

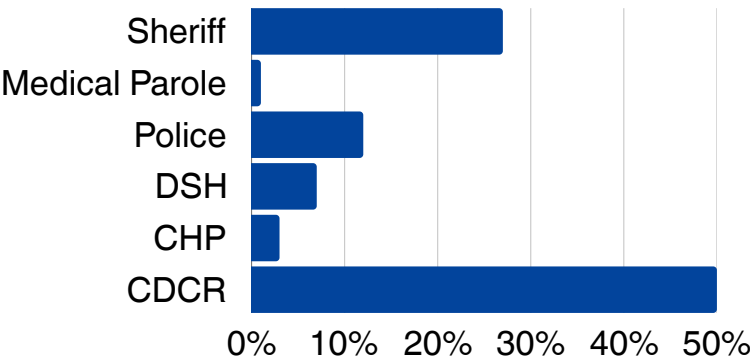
In-Custody Deaths 2014-2024

Between 2014 and 2024, **8,344 deaths** in law enforcement custody were reported to the California Department of Justice pursuant to the Federal Death in Custody Reporting Acts (DCRAs) of 2000 and 2013.

What Deaths Must be Reported? The death of any person who is either detained; under arrest; in the process of being arrested; en route to be incarcerated; or is incarcerated at a municipal or county jail, state prison, state-run boot camp prison, boot camp prison that is contracted out by the state, any state or local contract facility, or other local or state correctional facility (including any juvenile facility).

In Whose Custody Did They Die?

Custodial Responsibility at Time of Death



A small portion of deaths (n=24) were attributed to other state and local agencies.

Facilities/agencies that reported the most deaths

1. California Medical Facility
2. California Health Care Facility
3. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
4. RJ Donovan Correctional Facility
5. California Highway Patrol
6. Riverside County Sheriff's Department
7. San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department
8. California Institution for Men
9. Los Angeles Police Department
10. San Diego County Sheriff's Department

The top 3 of facilities/agencies comprise an entire quarter (25%) of the reported deaths in this period. In total, these 10 facilities/agencies represent 3,900 (45%) deaths in custody. The top 2 facilities are focused on serving incarcerated people who have severe and long term needs medical and mental health needs

Custody Status at Time of Death

Custody Status	All Deaths	In Police Custody	In Sheriff's Custody
Process of Arrest	20%	88%	22%
Awaiting Booking	1%	2%	3%
Booked – No Charges Filed	2%	2%	5%
Booked – Awaiting Trial	15%	2%	55%
Sentenced	58%	0%	13%
Other	4%	6%	2%

Given the vast scale of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the data reflects a large portion of deaths occurring after sentencing as do other solely post-sentencing agencies.

To better understand the impact of in-custody deaths throughout the criminal legal process, a review of data from different agencies is critical.

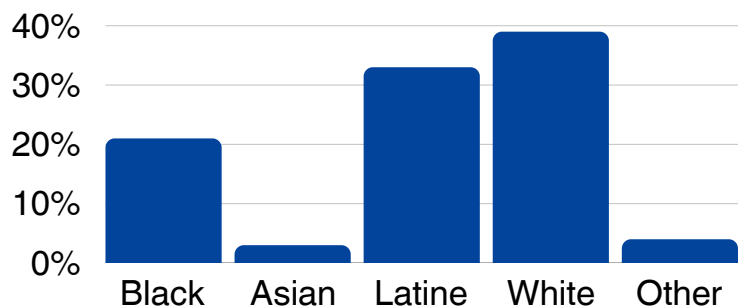
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When looking solely at local law enforcement deaths, the vast majority are dying pretrial, when they are legally presumed innocent.

Unfortunately, the category of “Other” which includes deaths that occur “In Transit” or “Out to Court” is vague and it is uncertain to what extent these individuals have been sentenced or not. Furthermore, of the deaths where the custody status was categorized as “Other” 49 were “unknown or medical assist” and died at the crime/arrest scene. These were not people who were convicted, let alone charged with an offense.

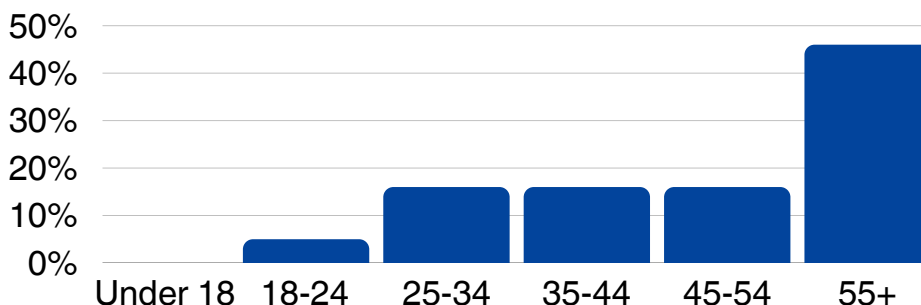
Of those that died in custody...

Though only 6% of the state’s population identify as Black (2,237,044 as of the 2020 census), **21% of those that die in custody are Black**; this is 3.5 times the state demographic average. Additionally, the data displayed does not accurately reflect people who identify with multiple races/ethnicities because it is not collected to do so, and research shows that Latine people are routinely misidentified ethnically and racially, likely skewing the results.



95% of those that die in custody are male.

The only options provided for gender are “Male” and “Female”. While it may be true that those who died in custody only identified as either male or female, we know that queer, gender non-conforming, and trans individuals face higher rates of violence while incarcerated. It is therefore likely that some information regarding gender is not accurately documented.



The age distribution of those that die in custody varies greatly depending on the entity reporting those deaths.

39 of those that died in custody were minors.

People detained in the state prison system and state hospital system are dying at an older age (55+) than those dying in local law enforcement custody or that are pre-sentenced: **53% of those in CDCR custody and 87% of those in the custody of the Department of State Hospitals are dying at age 55 and older** whereas for local police and California Highway Patrol this drops to less than 10% of those dying in custody. It is slightly higher for Sheriff’s Departments (26%); this could be attributable to conditions in jails or poor access to care for older adults that may also have diagnosed health conditions.

About Us

The No More Deaths in Custody Workgroup, a project of the Justice2Jobs Coalition, is a statewide convening of impacted families, advocates, and academic researchers.

For further information, please reach out to us at justice2jobsadvocacy@gmail.com.

