

For decades, Black and Brown communities have been [disproportionately represented](#) in New York City jails. A [recent study](#) found that **27%** of Black and **16%** of Hispanic men in New York City, compared to **3%** of white men, were jailed by the age of 38. Illustrating how mass incarceration can perpetuate racial inequity more broadly, incarceration produces an estimated [52% lifetime reduction](#) in annual earnings.

With support from Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies and data from the New York City Department of Correction, this research involves a deep dive into racial and ethnic disparities in New York City's use of jail from 2016 to 2021.

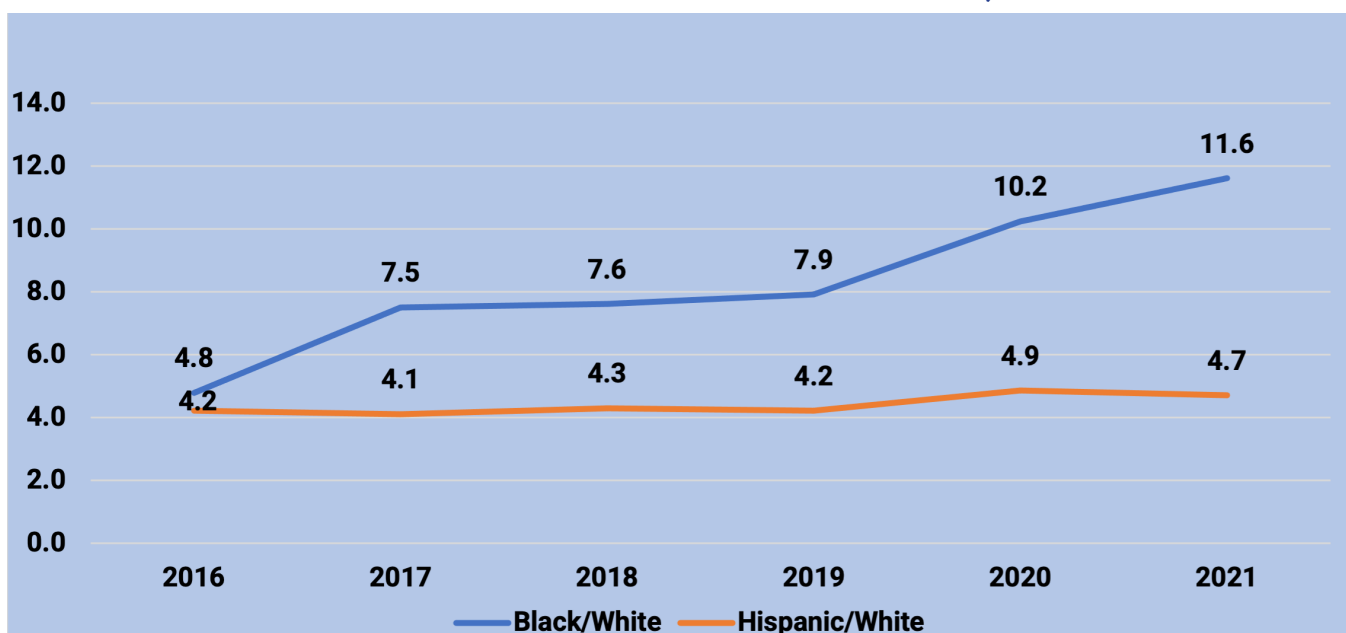
Overall Racial and Ethnic Disparities in NYC Jail Admissions

In 2021, Black (57%) and Hispanic (30%) people made up almost **90%** of New York City's more than **16,000** jail admissions. Relative to their numbers in the City's general population, the 2021 jail admission rate per 100,000 people was **11.6** times higher for Black than white people and **4.7** times higher for Hispanic than white people.

From 2016 to 2021, all racial/ethnic groups saw reductions in their jail admission numbers. Yet Black people's relative share of admissions increased by **4** percentage points (53% to 57%), while white people's share declined by **2** points and Hispanic people's share declined by **3** points.

Upshot: The jail incarceration rate was 4.8 times higher for Black than white people in 2016, before growing to 11.6 times higher by 2021.

RATE RATIOS FOR JAIL ADMISSIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2016-2021



Note: Numbers represent how many times greater are rates of Black versus white jail admissions and Hispanic versus white jail admissions, respectively, per 100,000 people.

Racial Disparities in the Five Boroughs

From 2016 to 2021, all five boroughs saw an increase in racial disparities adversely impacting Black people. Nowhere was the disparate incarceration of Black New Yorkers more glaring than in Manhattan, where Black people were jailed at a rate **23.0** times that of white people in 2016, growing to **29.5** times in 2021. By comparison, 2021 Black-to-white incarceration ratios were **14.9** in Staten Island, **11.6** in Brooklyn, **8.9** in the Bronx, and **8.4** in Queens. Manhattan also saw the largest gap in Hispanic-to-white incarceration (**9.4** times higher in 2021).

Racial Disparities by Reason for Incarceration

Black people were especially overrepresented among people jailed on parole violations. In 2021, Black people represented **61%** admitted to NYC jails on a parole violation stemming from a new arrest and **60%** admitted on a technical violation. (Insofar as the 2021 Less is More Act leads to less parole detention, it may drive future reductions in racial disparities.) By comparison, Black people represented **58%** jailed on an inability to pay bail before trial; **55%** jailed on a remand order before trial, and **53%** jailed on a sentence of less than a year. Conversely, white people represented **10%** jailed on a sentence and **6-7%** jailed pretrial or on a parole violation.

Among people jailed before trial from July 2020 through December 2021, those eligible for bail and detention under New York's original bail reforms were **60%** Black and **27%** Hispanic. On the other hand, those made eligible for bail and detention by amendments that went into effect July 2020 were **42%** Black and **43%** Hispanic, indicating that the amendments tended to negatively impact cases involving Hispanic New Yorkers. (Overall, the 2020 bail amendments accounted for **10%** of all pretrial jail admissions from July 2020 through December 2021).

Racial Disparities and Mental Illness

From 2016 to 2021, people discharged from NYC jails who needed mental health services while incarcerated rose from **24%** to **30%**. This signifies that the jails are increasingly housing people suffering from mental illness. However, the data did not point to a significantly different racial composition between those did and did not require in-jail mental health services.

The Intersection of Racial, Ethnic, and Neighborhood Disparities

Geographic Concentration of Jail Incarceration. Residents in just **23%** of New York City's 178 zip codes accounted for **60%** of the City's 2021 jail admissions. In turn, in **90%** of these 40 total zip codes with the most admissions, Black or Hispanic people made up a larger share of the general population than any other racial/ethnic group.

Disproportionate Incarceration of Black People *Within* Neighborhoods. Not only is jail incarceration concentrated in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods, but Black people are also especially vulnerable to incarceration within each neighborhood. In **92%** of all NYC zip codes, Black people made up a higher percentage of 2021 jail admissions than people who live in the given zip code. Of the 40 zip codes with the most overall jail admissions, Black people were overrepresented in 39, relative to their share of the general population. Some of the most staggering disparities were found in Manhattan neighborhoods. For example, in zip code 10025 on the Upper West Side (the only majority white neighborhood among the top 40 zip codes for jail admissions), Black people made up **69%** of 2021 jail admissions, despite only comprising **9%** of the population, whereas white people made up just **2%** of admissions, despite comprising **51%** of the population.

The data points to dual pernicious patterns of disparate incarceration in certain neighborhoods and disparate incarceration of Black people wherever they live.

Accompanying this report is a set of maps (available [here](#)) offering visual illustrations of racial and neighborhood disparities in NYC jail admissions.

Conclusion

Jail incarceration largely reflects decisions made by courts and prosecutors to set bail or detain people before trial or to sentence people to under a year in jail after a conviction. In addition, a small fraction of people sent to NYC jails are held on violations filed by parole officers. There are also obvious connections between jail incarceration and the residential segregation, concentrated poverty, and underlying underinvestment that pervades many of the predominantly Black and Brown communities most impacted by incarceration. If the full array of implicated institutions can own responsibility, a step that is expressly mandated through recent voter-approved changes put forth by the City's [Racial Justice Commission](#), policy reforms may be possible that advance racial equity while serving all New Yorkers' aspirations for a just City.