

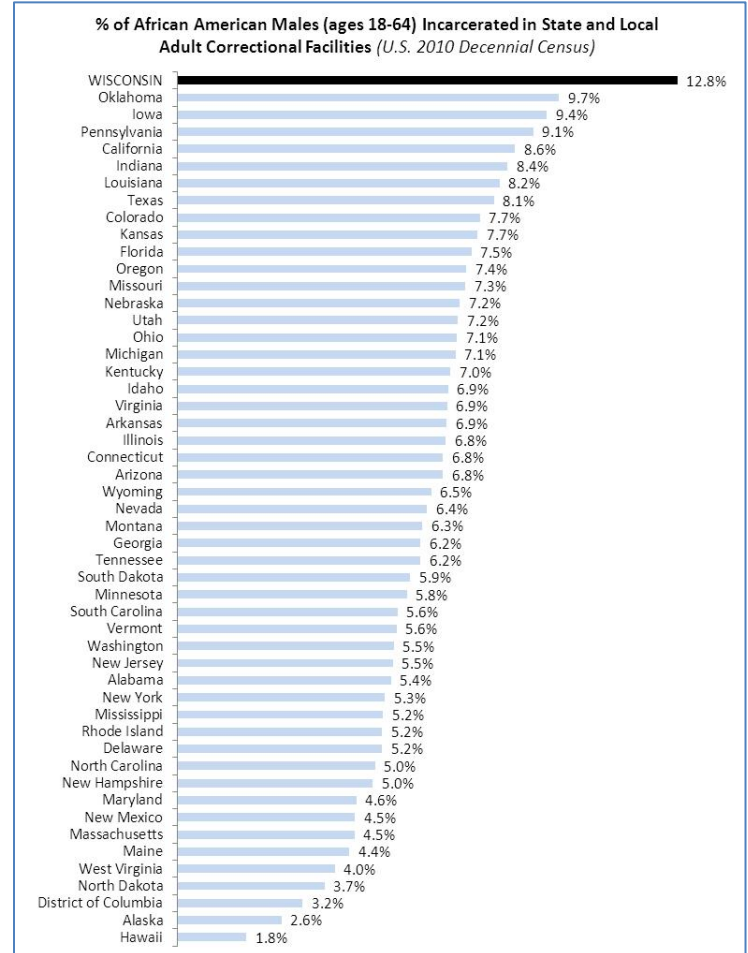
Wisconsin has highest black male incarceration rate in U.S. Half of African American men in their 30s in Milwaukee County have been in state prison.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute released a new study on **Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males: Workforce Challenges for 2013**, posted at <http://www4.uwm.edu/eti/2013/BlackImprisonment.pdf>.

The report uses two decades of state Department of Corrections and Department of Transportation files to assess employment and training barriers facing African American men with a history of DOC offenses and DOT driving violations.

The prison population in Wisconsin has more than tripled since 1990, fueled by increased government funding for drug enforcement (rather than treatment) and prison construction, three-strikes rules, mandatory minimum sentence laws, truth-in-sentencing replacing judicial discretion in setting punishments, concentrated policing in minority communities, and state incarceration for minor probation and supervision violations. Particularly impacted were African American males.

Notably, 26,222 African American men from Milwaukee County have been or are currently incarcerated in state correctional facilities (including a third with only non-violent offenses), and another 27,874 men (non-offenders) have driver's license violations (many for failure to pay fines and civil forfeitures) preventing them from legally driving.



John Pawasarat, director of the Institute and co-author of the study, noted, “These levels of incarceration have devastating impacts on Milwaukee children and families and represent a huge loss of labor force talent for the community. Without effective workforce, driver’s license and education supports we could lose half a generation of young black men.” Among the findings:

- Wisconsin has the highest incarceration rate for African American men in the nation, with 12.8% (or 1 in 8) of black men in state prison and local jails at the time of the 2010 decennial census, nearly double the national average of 6.7% (or 1 in 15 black men). Wisconsin’s incarceration rate for white men (1.2%, or 1 in 81) is ten times less and near the national average.
- By 2012 over half of African American men in their 30s in Milwaukee County had been or were currently in state prison.
- From 1990 to 2012 the African American men from the county were imprisoned for over 42.6 million days (or almost 117,000 years) at a cost in 2012 prices of \$91/day totaling \$3.38 billion. In 2012 the state was spending over \$1/2 million a day to incarcerate African American men from Milwaukee County.

The research is expected to contribute to discussions regarding alternatives to incarceration and levels of support for workforce initiatives and driver's licensing programs focused on incarcerated and released African American ex-offenders and on non-offending teens and adults in heavily impacted neighborhoods. For more information, see the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute website at www.eti.uwm.edu.