Quinn signed Public Act 97-697 into law, which modified the credits system for the Illinois Department of Corrections from good time and good conduct credits to sentencing and program sentence credits.³
- 2013 – The Illinois prison population peaked at over 49,000 people, with a recidivism rate, defined as the number of people that exited prison and returned to prison within three years, at about 51%.
- 2014 – Public Act 98-164 established Second Chance Probation in Illinois, allowing those who plead to or are found guilty of various low-level, non-violent felonies to be sentenced to probation if that person was not previously on probation or conditional discharge for a felony. Those who successfully complete the conditions of probation would not have a conviction record in their official criminal background.⁴
- 2015 – Governor Rauner issued Executive Order 15-14, which established the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform with the goal of reducing the prison population by 25% by 2025.⁵ The commission report, published in 2017, recommended 27 reforms to reduce the prison population while minimizing the risks to public safety.⁶

² Public Act 96-761:

<https://ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=1289&GAID=10&GA=96&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=42285&SessionID=76&SpecSess=>

³ Public Act 97-697:

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2621&GAID=11&GA=97&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=62972&SessionID=84&SpecSess=>

⁴ Public Act 98-164:

<https://ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=3010&GAID=12&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=74861&SessionID=85&SpecSess=&Session=&GA=98>

⁵ Executive Order 15-14: <https://www.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders/executive-order-executive-order-number-14.2015.html>

⁶ Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform Final Report, https://cjreform2015.icjia.cloud/pdf/CJSR_Final_Report_Dec_2016.pdf

- 2017 – The Cook County’s Office of the Chief Judge issued General Order 18.8A, which revised pre-trial detention policies to reduce the reliance on cash bail in Cook County.⁷
- 2018 – Public Act 99-938 became effective, which revised eligibility for and expanded awards for statutory and programming sentence credits, as well as Earned Discretionary Sentence Credits (EDSC).⁸ This Act also amended parts of 730 ILCS 5/5-5-3 by reducing the number of offenses that do not allow a probation sentence.
- 2018 – PA 100-0003 became effective, which created the First Time Weapons Offender Program and created a presumptive new minimum for people convicted of UYW-Felon with specific prior offenses in their history.⁹
- 2019 – the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act was signed into law, legalizing recreational cannabis, effective in 2020.¹⁰ The legislation was part of a long line of cannabis reform in Illinois since 2010, including allowing medical use of cannabis in 2014¹¹, decriminalization of under 10 grams from a misdemeanor penalty to a fine in 2016¹², and expansion of medical use of cannabis in 2018-2019.¹³ Included with the legislation was the creation of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program, which drives 25% of cannabis tax revenue to fund grants for violence prevention, reentry, youth development, economic development, and civil legal aid services in areas of the state that were negatively impacted by harsh policies of the criminal justice system.¹⁴
- 2021 – The SAFE-T Act was signed into law.¹⁵ The Act included reforms in police training, rules and oversight, pretrial processes and detention, sentencing, corrections, and mandatory supervised release. Included in the SAFE-T Act was the Pretrial Fairness Act (PFA), which

⁷ General Order 18.8A: <https://www.cookcountycourt.org/Manage/Division-Orders/View-Division-Order/ArticleId/2562/GENERAL-ORDER-NO-18-8A-Procedures-for-Bail-Hearings-and-Pretrial-Release>

⁸ Public Act 99-938: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2872&GAID=13&GA=99&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=96191&SessionID=88&SpecSess=>

⁹ Public Act 100-3: <https://ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=1722&GAID=14&GA=100&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=104613&SessionID=91&SpecSess=>

¹⁰ Public act 101-27: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=1438&GAID=15&GA=101&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=115810&SessionID=108&SpecSess=>

¹¹ Public Act 98-122: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/098-0122.htm>

¹² Public Act 99-697: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2228&GAID=13&GA=99&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=93232&SessionID=88&SpecSess=>

¹³ Public Act 100-114: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/100/100-1114.htm>

¹⁴ Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program: <https://r3.illinois.gov>

¹⁵ Public Act 101-652: <https://ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3653&GAID=15&GA=101&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=120371&SessionID=108&SpecSess=>

eliminated cash-bail pretrial release in favor of a risk-based procedure. The PFA was challenged in court but ultimately became effective in September of 2023.¹⁶

- 2021-2022 – The Illinois prison population, after already declining to about 39,000 people in 2019, declined even further to 30,000 people or fewer, where it remained as of the date of publication of this report. The recidivism rate had declined to just under 37%.¹⁷

Data

The data for this report consists of SPAC analyses of administrative data covering 2010 through 2022 for adults, defined in this report as age 18 or older, who had a felony arrest charge or guilty disposition. The data are as follows; readers may wish to consult the Data and Methodology section in the Appendix for more information.

- Arrest data are from Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) database extracts housed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.
- Guilty disposition and sentence data are from a combination of CHRI database extracts, Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) Automated Disposition Reporting (ADR) data, and Cook County Clerk data.
- Prison data are from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Planning and Research Unit extracts provided to SPAC, which include prison admissions, exits, and the June 30th annual population census.

¹⁶ <https://ilcourtsaudio.blob.core.windows.net/antilles-resources/resources/79db4d0e-4bed-4cd2-bec1-88fc1ba8b904/Rowe%20v.%20Raoul,%202023%20IL%20129248.pdf>

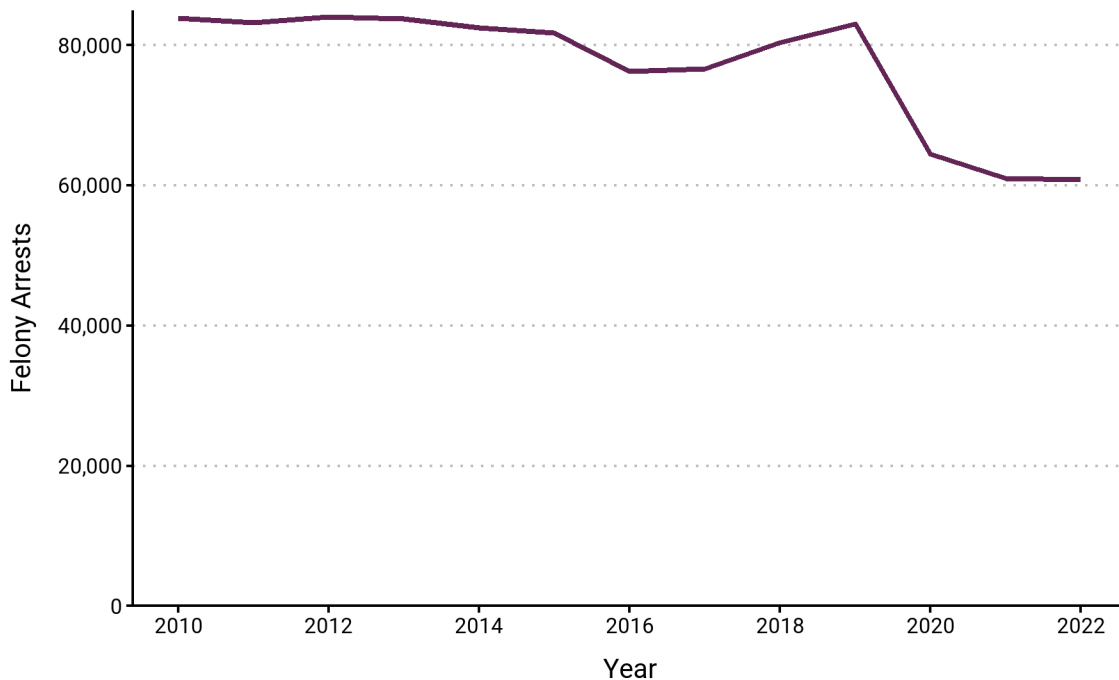
¹⁷ Illinois Department of Corrections 3 Year Recidivism Rates:
<https://idoc.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idoc/reportsandstatistics/documents/FY22-Online-Recidivism-Table.pdf>

Felony Arrests

Felony Arrest Totals

Between 2010 and 2019, arrests in the CHRI data (Figure 1) were generally around 75,000 to 85,000 per year. The impact of the pandemic can be seen in 2020 when felony arrests declined to about 64,350 arrests and remained at just over 60,000 arrests in 2021-2022. Overall, arrests declined by about 27% between 2010 and 2022, although much of that decline occurred in years when the pandemic impacted law enforcement practices and policies. Felony arrests had not returned to pre-pandemic levels as of 2022.

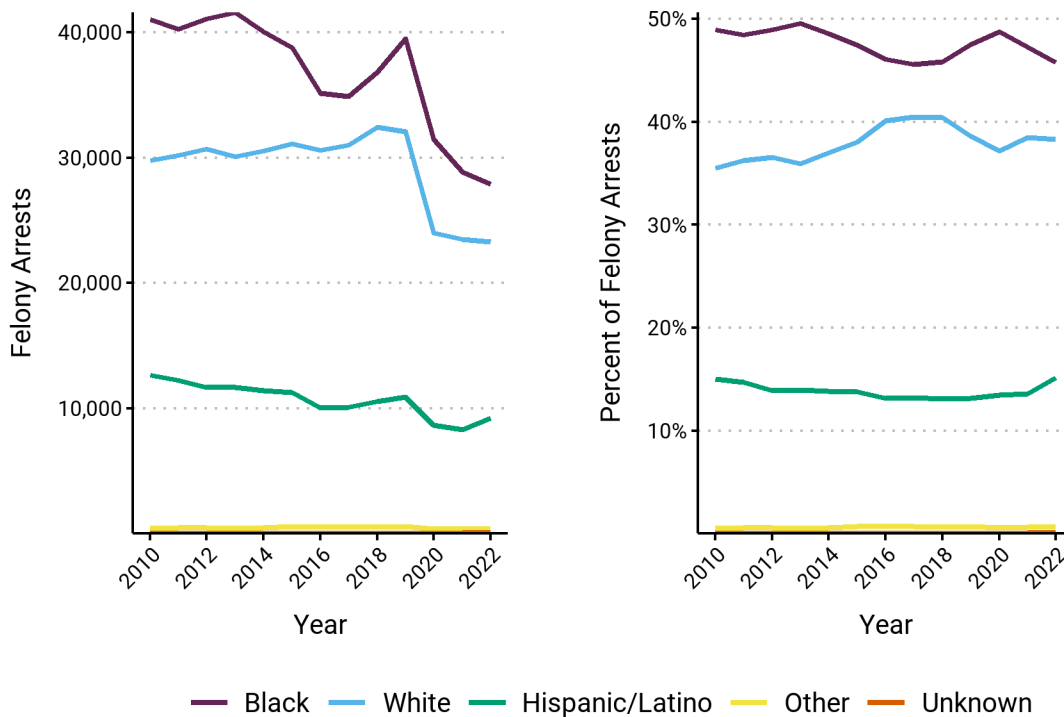
Figure 1: Felony Arrests in Illinois, 2010 to 2022



Arrests by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

Throughout 2010-2022, the percentage of arrests by sex remained stable, with a small increase in the female percentage from 18% to 20% in 2010 - 2022. The race/ethnicity arrest breakdown in Illinois (Figure 2) changed slightly but maintained the same overall pattern of the Black population having disproportionately higher rates of arrests compared to the white and Hispanic/Latino populations. For example, in 2020, the census estimated that nearly 60% of the Illinois population was white non-Hispanic/Latino, about 15% were Black non-Hispanic/Latino, and 18% were Hispanic/Latino.¹⁸ However, in 2020, the adult felony arrest makeup was 49% Black, 37% white, and about 14% Hispanic/Latino. As a proportion of total felony arrests, the gap between white and Black people arrested was shrinking until around 2018 but has since slightly widened.

Figure 2: Felony Arrests in Illinois by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 to 2022

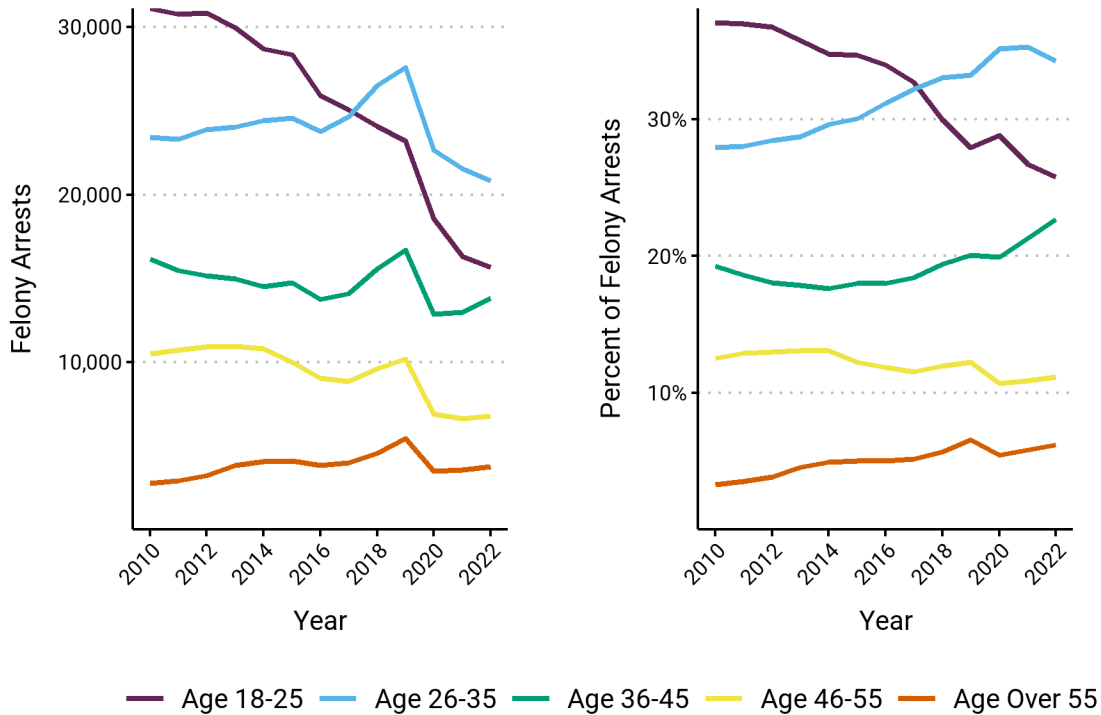


¹⁸ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/IL/PST040223>

Felony Arrests by Age Group

There have been several noticeable shifts in arrests by age as shown in Figure 3. The number of arrests for those age 18-25 declined by 40%, from over 30,000 arrests in 2010 to about 16,000 in 2022.¹⁹ This decline began prior to the pandemic. No other age group experienced such a large decline, and other age groups generally had trends showing smaller increases or decreases in arrests until the end of the decade, in which all age groups experienced a decline in the first year of the pandemic.

Figure 3: Felony Arrests in Illinois by Age Group, 2010 to 2022



¹⁹ The general population in Illinois that were age 18-25 also declined between 2010 and 2020, but only by around five percent.

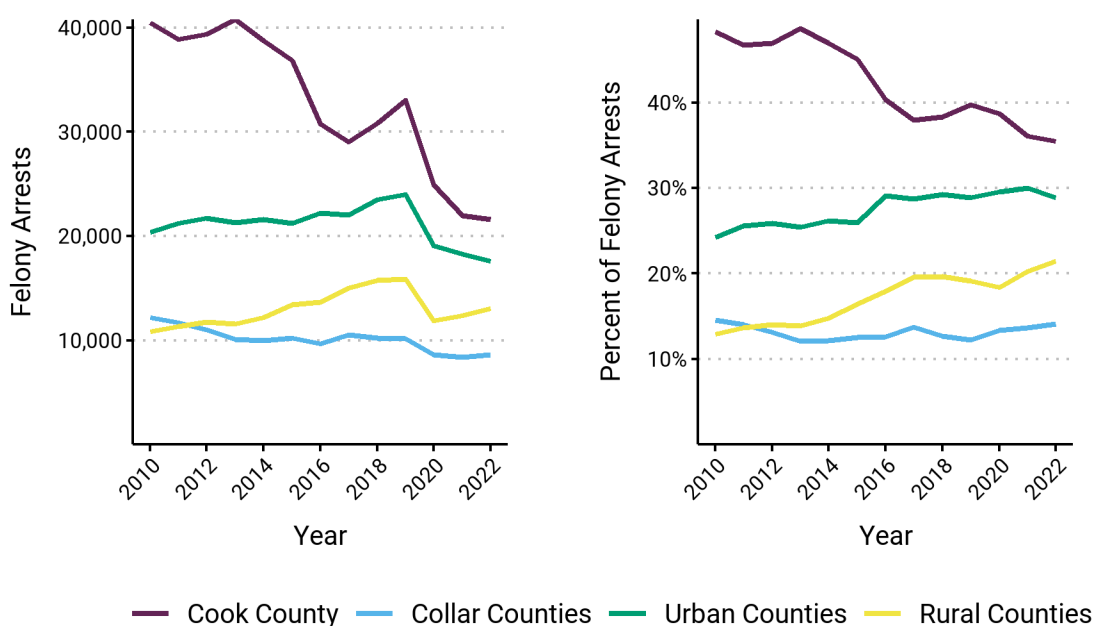
2010 Census: <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/cen2010/cph-1-15.pdf>

2020 Census: <https://data.census.gov/table?q=P12&d=DEC+Demographic+and+Housing+Characteristics>

Felony Arrests by County Type

Changes to arrest trends varied by county type from 2010 to 2022 (Figure 4), particularly in Cook County. In 2010, Cook County comprised about half of all felony arrests but substantially declined from about 40,500 to about 21,600. This was not a constant decrease and was greatly impacted by the pandemic. The collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties) collectively have also shown a substantial decrease since 2010, declining by nearly 30% from about 12,200 to 8,600. Other urban and rural counties had flat or increasing felony arrest trends until the pandemic, in which arrests across the state declined.

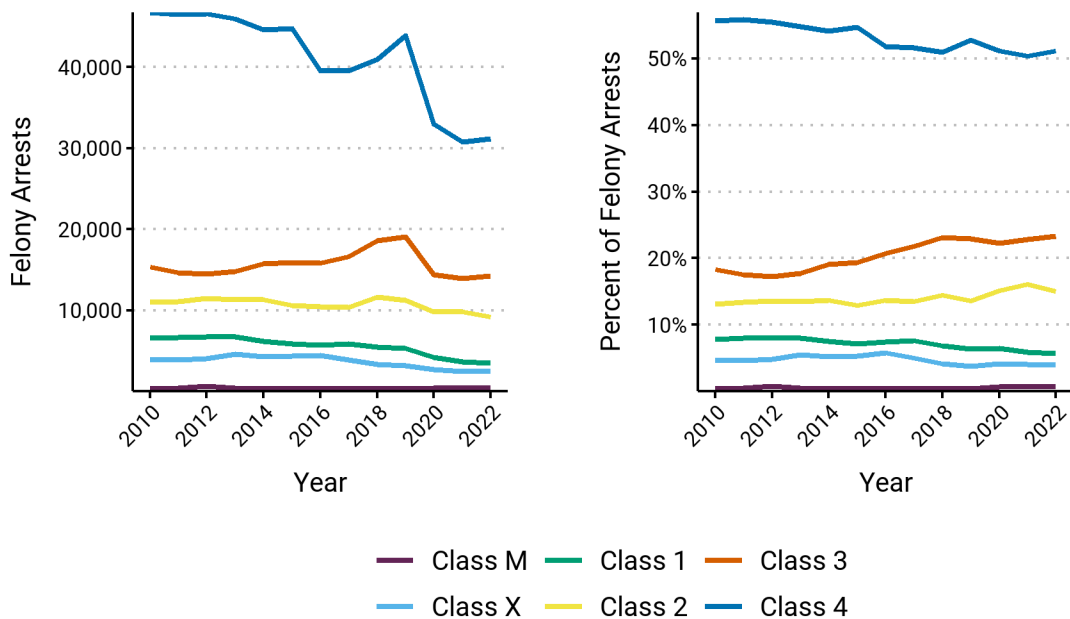
Figure 4: Felony Arrests in Illinois by County Type, 2010 to 2022



Felony Arrests by Offense Class

Figure 5 shows felony arrests between 2010 and 2022 by offense class. Class 4 arrests were the most frequent arrest class during the entire period but were considerably more frequent in the earlier years. The number of Class 4 arrests declined by about 33% from nearly 47,000 in 2010 to about 31,000 arrests in 2022. Other classes were less frequent and also mostly had declines, with a few years having small increases. Class X and Class 1 arrests declined by 37% and 47%, respectively. Class 3 and Class 2 declined by 7% and 17%, respectively. Only first-degree murder arrests, a small fraction of all felony arrests in general, increased from 2010 to 2022.

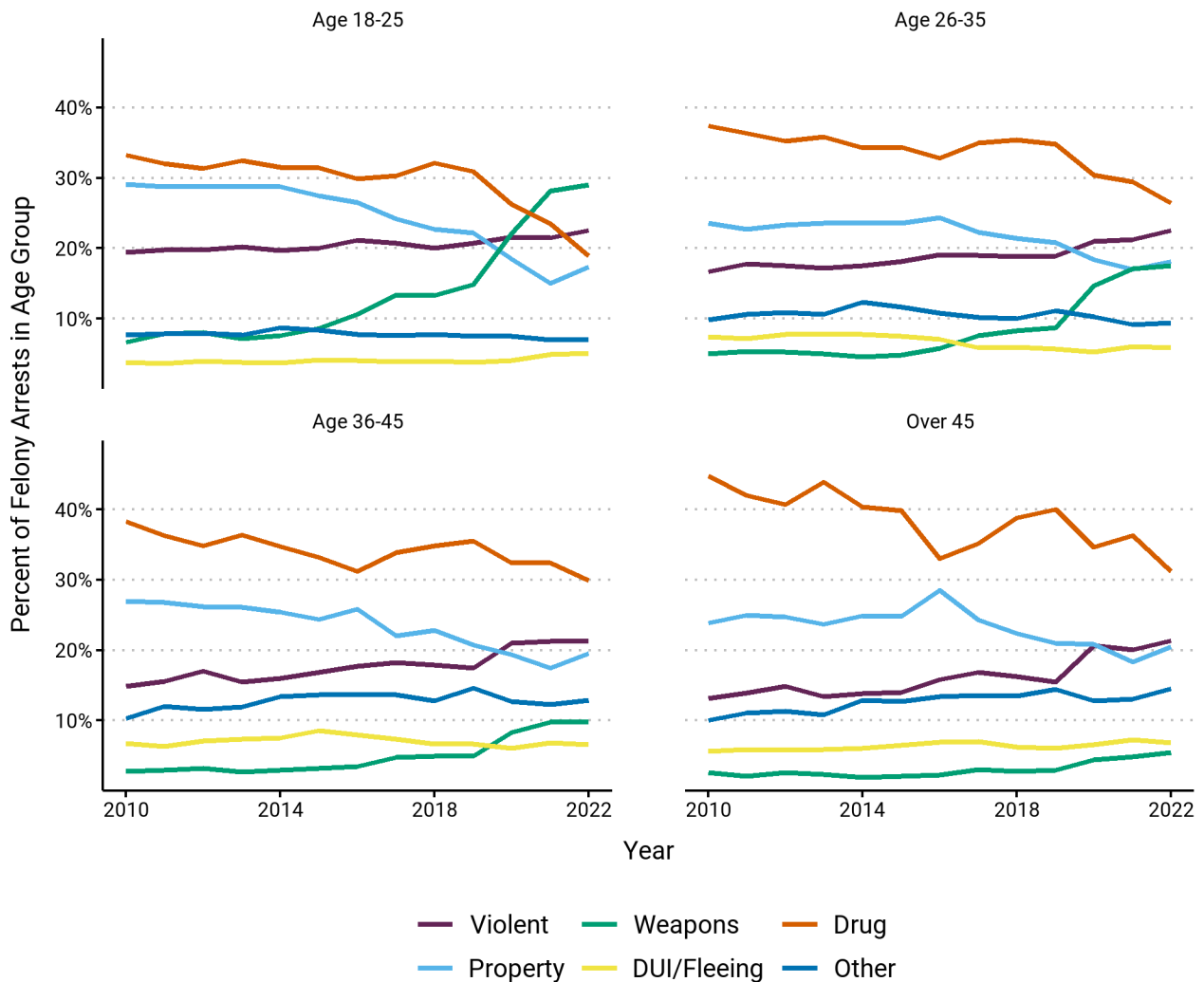
Figure 5: Felony Arrests in Illinois by Offense Class, 2010 to 2022



Felony Arrests by Offense Category and Age Group

Arrests by offense category within each age group (Figure 6) showed significant changes. Weapons offense arrests increased for all age groups, but the largest increases occurred in the youngest age groups, particularly 18-25- and 26-35-year-old arrests. Between 2010 and 2022, weapons arrests increased from one of the least common offense categories to the most common for arrests in the 18-25 age group. Drug and property offense arrests were the most common arrest offense categories at the beginning of this period for all age groups. Both declined as a proportion of all felony arrests in all age groups.

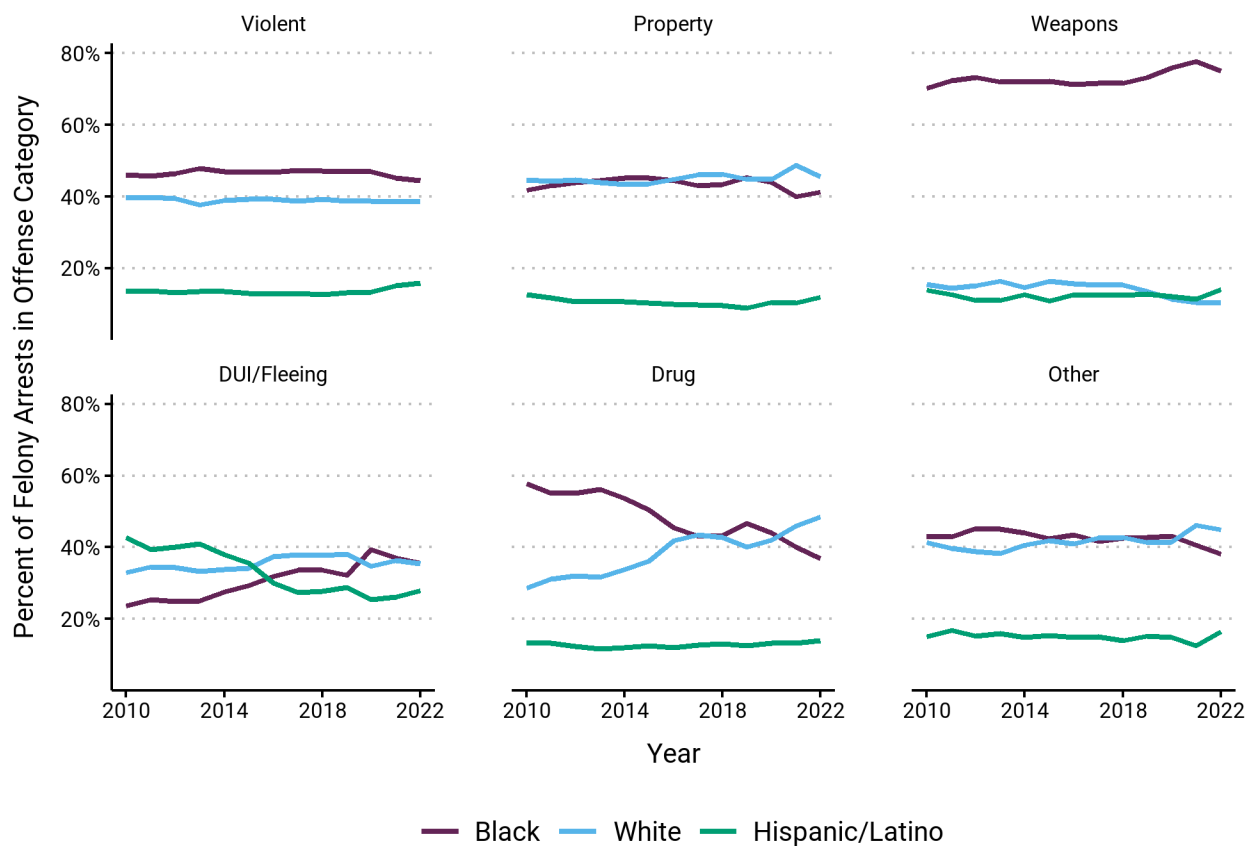
Figure 6: Felony Arrests in Illinois by Age Group and Offense Category, 2010 to 2022



Felony Arrests by Offense Category and Race/Ethnicity

Arrests by offense category and race/ethnicity (Figure 7) also showed significant changes. First, the proportion of arrests for DUI or fleeing offenses by Hispanic/Latino people declined while the white and Black proportion increased. This is likely a result of a 2013 law that allowed temporary driver's licenses to be issued to undocumented immigrants if they meet other eligibility criteria.²⁰ Second, the proportion of felony drug arrests declined for Black people by about 20%, while it likewise increased for white people by 20%. These trends also exist in the felony guilty dispositions.

Figure 7: Felony Arrests in Illinois by Offense Category and Race/Ethnicity, 2010 to 2022



²⁰ Public Act 097-

1157: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=0957&GAID=11&GA=97&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=55832&SessionID=84&SpecSess=>

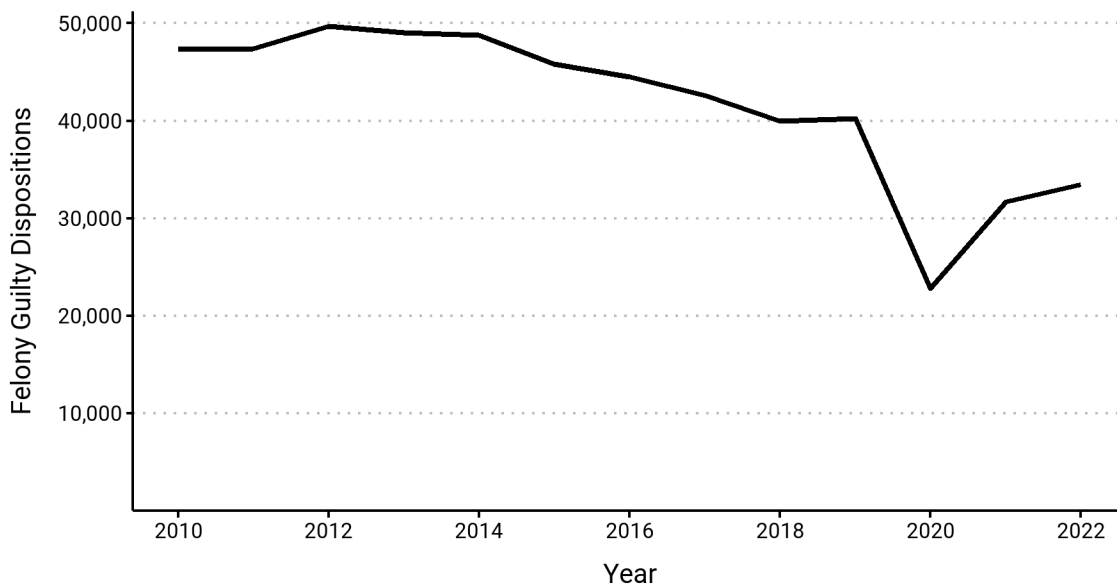
Felony Guilty Dispositions

Typically, a finding of guilt can lead to a conviction where the judgement is entered, or court supervision where the judgement is withheld. Court supervision is a non-conviction disposition that is used in misdemeanor cases but similar options exist with some felony sentences such as Second Chance Probation and the First Time Weapons Offender Program. Convictions will appear on a person's official state criminal history record, while dispositions with judgments withheld should not appear if the person successfully completes court-ordered requirements. SPAC included both convictions and other dispositions with judgments withheld in this section about guilty dispositions, partially because the data are sometimes in error and have dispositions with judgments withheld indicated as a conviction. Felony convictions can involve a community-based sentence, such as probation or conditional discharge, or incarceration in a state prison. Incarceration for felonies is always a prison sentence, however, if sentenced to probation, incarceration in jail of up to 6 months can be a condition of probation.

Total Felony Guilty Dispositions

Between 2010 and 2022, total felony guilty dispositions (Figure 8) decreased from about 47,300 to 33,500, nearly a 30% decline. The decline was not constant, and there was a slight increase at the beginning of this period. The pandemic's impact on court operations caused a large decline in 2020, but the number of guilty dispositions increased in 2021 to 2022, back to totals that were mostly in line with the previous trend.

Figure 8: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois, 2010 to 2022

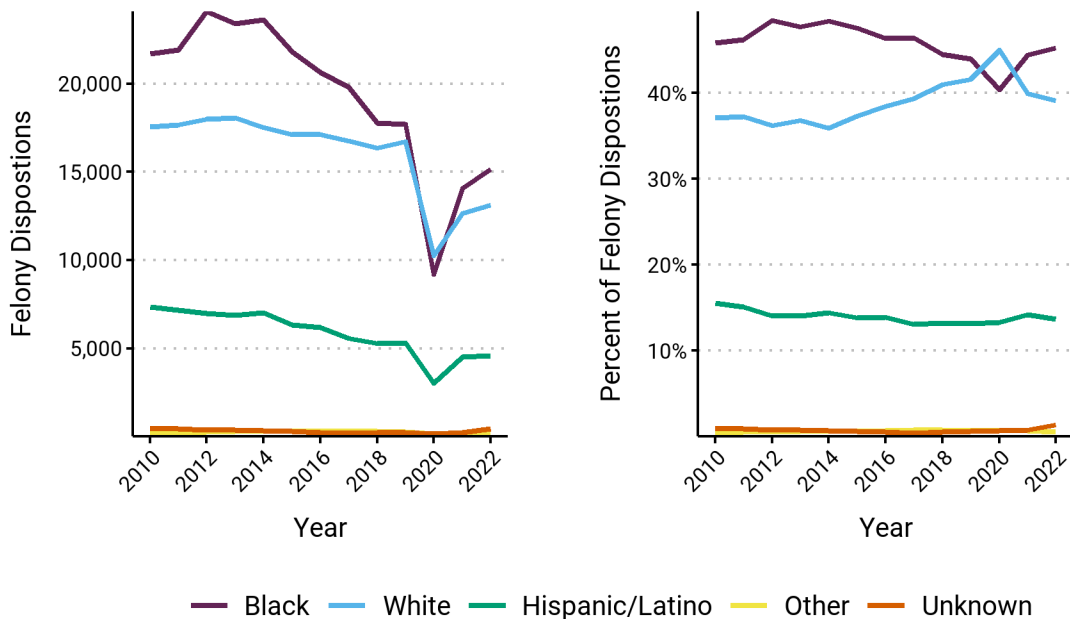


Felony Guilty Dispositions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

The percentage of felony guilty dispositions by sex remained very stable from 2010 through 2022, with males accounting for 83% of guilty dispositions.

The race and ethnicity composition changed over the period examined (Figure 9). The largest shifts occurred during the middle years of this time period, where the percentage of guilty dispositions involving white people increased while the percentage of guilty dispositions involving Black people decreased, mainly due to a larger decline in guilty dispositions involving Black people. However, this reversed in 2021.

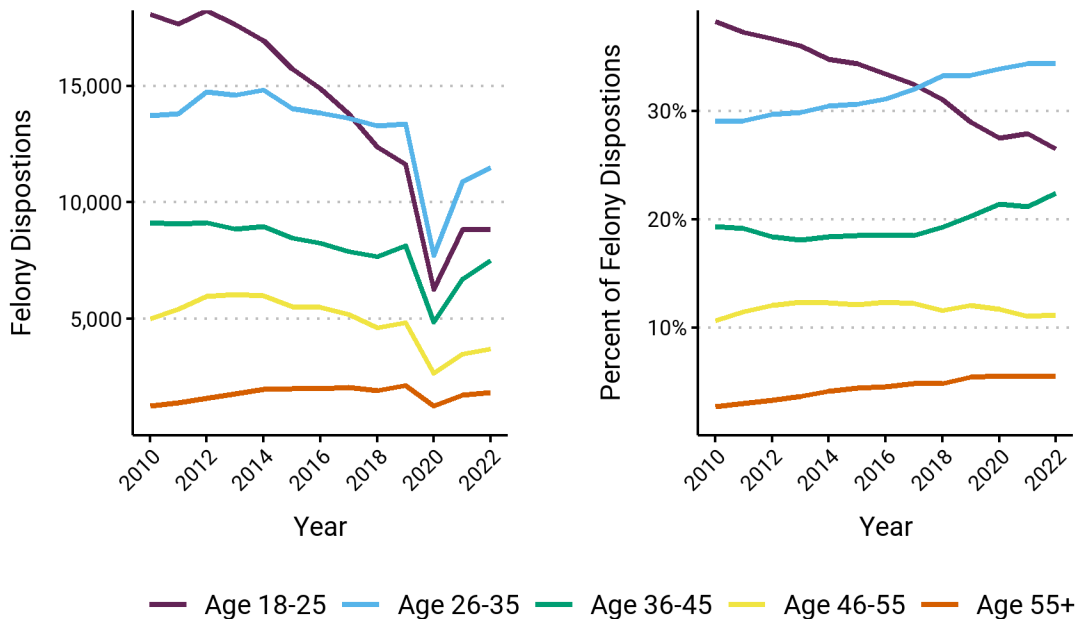
Figure 9: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 to 2022



Felony Guilty Dispositions by Age Group

There were large shifts in the age makeup of felony guilty dispositions in Illinois from 2010-2022 (Figure 10). Most age groups experienced a decline in the number of guilty dispositions except for people age 55 or older. The percentage of guilty dispositions involving 18- to 25-year-olds declined from nearly 40% to about 27%. As a result, the age group with the highest percentage of all guilty felony dispositions shifted from 18–25-year-olds to 26–35-year-olds. This finding is not novel to Illinois, as other research has also noted variation in the age-crime curve that has been predominant in the last century.²¹

Figure 10: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois by Age Group, 2010 to 2022

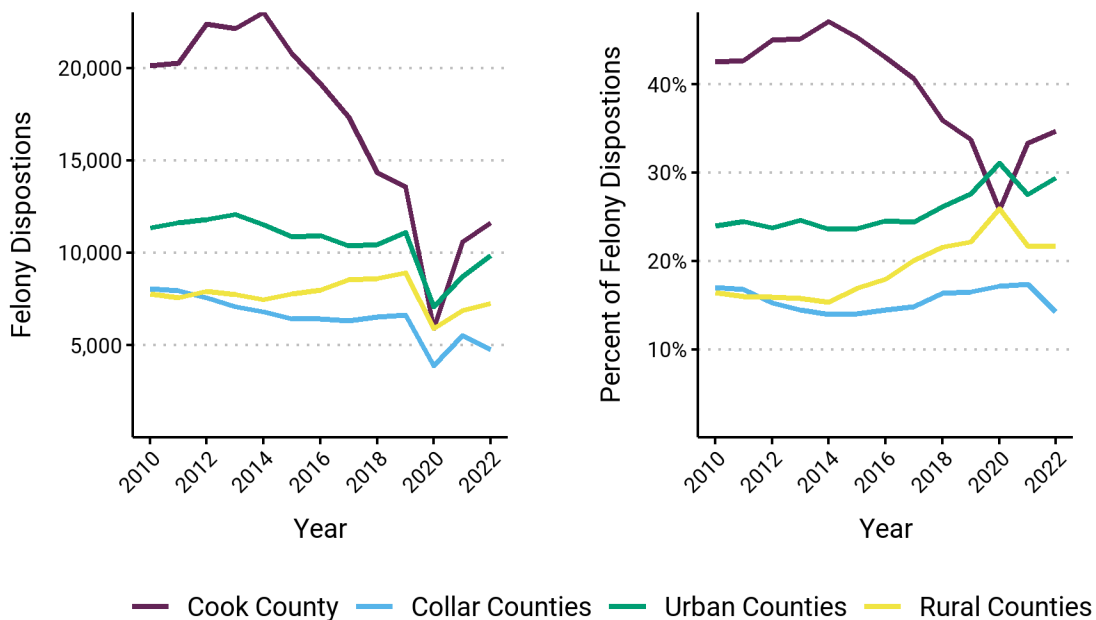


²¹ Tuttle, James (2023). The End of the Age-Crime Curve? A Historical Comparison of Male Arrest Rates in the United States, 1985–2019, *The British Journal of Criminology*, azad049; <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azad049>.

Felony Guilty Dispositions by County Type

Illinois counties shifted somewhat in the proportion of statewide guilty dispositions (Figure 11). Overall, the gap in the percent of guilty dispositions between Cook County and other counties shrank between 2010 and 2022. Cook County comprised over 40% of felony guilty dispositions in the first half of this period but declined to about 35% in 2022. Urban and rural counties' share of total guilty dispositions grew by about 5% each, while there was little change in the collar counties. The pandemic and its impact on the court system, particularly in Cook County, made 2020 an anomalous year compared to the overall trend. Cook County had fewer guilty felony dispositions in 2020 than non-collar urban and rural counties collectively.

Figure 11: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois by County Type, 2010 to 2022

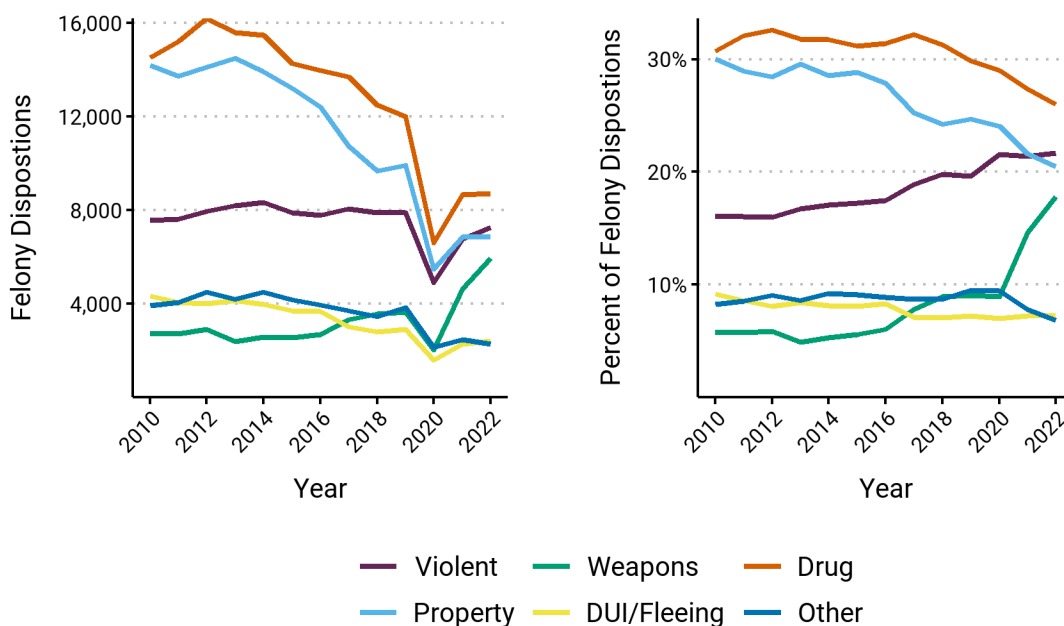


Felony Guilty Dispositions by Offense Category

Figure 12 shows the trends in guilty dispositions by offense category. Overall, drug and property offenses declined the most, from each having about 13,000 guilty dispositions to 9,000 and 7,000 guilty dispositions, respectively. During this time, particularly from 2016-2022 and excluding the decline in 2020, weapons offenses doubled from about 3,000 to 6,000 guilty dispositions.

As a percentage of guilty felony dispositions, the large decline in drug and property dispositions caused the relative distribution of other offenses to increase as a percent of all guilty dispositions. Although guilty dispositions for violent offenses had a flat trend in annual counts, their percentage of the total number of guilty felony dispositions increased from about 15% to 21%. In 2010, weapons offenses made up only about 5% of all felony guilty dispositions. Despite numerous increases in the penalties for illegal weapons possession intended to deter or incapacitate²², weapons offenses, as a percentage of all guilty felony dispositions, grew considerably, roughly doubling by 2016 and doubling again by 2022.

Figure 12: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois by Offense Category, 2010 to 2022



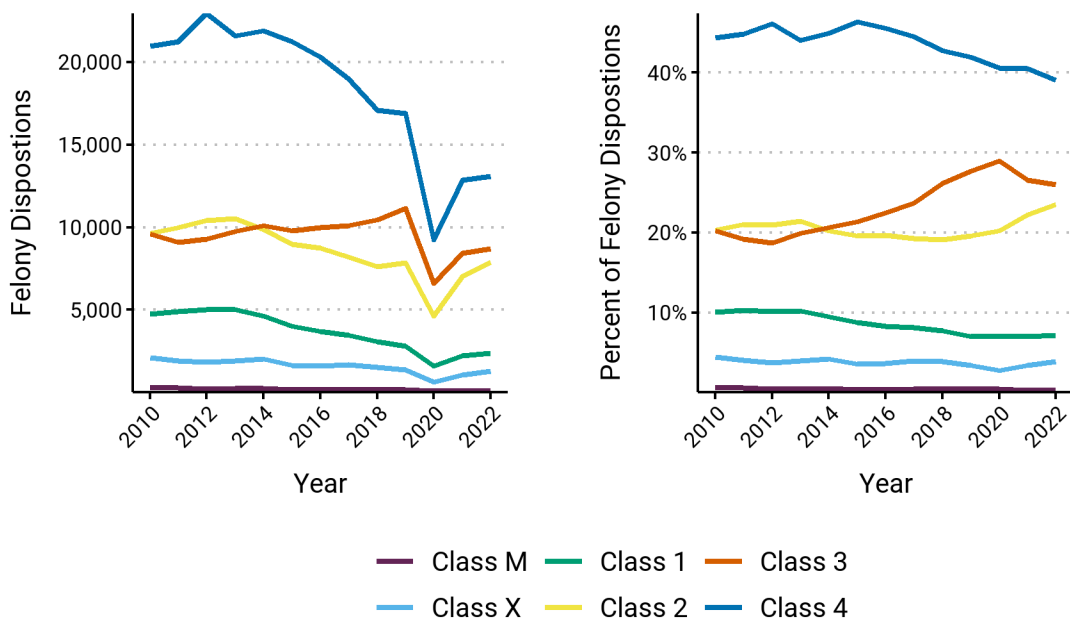
²² A legislative timeline for Unlawful Use of a Weapon penalties is available in <https://spac.icjia-api.cloud/uploads/01%202020%2022%20UW%20Trends%20Report%20FINAL-20220122T23183684.pdf>

Felony Guilty Dispositions by Offense Class

Figure 13 shows the change in guilty dispositions by offense class. Class 4 remained the most common felony offense class throughout the entire time period and had the largest decline in annual counts, from nearly 21,000 in 2010 to about 13,000 in 2022. Other classes also declined, although Class 3 guilty dispositions were unique in that they had an increasing trend in annual counts until the pandemic.

As a percentage of total guilty dispositions, Class 4 guilty dispositions decreased from about 45% of all guilty dispositions to just under 40%, while Class 3 and Class 2 each increased from about 20% to 25%. Class 1 declined from 10% to about 7%, while the two most severe and least frequent classes, First Degree Murder and Class X, remained mostly stable.

Figure 13: Felony Guilty Dispositions in Illinois by Offense Class, 2010 to 2022

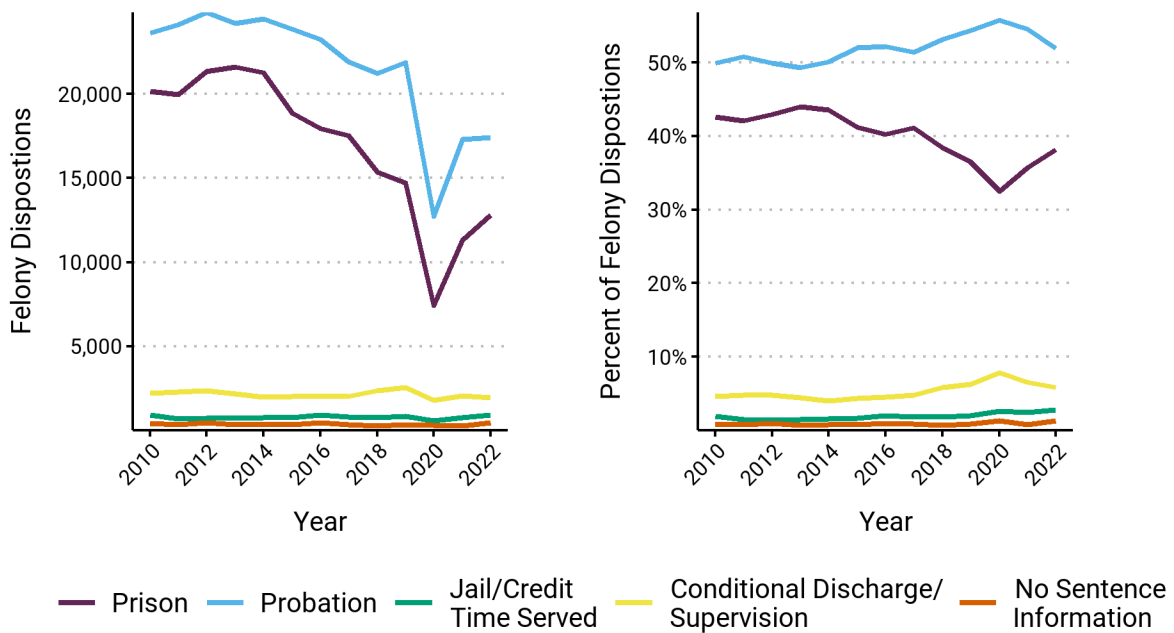


Felony Sentences Imposed

Total Felony Sentences Imposed

From 2010 through 2022, guilty dispositions (Figure 14) were sentenced to probation more than prison, increasing from around 50% to about 52%, with a temporary peak at 56% in 2020 when the pandemic impacted court processes. Although the overall number of felony sentences declined, the proportion of sentences imposed had little change, but there were notable changes in sentences imposed by offense category and class.

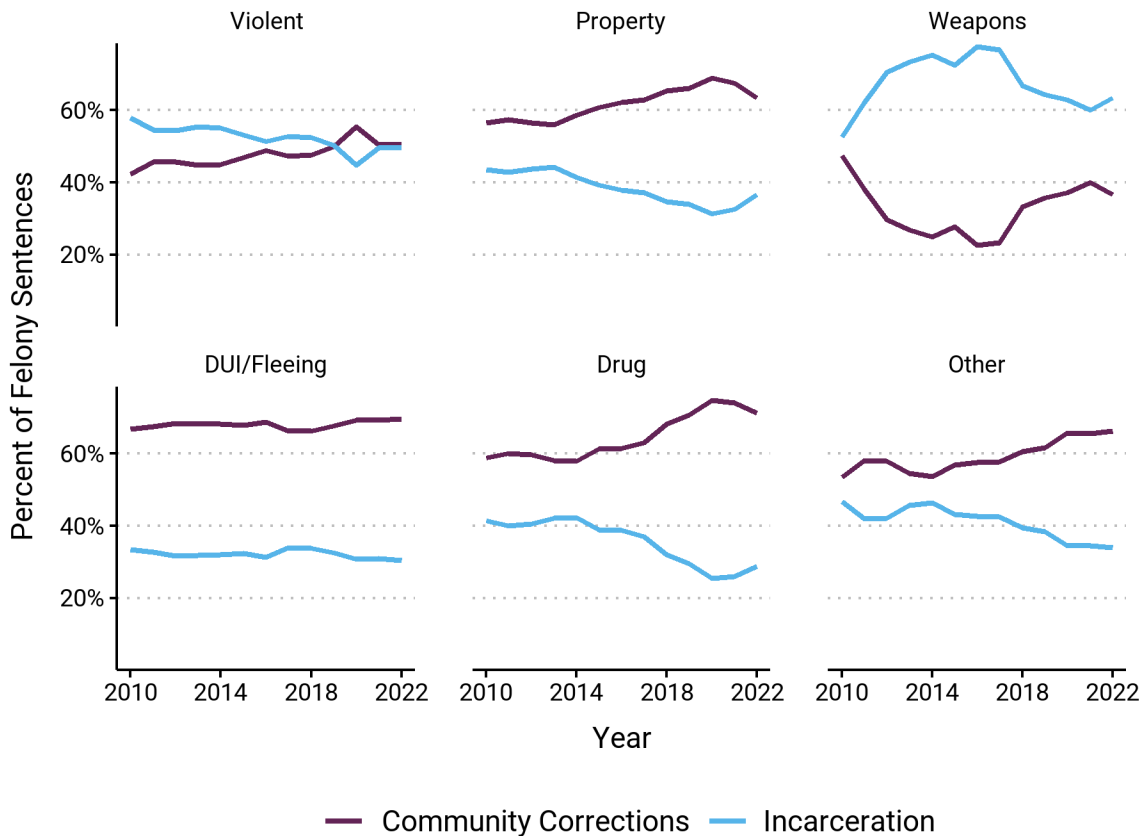
Figure 14: Felony Sentences in Illinois, 2010 to 2022



Sentence Types Imposed by Offense Category

Figure 15 shows sentences categorized by incarceration (prison or jail/credit time served) or community corrections (probation or conditional discharge) and the offense category. Sentences for violent felonies were more often incarceration than community corrections, but since 2010, the gap has narrowed. In 2022, sentences were equally distributed between incarceration and community corrections. Weapons offenses were typically far more likely to be sentenced to incarceration. The First Time Weapons Offender Program, which became effective in 2018, increased the likelihood of a community corrections sentence, but incarceration remains the most frequent sentence. Other felony offense categories were increasingly more likely to have a community corrections sentence imposed from 2010 through 2022.

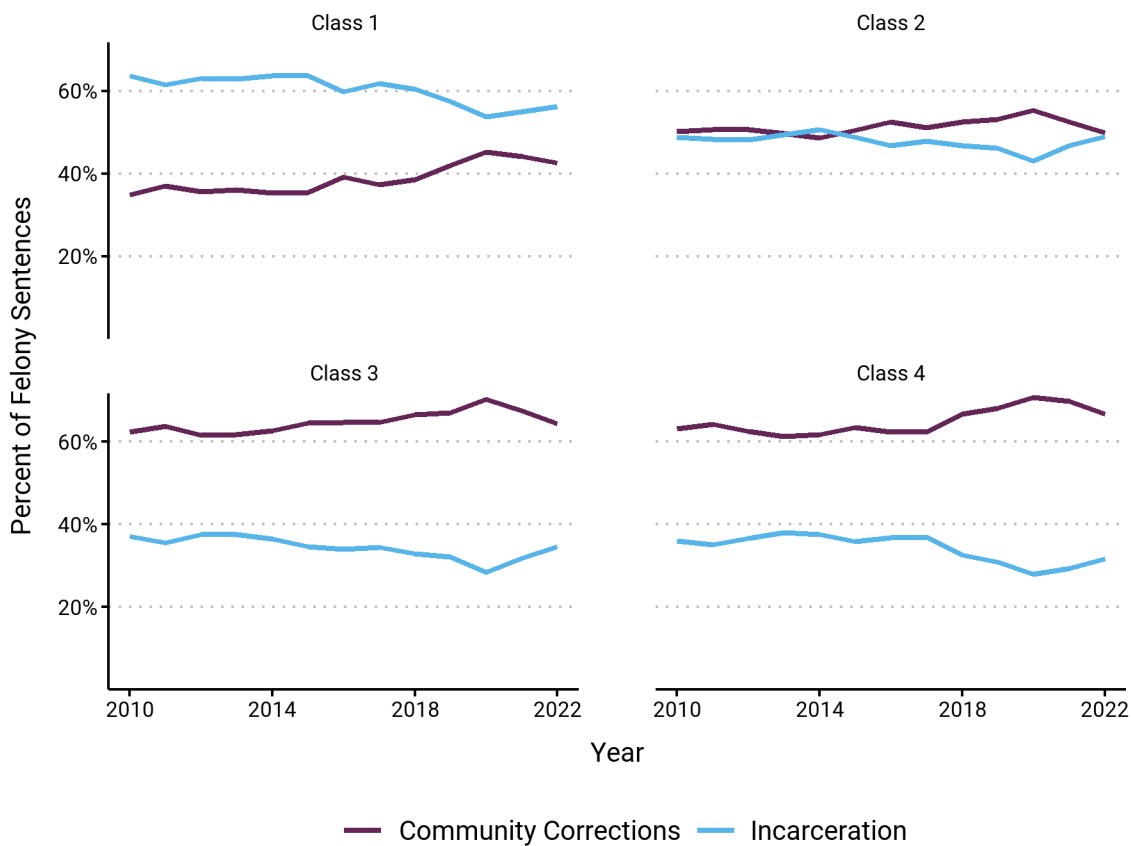
Figure 15: Felony Sentences in Illinois by Offense Category, 2010 to 2022



Sentence Types Imposed by Offense Class

Figure 16 shows sentences imposed for felony classes 4 through 1 (SPAC excluded Class M and X guilty dispositions because they require mandatory prison sentences). Classes 3 and 4 had a mostly flat trend in the early years examined, decreasing the use of prison around the middle of the period, and since 2020, slightly increasing the use of prison. Class 2 had roughly about the same percentage sentenced to incarceration vs. community corrections for the first few years, followed by an increase in the percentage sentenced to community corrections, and then returned to about equal percentages in 2022. Throughout 2010-2022, Class 1 sentences were more likely to be incarceration, but narrowed for the middle of 2010-2022 and began to widen again after 2020.

Figure 16: Felony Sentences in Illinois by Offense Class, 2010 to 2022

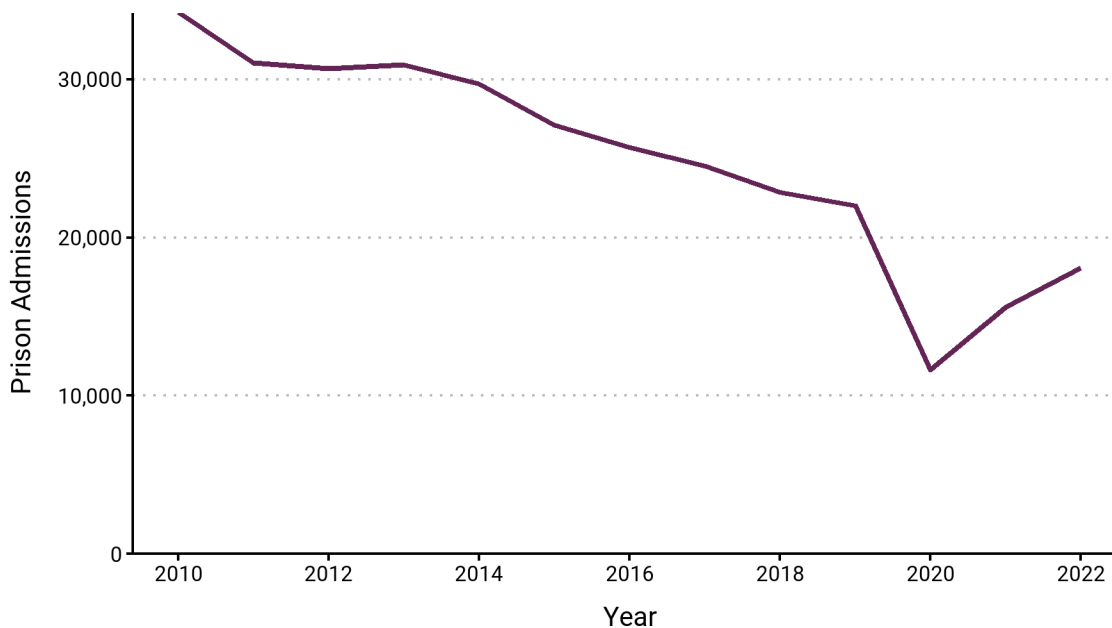


Prison Admissions

Total Prison Admissions

Figure 17 shows admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC). There were 34,262 admissions in 2010 and 18,092 admissions in 2022, reflecting a 47% decrease. The significant decline in 2020 is largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-13, halting most admissions into prison to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the custodial setting. Governor Pritzker rescinded this order in July of 2020.²³

Figure 17: Admission to Prison, 2010-2022

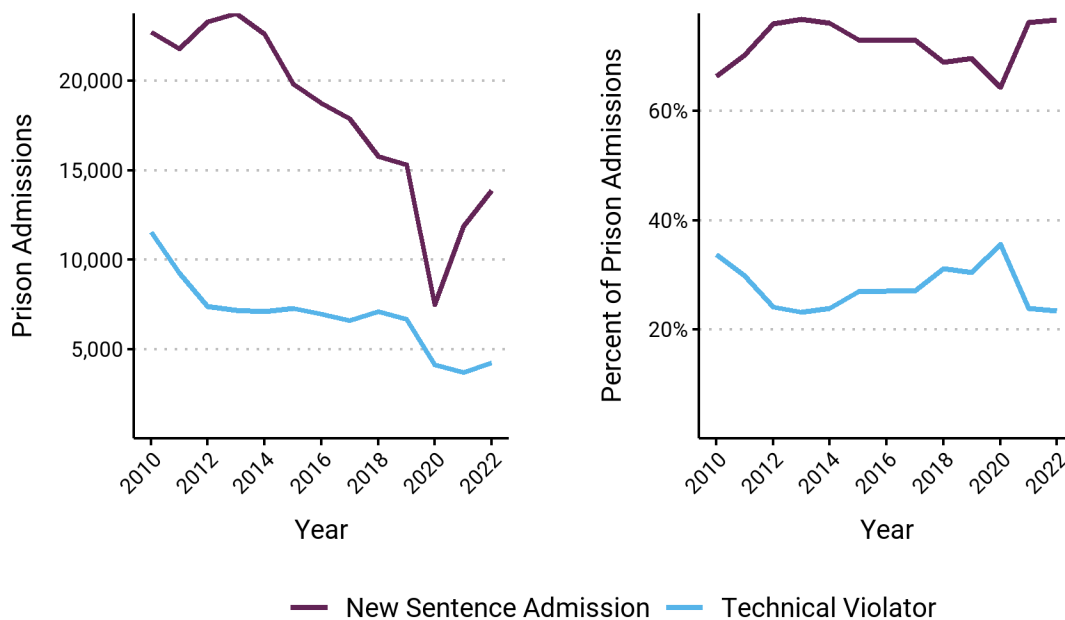


²³ <https://www.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders/executive-order.executive-order-number-13.2020.html>

Prison Admissions by Admission Type

Figure 18 shows the admission type for people admitted to DOC from 2010 to 2022. Overall, new sentence admissions accounted for 72% of admissions, while the remaining 28% were technical violators. In 2010, Technical Violations accounted for 34% of DOC admissions and by 2022 had reached a recent low of 23% of admissions.

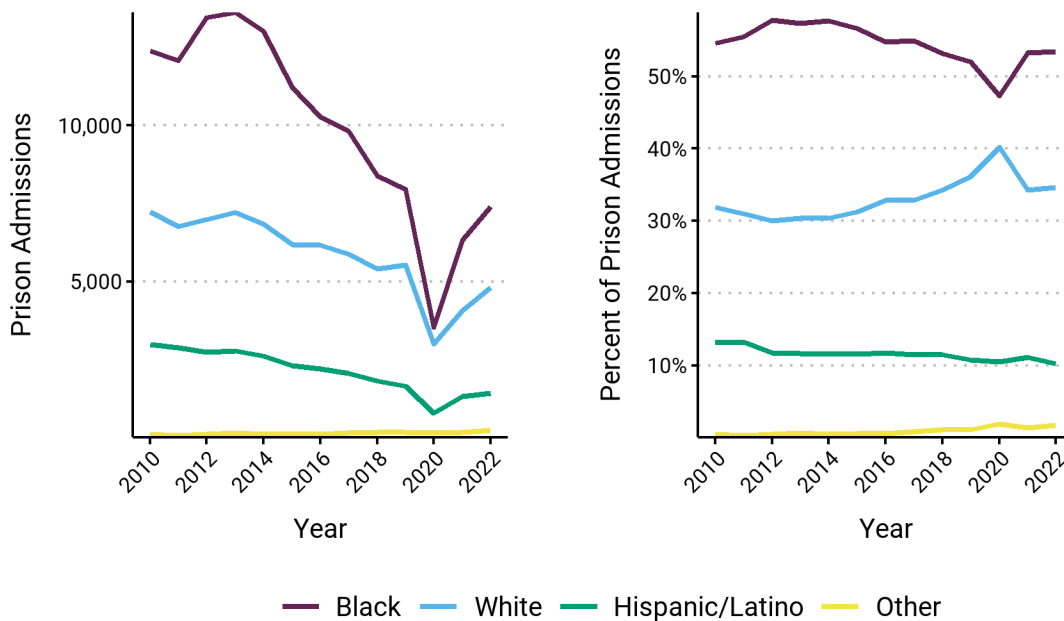
Figure 18: Admissions to Prison by Admission Type, 2010-2022



Prison Admissions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

New sentence admissions by sex remained stable from 2010 to 2022; men accounted for 91% of new sentence admissions, with little fluctuation from year to year. New sentence admissions by race/ethnicity (Figure 19) had some changes in trends during this period. Black admissions declined by 40%, white admissions declined by 34%, and Hispanic/Latino admissions declined by 52%. Black people were the most frequent admission, averaging 54% of new sentence admissions over the twelve-year period. White people generally accounted for 33% and Hispanic/Latino people accounted for 12% of new sentence admissions.

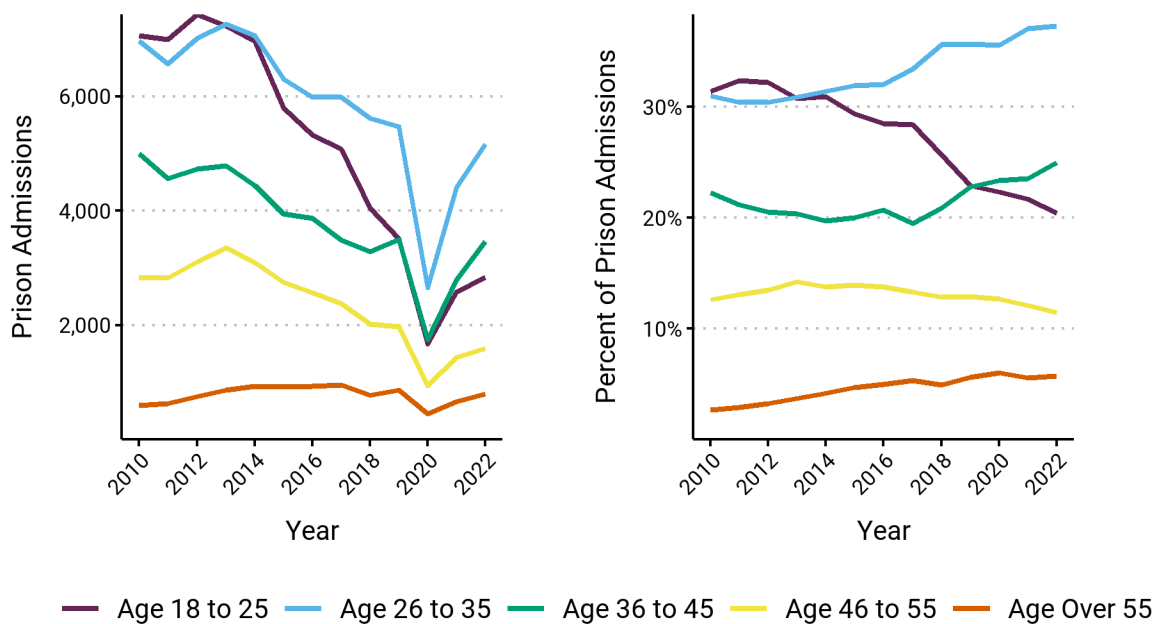
Figure 19: New Sentence Admissions to Prison by Race, 2010-2022



Prison Admissions by Age Group

Figure 20 shows new sentence admissions by age group from 2010 to 2022. Much like in arrests and guilty dispositions, there were large declines in the younger adults in prison admissions. People age 18-25 accounted for 31% of admissions in 2010 and 20% in 2022, decreasing 60% relatively. People age 26-35 increased from 31% of admissions in 2010 to 37% in 2022. However, new sentence admissions for people age 26-35 decreased by 26%. The only age group that saw an increase in the number of admissions was people over 55, from 601 to 799, a 33% increase from 2010 to 2022.

Figure 20: New Sentence Admissions to Prison by Age Group, 2010-2022

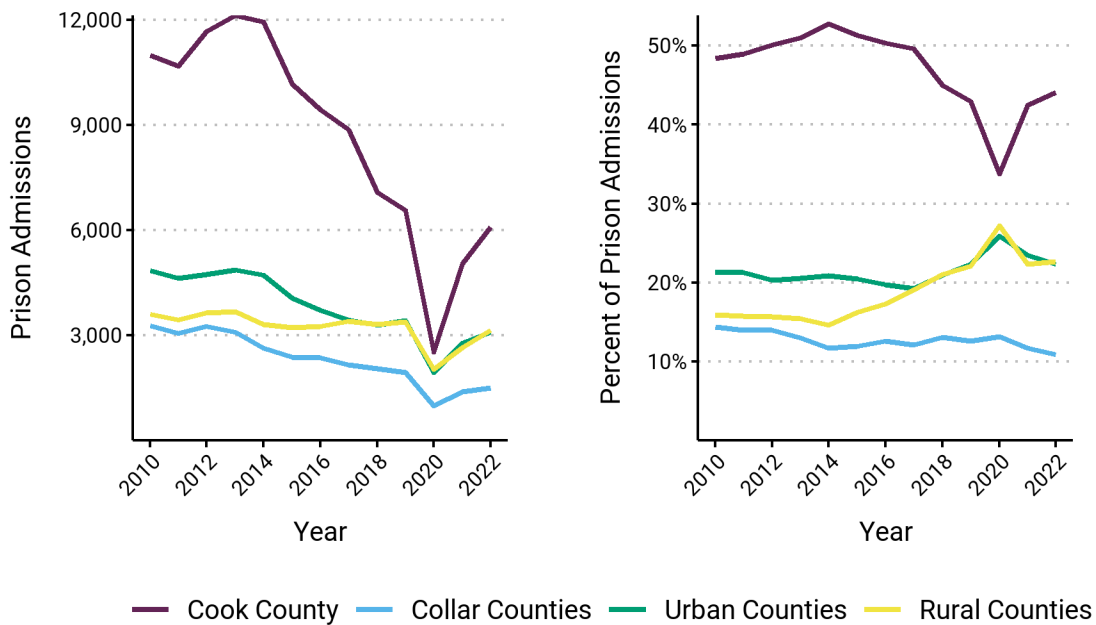


Prison Admissions by County Type

Figure 21 shows new sentence admissions to prison by county type (Cook, collar, urban, and rural). Although new sentence admissions declined in each of the four county types, there were large differences in the size of the decline. Cook County decreased by 44%, the collar counties decreased by 54%, urban counties decreased by 36%, and rural counties decreased by 13%.

Between 2010 and 2022, rural counties accounted for 19% of admissions but increased as a percentage of admissions from 16% in 2010 to 23% in 2022, consistently sending more admissions to prison than other urban counties besides Cook and the collar counties after 2016. Urban counties sent 21% of admissions and collar counties sent the fewest number of people to prison with 13% of admissions.

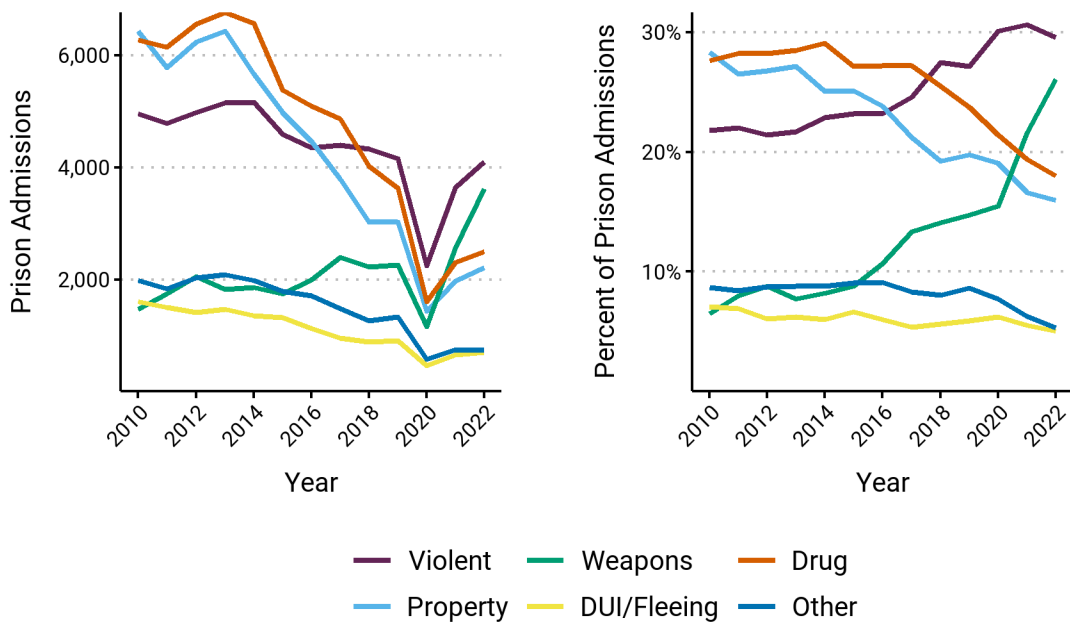
Figure 21: New Sentence Admissions to Prison by County Type, 2010-2022



Prison Admissions by Offense Category

Figure 22 shows new sentence admissions to prison by offense category from 2010 through 2022. The makeup of new sentence admissions' offense categories changed considerably over this time period. Admissions for drug and property offenses declined substantially from 2010 to 2022, by 60% and 66% respectively. Violent offense admissions declined the least, by 17%. Admissions for weapon offenses, the only offense category that increased from 2010 to 2022, increased from 1,470 to 3,617, a 146% increase.

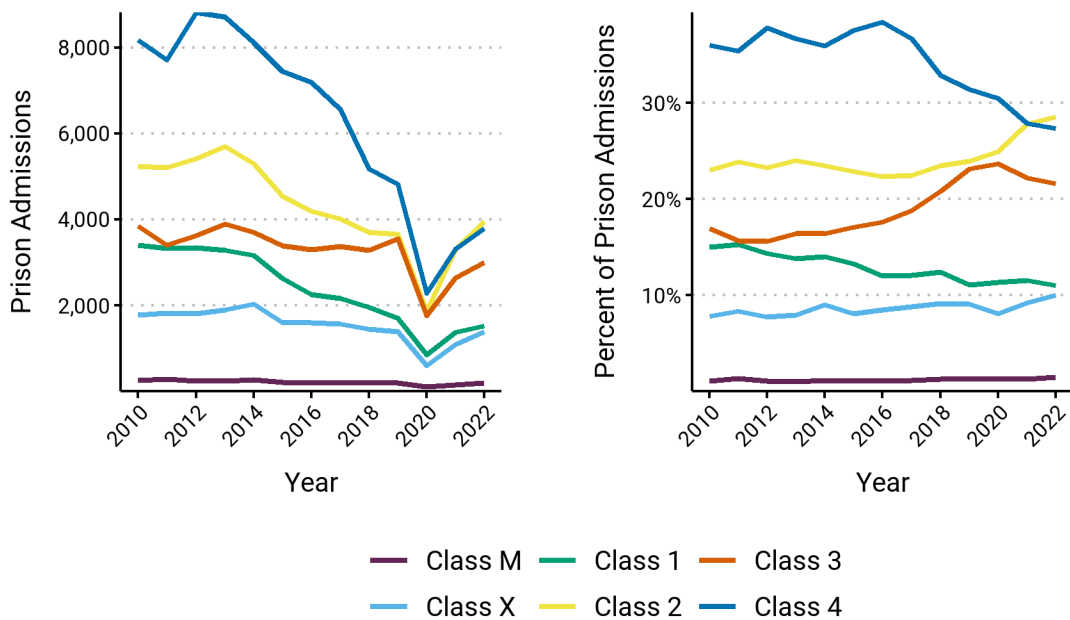
Figure 22: New Sentence Prison Admissions by Offense Category, 2010-2022



Prison Admissions by Offense Class

Figure 23 shows new sentence admissions by offense class, which all declined from 2010 to 2022. Class 4 admissions declined 54% in the count of admissions and fell from 36% of new sentence admissions to 27% of all new sentence admissions. In 2022, Class 2 surpassed Class 4 as the most common class for admissions. For further information about which types of offenses are most common within each offense class, SPAC regularly published prison charts showing this information during this time frame.²⁴

Figure 23: New Sentence Prison Admissions by Offense Class, 2010-2022

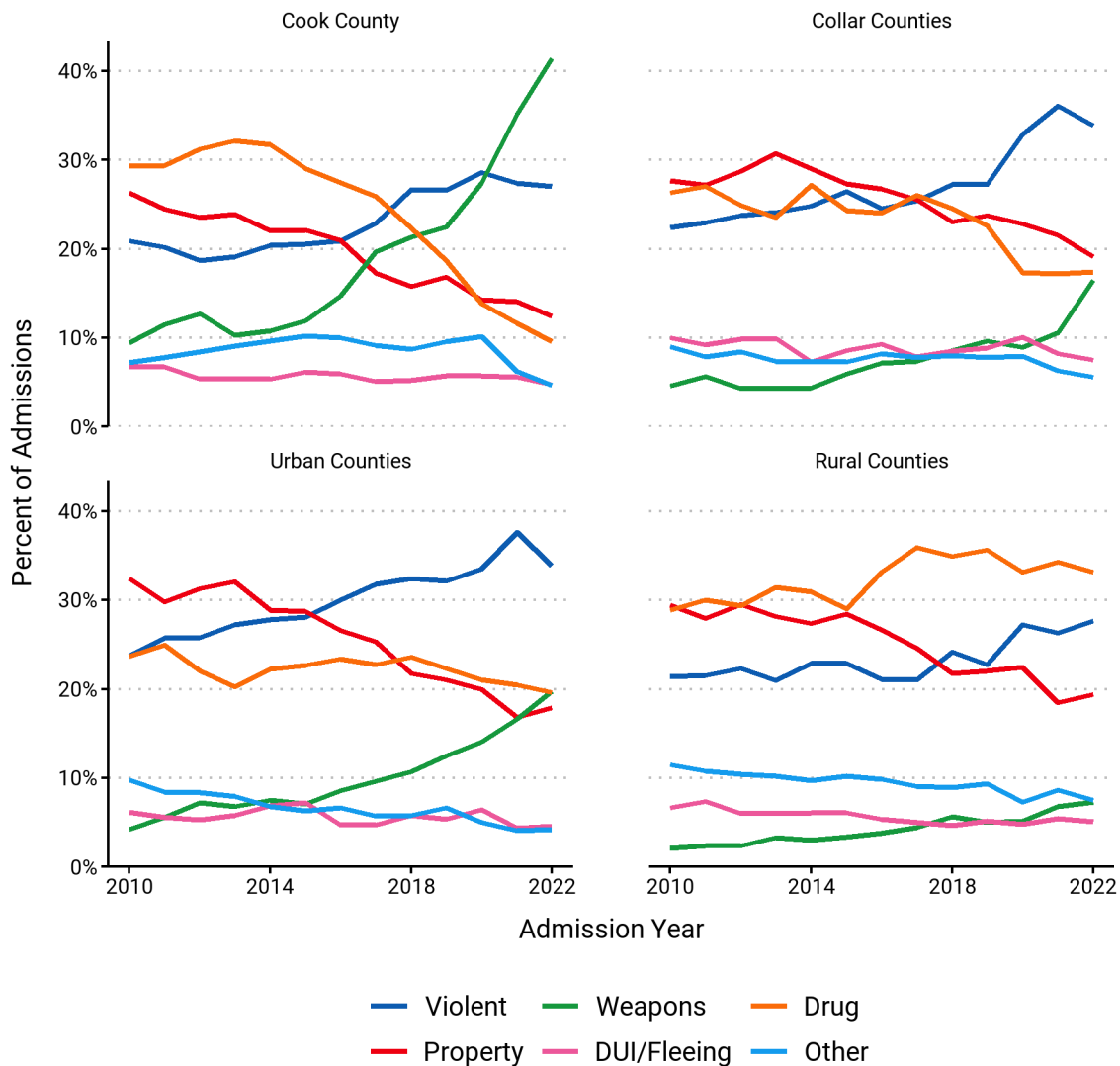


²⁴ See reports titled "Prison Pies" at <https://spac.illinois.gov/publications/research-reports> for more information.

Prison Admissions by Offense Category and County Type

Figure 24 shows new sentence admissions by offense category and county type. Proportionately, weapon offenses increased in all county types, but Cook County saw the largest increase in the percentage of people admitted for weapon offenses, followed by admissions from urban counties. People admitted for drug offenses substantially declined in Cook and the collar counties but remained mostly stable in urban counties. In rural counties, drug admissions in 2022 accounted for a slightly higher percentage than in 2010.

Figure 24: New Sentence Prison Admissions by Offense Category and County Type, 2010-2022



Prison Admissions and Sentence Length

Table 1 shows median sentence lengths by class for new sentence admissions from 2010 to 2022, excluding life sentences and consecutive sentences. Median sentence length by class mostly started and ended near the same length in 2010 and 2022, with some fluctuation from year to year. Other than first degree murder (Class M), which had the most variability and is the least common sentence, the median sentence for Class 1 offenses had the largest relative change, increasing by about one year.

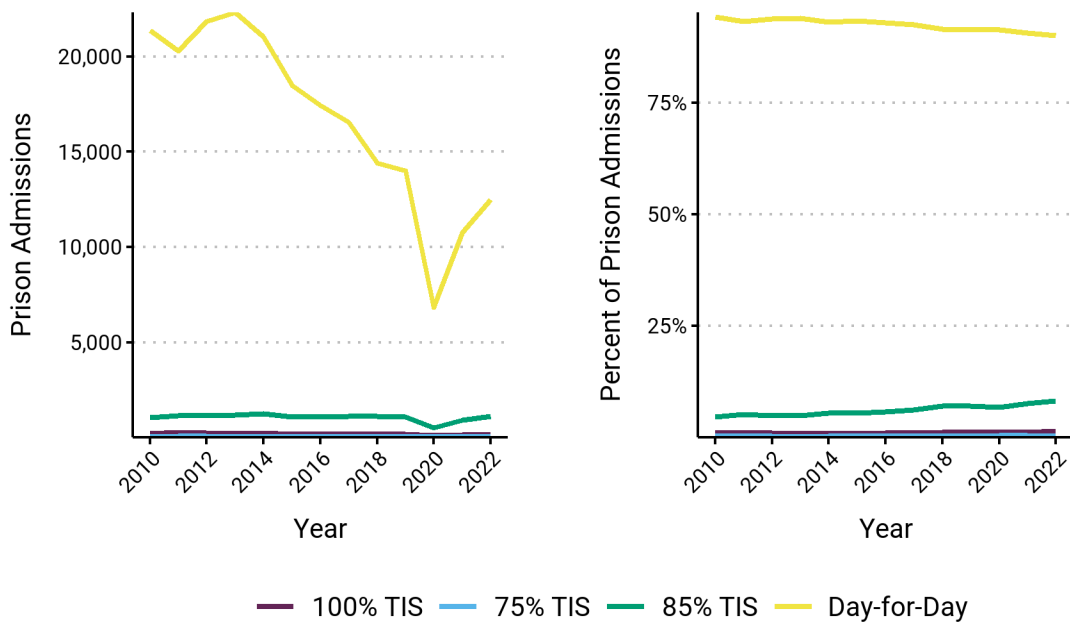
Table 1: Median Sentence Length (Years) by Class from 2010-2022

Admission Year	Offense Class					
	M	X	1	2	3	4
2010	32.0	9.0	5.0	4.0	2.5	1.5
2015	45.0	10.0	5.0	3.8	2.5	1.5
2020	35.0	10.0	6.0	4.0	2.5	1.5
2022	37.0	10.0	6.0	4.0	2.5	1.5

Prison Admissions and Truth-in-Sentencing

Figure 25 provides the percentage of admissions that are restricted from earning credits under truth-in-sentencing (TIS) laws and those that are allowed to earn day-for-day credits. The vast majority of new sentence admissions are day-for-day, which declined from about 22,700 admissions in 2010 to about 13,900 in 2022. Truth-in-sentencing admissions had a flatter trend, typically admitting between 1,300 to 1,400 people per year, and increased from about 6% to 10% of all new sentence admissions in 2010-2022.

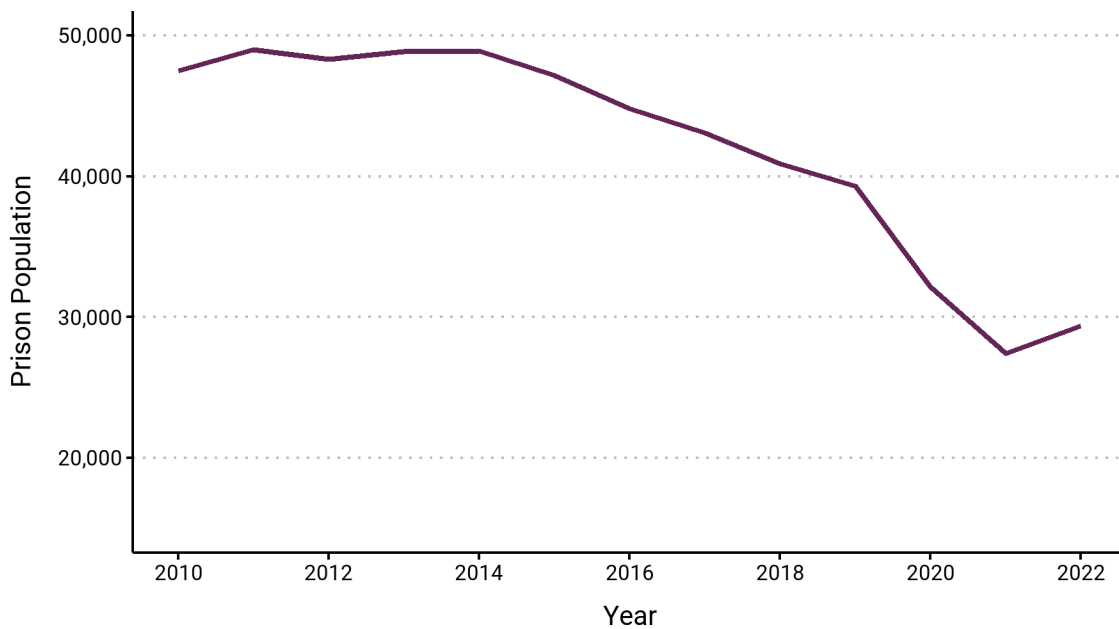
Figure 25: New Sentence Prison Admissions and Truth-in-Sentencing (TIS), 2010-2022



Prison Population

Figure 26 shows the prison population on June 30th each year from 2010 to 2022. The population peaked in 2011 with 48,978 people in the Department of Corrections, then declined relatively consistently until 2019. In 2020 and 2021, there was a rapid decline due to reduced admissions from the pandemic, when the population reached a low of about 27,400 people incarcerated in state correctional centers. The population grew to 29,366 in 2022, an overall 40% decrease from the peak in 2011.

Figure 26: Prison Population, 2010 to 2022

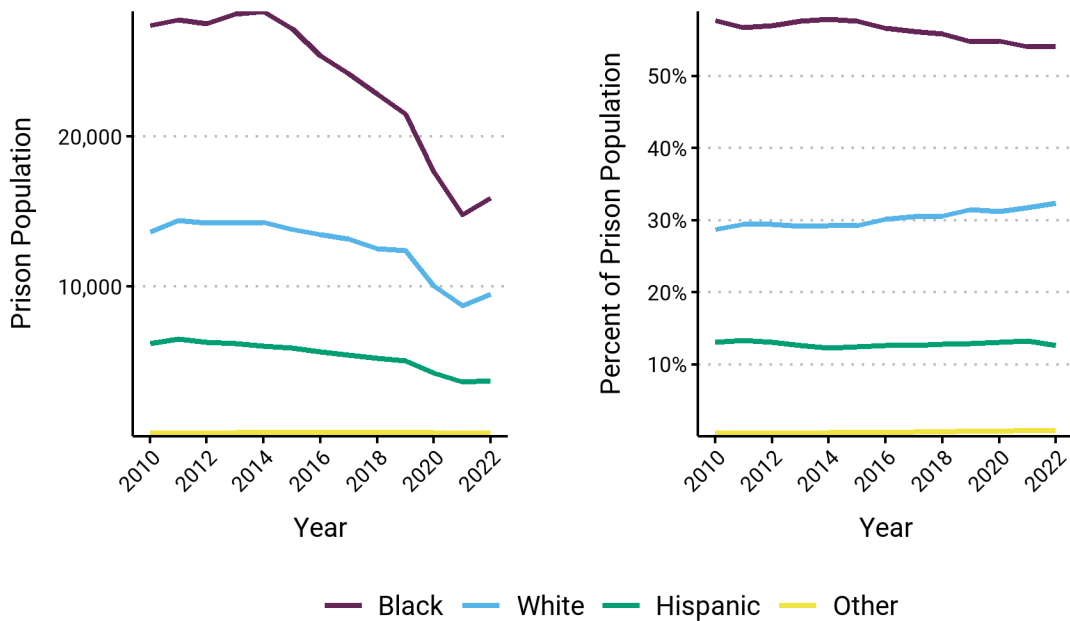


Prison Population by Race

Figure 27 shows the race/ethnicity breakdown of people in prison on June 30th of each year from 2010 to 2022. The population across all race/ethnicity groups declined from 2010 to 2022, with the largest decline in the Black population from about 27,400 to 15,900, a 42% decline. White and Hispanic/Latino populations declined by 30% and 40% respectively.

Although the population has declined considerably, the race/ethnicity composition of people in prison changed just slightly. Black people accounted for 56%, white people accounted for 30%, and Hispanic/Latino people averaged 13% of the population from 2011-2022. Most of the change was a decline in the Black proportion and a corresponding increase in the white proportion. Males generally accounted for 94% of the population over this time period.

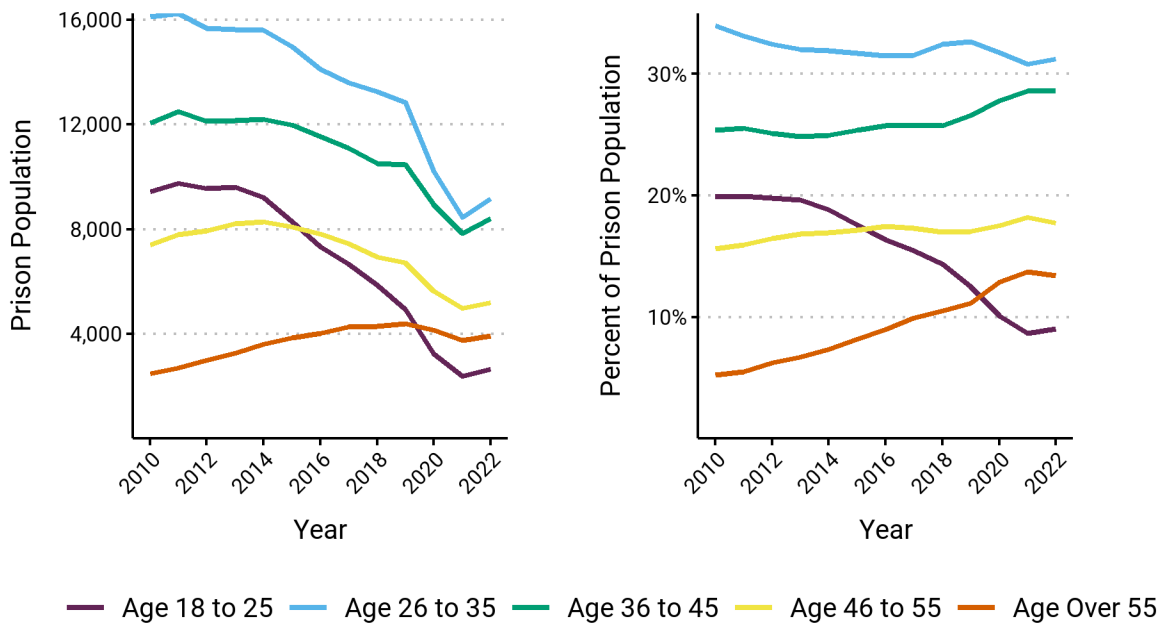
Figure 27: Prison Population by Race, 2010 to 2022



Prison Population by Age Group

Figure 28 provides the population by age group from 2010 to 2022. The population aged 18 to 25 declined by 72%, the largest of any age group. The population aged 26 to 35 also declined, by 43%. People over 55 were the only age group that increased in the number of people in prison from 2010-2022, from 2,476 to 3,931, a 59% increase.

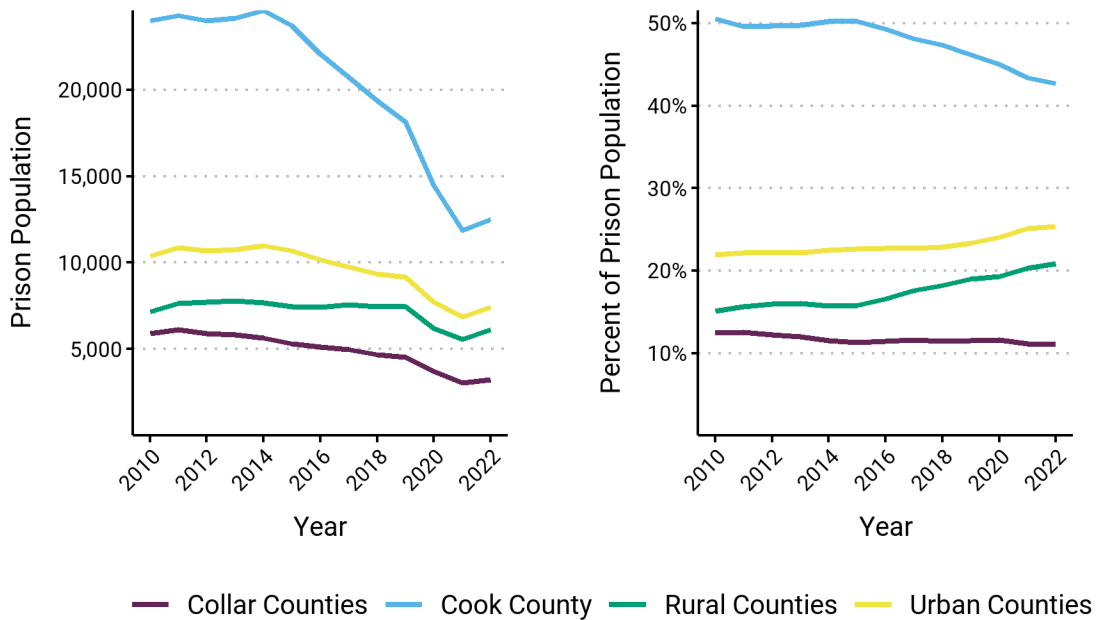
Figure 28: Prison Population by Age Group, 2010 to 2022



Prison Population by Committing County Type

Figure 29 shows how the makeup of the prison population by the type of committing county has changed. Cook County declined as a percentage of the population from 51% in 2010 to 43% in 2022. While the total number of people from rural counties declined, they increased as a proportion of the prison population, from 15% to 21%. Urban and collar counties slightly increased as a proportion of the population.

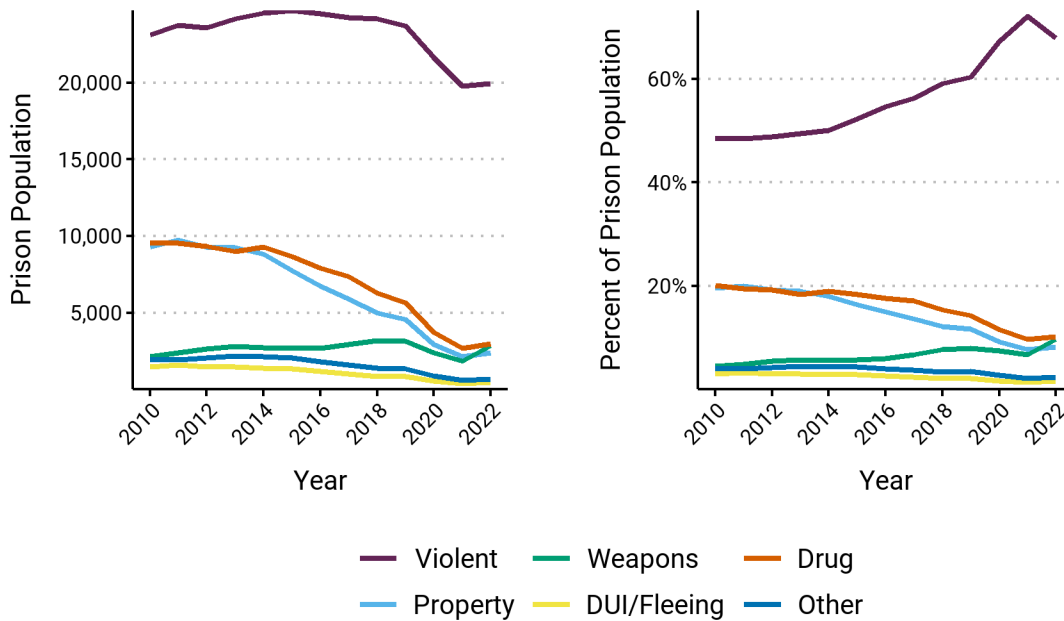
Figure 29: Prison Population by County Type, 2010 to 2022



Prison Population by Offense Category

Figure 30 shows the offense category of people in prison from 2010 to 2022. Person and violent sex offenses increased from 28% of the population to nearly 39%. Homicide offenses increased from 22% of the population to 30%. Drug offenses declined from 20% of the population to 10%, and property offenses declined from 20% to 8%.

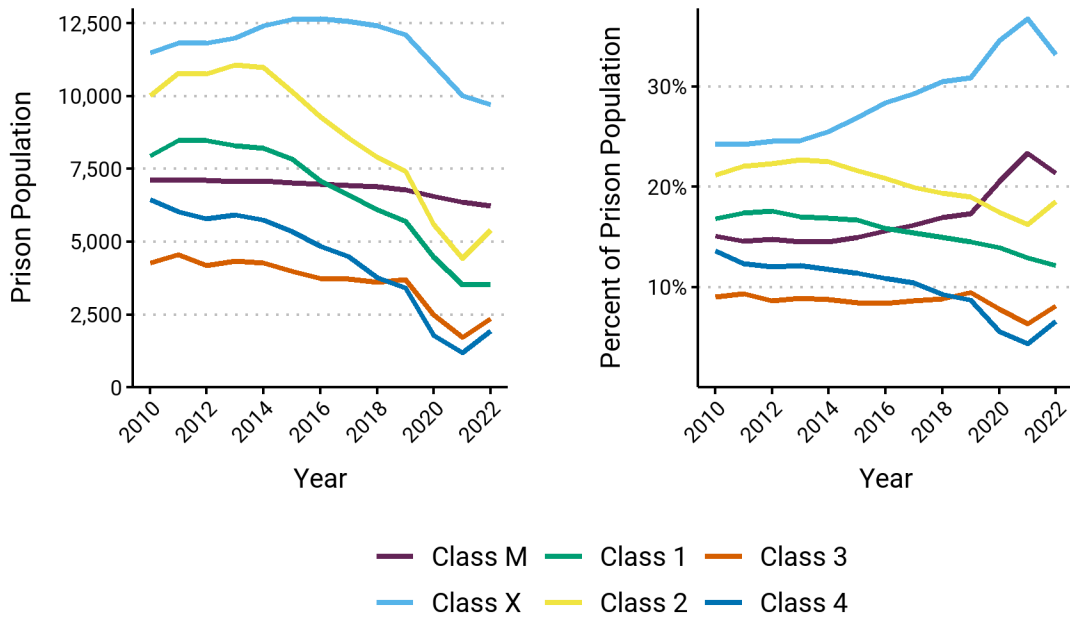
Figure 30: Prison Population by Offense Category, 2010 to 2022



Prison Population by Offense Class

Figure 31 provides the distribution of offense class from 2010 to 2022. During this time, the population declined for each offense class, but not equally. Over time, Class X and Class M (Murder) have accounted for a larger proportion of the population in recent years and were over 50% of the prison population in 2022. In 2018, Class 4 dropped below Class 3 making the Class 4 population the smallest proportion of offense classes in prison.

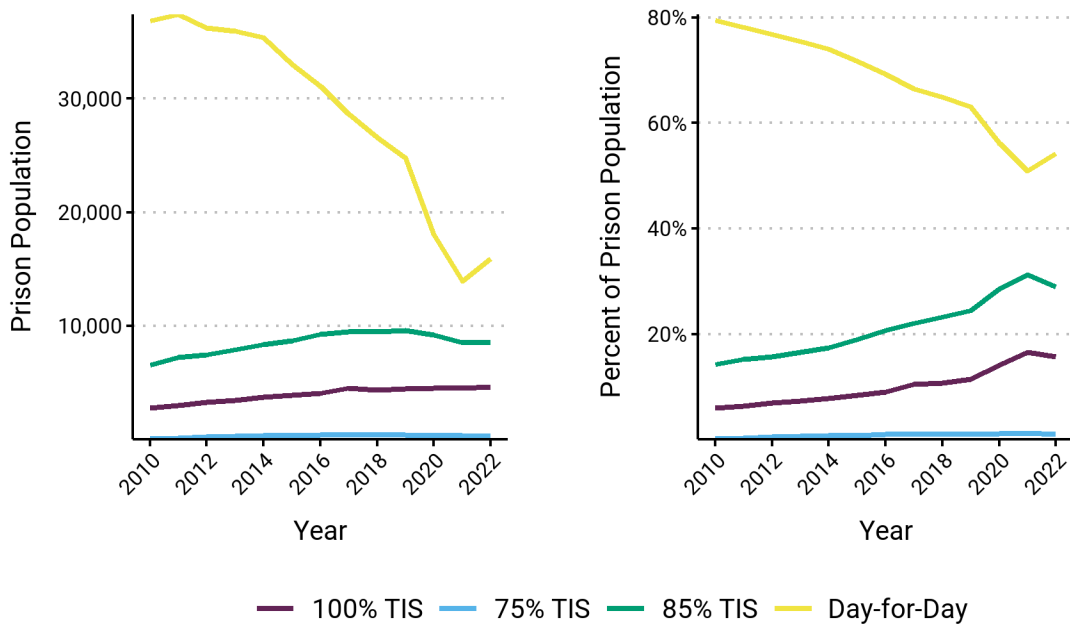
Figure 31: Prison Population by Class, 2010 to 2022



Prison Population and Truth-in-Sentencing

Figure 32 shows the prison population for truth-in-sentencing (TIS) and the day-for-day population from 2010 to 2022. Overall, the decline in the prison population was in the day-for-day population that is not subject to truth-in-sentencing. The day-for-day population declined from 78% of the population in 2010 to 52% of the population in 2022. People who must serve 85% TIS are the most common TIS offense group accounting for 30% of the population in 2022.

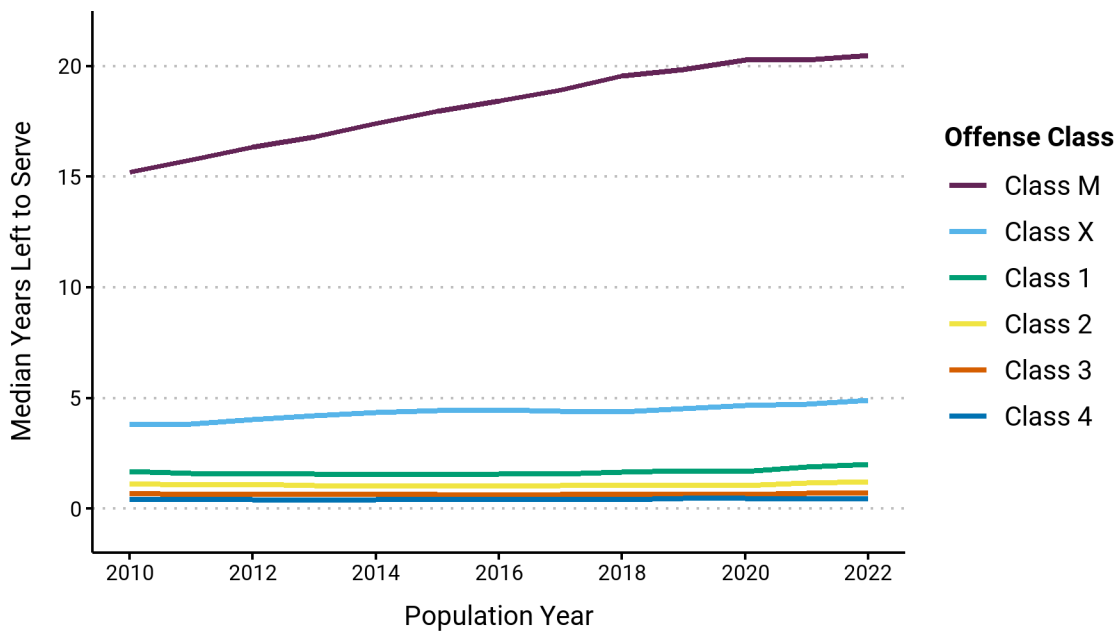
Figure 32: Prison Population by Truth-in-Sentencing (TIS), 2010 to 2022



Prison Population and Time Left to Serve

Figure 33 shows the median time left to serve by class for people in DOC on June 30th of each year, excluding technical violators and life sentences. Most classes remained stable over the time period examined, except for those with the most serious offense classes. Class X and Class M (Murder) both increased in the median amount of time remaining. The median time remaining for people admitted for Murder increased from 15 years in 2010 to 20 years in 2022, a 33% increase. The median time remaining for people admitted for a Class X offense increased from 4 years in 2010 to 5 years in 2022, a 25% increase.

Figure 33: Median Time (Years) Left to Serve, 2010 to 2022

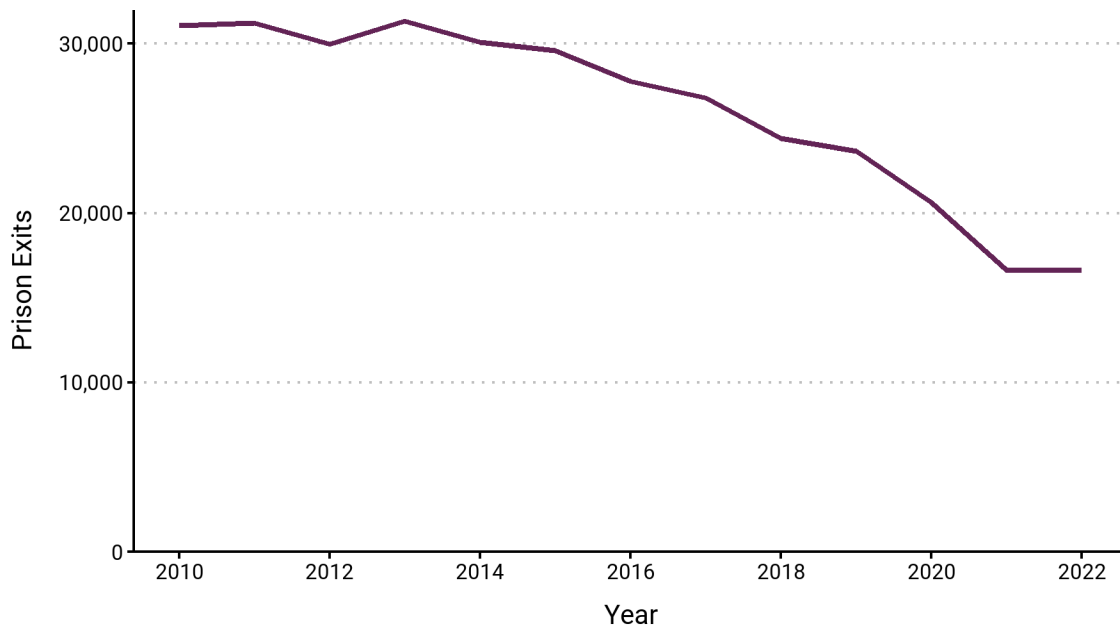


Prison Exits

Total Prison Exits

Exits from the Illinois Department of Corrections from 2010-2022 (Figure 34) showed a similar pattern as the admissions into prison. At the beginning of the time period, over 30,000 people exited from prison per year, including technical violators. Exits declined as admissions declined, falling by nearly 50% to 16,655 by 2022.

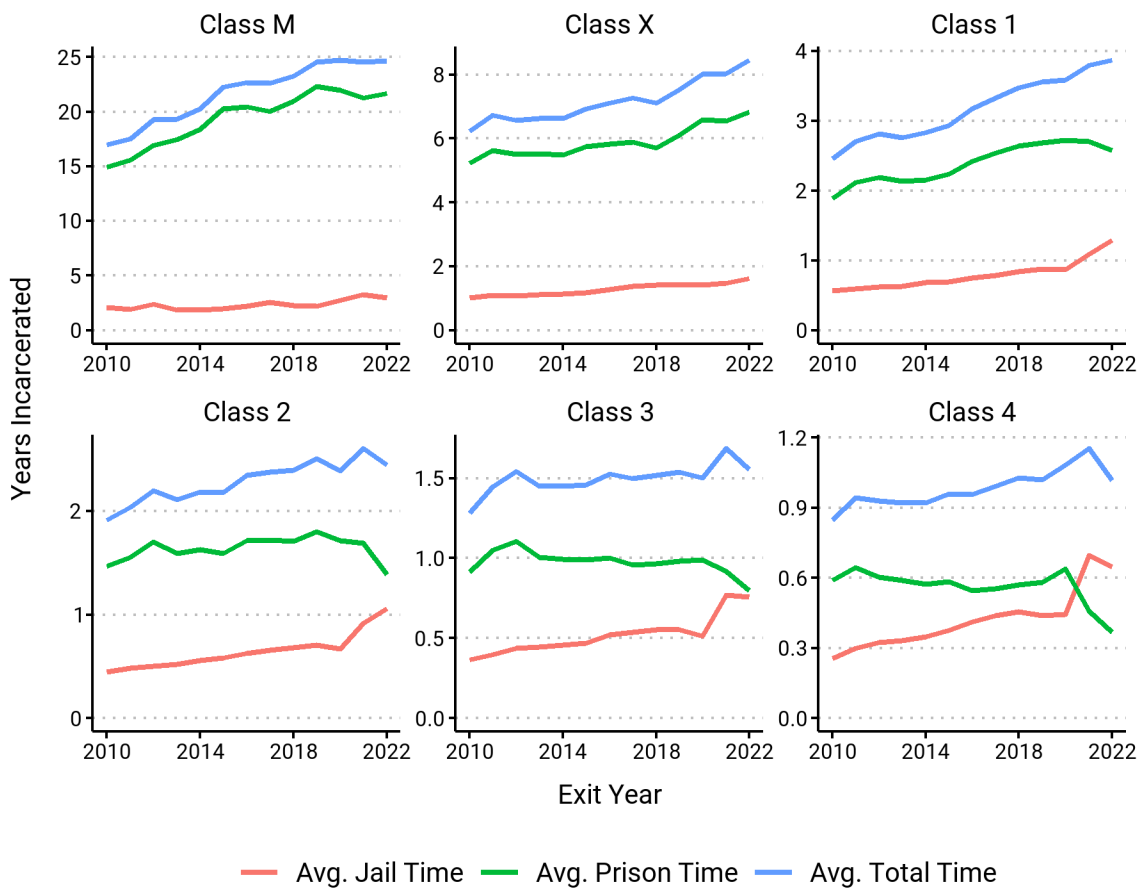
Figure 34: Exits from Prison, 2010 to 2022



Prison Exits Length of Stay

The amount of time a person spends in prison depends on their sentence length and eligibility for credits to apply to their sentence. Time spent in prison can be reduced by the number of days a person is credited for pretrial custody prior to conviction and admission into the Department of Corrections. Figure 35 shows the average total time incarcerated, with separate lines indicating the time spent in pretrial custody and in prison, categorized by class and year, excluding technical violators. Time served has generally been increasing from 2010-2022. However, the proportion of time served in prison versus pretrial custody was impacted by the pandemic, during which prison admissions were halted and people spent more time in jail or other forms of custody while awaiting admission into prison.

Figure 35: Length of Incarcerations for Exits from Prison by Offense Class, 2010 to 2022



Appendix

Data and Methodology

Data Sources

The data for this report are from SPAC analyses of administrative data covering 2010 through 2022 for adults, defined in this report as individuals age 18 or older, sourced from the following data sets and was combined and aggregated to provide a broad look at disposition and sentencing data from 2010 - 2022.

- Arrest data are from Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) database extracts. SPAC accessed a version of these housed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.
- Guilty disposition and sentence data are from a combination of CHRI database extracts, Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) Automated Disposition Reporting (ADR) data, and clerk data.
- Prison data are from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Planning and Research Unit data extracts provided to SPAC covering prison admissions, exits, and the population.

There are other sources of data that may not match the numbers provided in this report exactly due to data quality issues, differing definitions, and levels of aggregation. The guilty disposition data presented in this report is missing data and cases to an unknown extent, but SPAC chose to use the particular data sets mentioned previously as they are the most granular and allowed for detailed investigations of trends over time.

Offense-Related Categorization

An arrest and/or court case may involve multiple charges of different types and offense classes. To avoid counting a case with multiple charges more than once, SPAC categorized each arrest and guilty disposition based on the most severe charge in the case, prioritizing the offense class first and followed by an offense categorization created by SPAC for cases with multiple offenses of the same class. Readers may contact SPAC for more information regarding these offense categorizations.

A guilty disposition can have multiple sentences imposed, and most felony guilty dispositions will involve a probation or prison sentence. In cases where a disposition involved probation followed by a later prison sentence (likely the result of probation revocation), SPAC categorized them as probation sentences rather than prison sentences.

IDOC data are assigned a holding offense at reception and classification, which is the offense that has the longest expected time to serve in prison. SPAC used this holding offense to categorize each admission, exit, and population census entry to match the categorization used elsewhere in this

report. Unlike the sentence data previously mentioned using the other data sources, the admissions into prison may include probation revocation admissions.

Race/Ethnicity Categorization

Race/Ethnicity for prison data is self-reported at reception and classification when the person first enters prison. The source (self-reported or third-party) for race/ethnicity in arrests and disposition data are problematic in a few ways. First, Hispanic was not included as an option in the CHRI arrest and disposition data until 2015. Second, SPAC noticed numerous cases in the arrest and disposition data with people with Hispanic/Latino names often being assigned a white race. To remedy this, SPAC applied an algorithm that used existing data in the arrests, dispositions, and prison data in conjunction with census data to apply Bayesian Improved Surname Geocoding (BISG), implemented via the R package wru3.²⁵ The full methodology that SPAC uses is available upon request.

Urban/Rural County Categorization

Urban and rural categorization can differ depending on the year of the census and differing definitions. For consistency, SPAC used 2010 census data and categorized counties as rural if they were not part of a metropolitan statistical area or had a population of less than 60,000 people. This matches how the Illinois Department of Public Health categorizes counties.²⁶ Cook County and the collar Counties (Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, and Will) are portrayed separately.

²⁵ The wru3 package implements methods proposed in Imai, K. and Khanna, K. (2016). "Improving Ecological Inference by Predicting Individual Ethnicity from Voter Registration Record." *Political Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring), pp. 263-272. doi: 10.1093/pan/mpw001.

²⁶ See http://www.idph.state.il.us/RuralHealth/Rur_Urb_2021.pdf for a map of Illinois Counties categorized as urban vs. rural.