

Pennsylvania Prison Population Trends: People are Staying Longer

Updated 10/18/2026

Sentences Are Getting Longer.

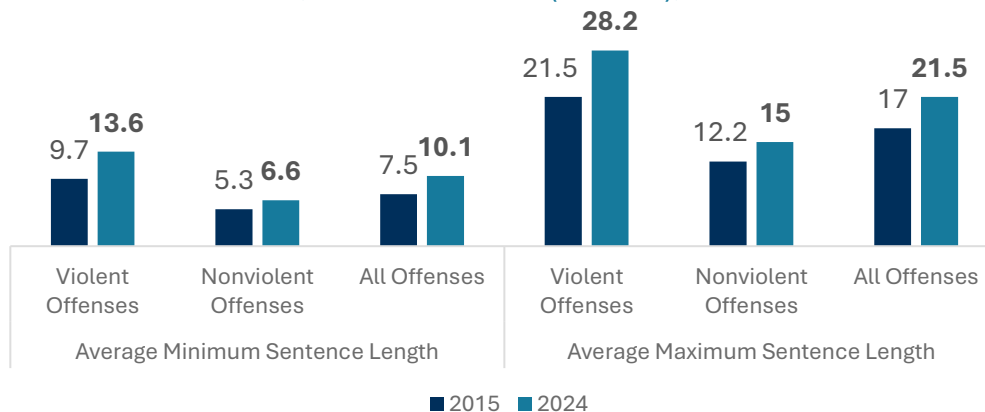
From 2015 to 2024, sentence lengths increased.

- The average **minimum** sentence increased by **35%**.
- The average **maximum** sentence increased by **26%**.

Sentence lengths increased for both violent and nonviolent offenses.

- Violent offenses¹ — average minimum up **40%**; average maximum up **31%**
- Nonviolent offenses² — average minimum up **25%**; average maximum up **23%**

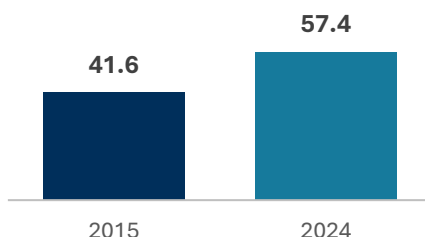
Average Minimum & Maximum Sentence Length for Violent, Nonviolent, and All Offenses (in Years), 2015 & 2024



People Are Incarcerated Longer.

Length of stay has increased over the decade.

Average time served increased by **38%** from 2015 to 2024.



▲ 38%
longer average time served since 2015
41.6 to 57.4 months
(about 3.5 years to 4.8 years)

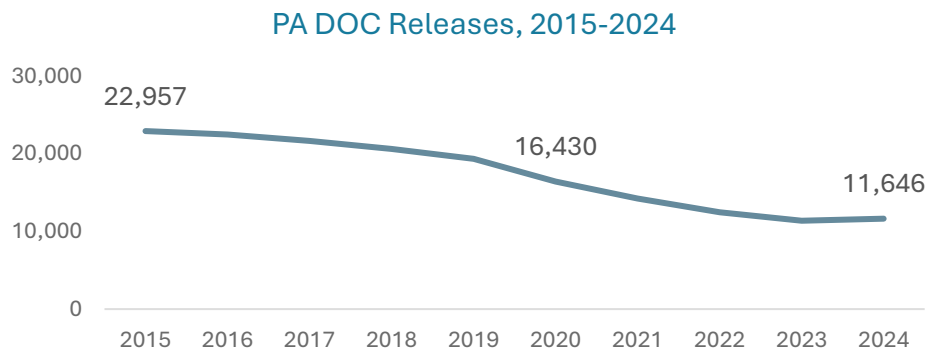
¹ Violent offenses include first, second, and third-degree murder; unspecified murder; voluntary and involuntary manslaughter; aggravated assault; arson; burglary; forcible rape; homicide by vehicle; robbery; and theft/larceny.

² Nonviolent offenses include DUI, forgery, fraud, kidnapping, narcotic drug laws, other assaults, other sex offenses, prison breach, receiving stolen property, statutory rape, weapons, and other non-violent offenses.

Fewer People Are Getting Out.

Pennsylvania DOC releases decreased over time.

- From 2015 to 2024, releases decreased by **49%**.
- From 2020 to 2024, releases decreased by **29%**.



Sources:

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the US Reports (2016-2025).

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Bureau of Planning, Research and Statistics. *Annual Statistical Reports, 2015-2024*.

Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.