



new hampshire

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION



**NEW HAMPSHIRE'S INCARCERATED WOMEN:
2018 SNAPSHOT**



Officials Break Ground at the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women in August 2014; Photo Courtesy of New Hampshire Public Radio

MISSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in opportunity and equality for women and girls through grantmaking, research, education, and advocacy. We believe in social, political, and economic equality for New Hampshire women and girls.

Greg Bird of the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies and Allyson Ryder conducted the research and analysis for this report and provided essential support throughout its development. Andrea Cairns created the design and layout. We thank the New Hampshire Department of Corrections and the superintendents of the county correctional systems for making data and information available. This report was underwritten through the generous support of Martha Fuller Clark and the Hesed Foundation.

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Cover Photo: Woman at Sullivan County House of Corrections; Photo Courtesy of Signe Taylor

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women (NHCSW) published *Double Jeopardy*, a report detailing the lack of gender-responsive programming for incarcerated women in the Granite State. In 2008, the New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute (NHWPI) published *Women Behind Bars*, a comprehensive analysis of challenges in women's corrections. Through a series of mergers beginning in 2012, NHCSW, NHWPI, the New Hampshire Women's Lobby, the New Hampshire Women's Alliance, and the Women's Fund of New Hampshire formed the New Hampshire Women's Foundation. With a long track record of research on women's corrections among our merging partners, the New Hampshire Women's Foundation is proud to take up the mantle of this important work.

New Hampshire has been incarcerating women since 1813, when Abigail Sweatt was sentenced to one year in prison for stealing. Since then, the State's correctional system has struggled to provide women with the facilities and services available to men. For nearly half of the 20th century, women were primarily sent away to county jails and out-of-state prisons. After years of class action litigation, a 1989 court order required the State to provide women with a facility and services comparable to what was available at the New Hampshire State Prison for Men. The state did not break ground on the new women's facility in Concord until 2014, instead housing women in a temporary facility in Goffstown ("temporary" - for 29 years and counting). In 2018, women are still waiting for the new facility to open. The long pattern of gender discrimination in corrections means that generations of incarcerated women have faced enormous obstacles to rehabilitation and reentry. Out-of-state placements made visiting with children and other family members difficult or impossible. The limitations of the temporary Goffstown facility, including overcrowding and lack of programming space, shortchanged education, vocational training, work, and recreational opportunities. Lack of services complicated women's ability to plan for rejoining the community. Meanwhile men have been provided a considerably more robust array of educational and vocational services, such as preparation for higher-paying jobs.

The brand-new New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women is on track to open in 2018 on the back of a capital investment of around \$50 million. Chronic underfunding and understaffing mean the new women's facility may open with insufficient staff to provide women with crucial services. This would be a missed opportunity to resolve the long-term disparities between men's and women's corrections. New Hampshire's history of gender discrimination in corrections demands our continued attention, lest we risk failing another generation of women. The New Hampshire Women's Foundation is pleased to promote awareness of data about women's corrections through the release of this 2018 Snapshot.¹



Tanna Clews
CEO



Sarah Mattson Dustin
Director of Policy

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DATA

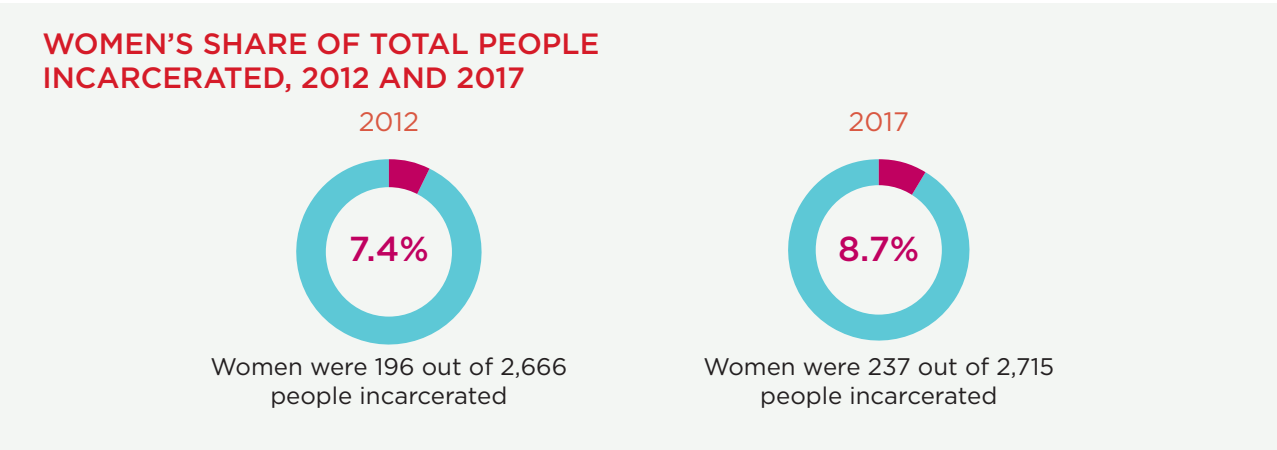
How Many Incarcerated?

Men and women sentenced to more than one year of incarceration based on felony convictions are supervised by the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) and confined in NHDOC facilities.

NHDOC currently incarcerates 237 women and 2,478 men.² This wide gender gap is consistent with national trends. Approximately 6.8 percent of people in federal prison are women.³ Approximately 7.4 percent of people in state prisons across the United States are women.⁴



Although there are far fewer women subject to NHDOC supervision than men, women’s incarceration is growing steadily. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of women incarcerated by NHDOC increased by 21 percent. During the same time period, the number of men increased by less than 1 percent.



Why?

Some women subject to NHDOC supervision are serving prison sentences based on multiple offenses, therefore the 237 women were convicted of a total of 431 offenses. The most common offense among women subject to NHDOC supervision is theft. For the remaining offenses for which there are at least 10 convictions among the 237 women, most are drug offenses. Considered together as a single category, drug offenses outpace other categories by far.

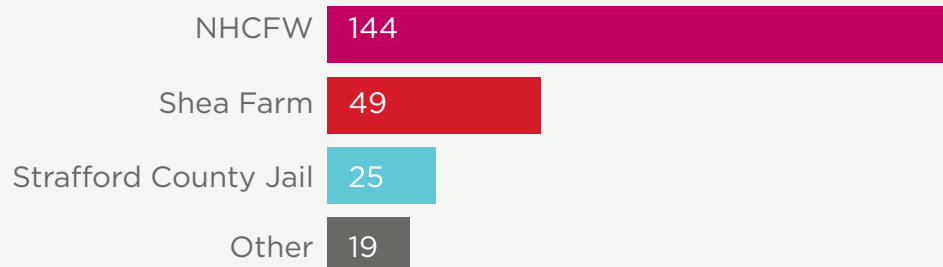
MOST COMMON OFFENSES, 2017

Various Drug Offenses	74
Theft by Unauthorized Taking (\$1,001.00-\$1,500.00)	49
Forgery of a Government Instrument or Check	21
Second Degree Murder	20
Burglary	17
Theft by Deception	15
Operating After Certification as a Habitual Offender	13
Receiving Stolen Property	12

Where?

Of the 237 women supervised by NHDOC, the majority are confined at the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women (NHCFW) on Mast Road in Goffstown. NHCFW is full, so NHDOC contracts with the Strafford County Jail to confine 25 more women. Most of the remaining women live at the Shea Farm Transitional Housing Unit, a community corrections facility formerly known as a “halfway house,” on Iron Works Road in Concord.⁵ A small number of women are in other placements, including administrative home confinement.

LOCATIONS OF CONFINEMENT, 2017



NHDOC classifies incarcerated women into custody levels. The custody levels range from maximum security under which women are locked in their cells for approximately 22 hours per day to administrative home confinement which permits women to live at their homes and work in the community while wearing an electronic monitoring system. Most of New Hampshire's incarcerated women are subject to medium custody and make up NHCWF's "general population."⁶

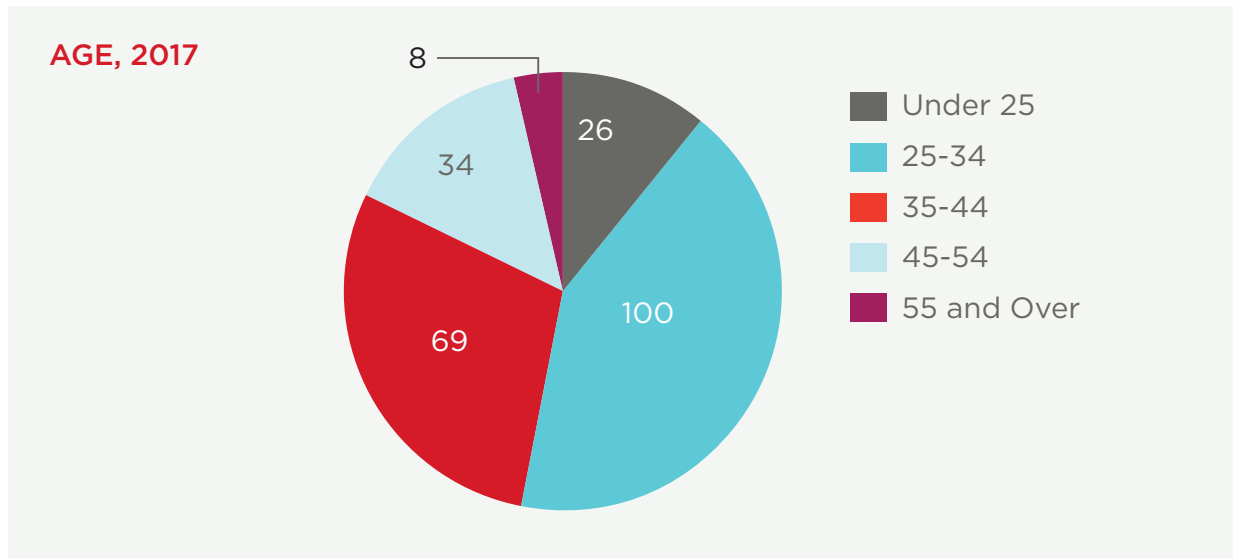


Who?

The percentage of incarcerated women who are white is very close to the percentage of women in the New Hampshire population who are white.⁷ That stands in stark contrast to men's corrections, where nearly 17 percent of incarcerated men are nonwhite - far exceeding the percentage of nonwhite men living in New Hampshire.



More than 7 out of every 10 women supervised by NHDOC are between the ages of 25 and 44.



NHDOC does not keep official data about the parental status of women incarcerated under its supervision. In 2016, 116 women volunteered to participate in a study through NHDOC's Family Connections Center. They reported having a total of 225 children age 17 and under.⁸



NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNTY CORRECTIONS DATA



Hillsborough County Jail; Photo Courtesy of New Hampshire Public Radio

How Many Incarcerated?

Men and women sentenced to one year or less of incarceration are supervised by the county correctional authorities and held in county correctional facilities. The counties currently supervise 297 women.⁹

WOMEN INCARCERATED BY NH COUNTY CORRECTIONS, 2017

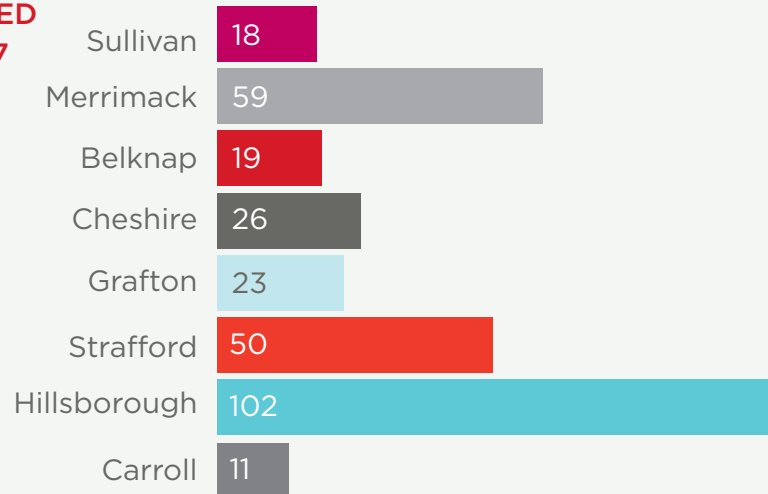


**297
WOMEN**

Where?

Eight of New Hampshire's 10 counties have in-county correctional facilities for women. Coos County sends women to Grafton County. Rockingham County sends women to several county correctional facilities around the state. The most common convictions among women in these facilities are drug offenses and probation violations.

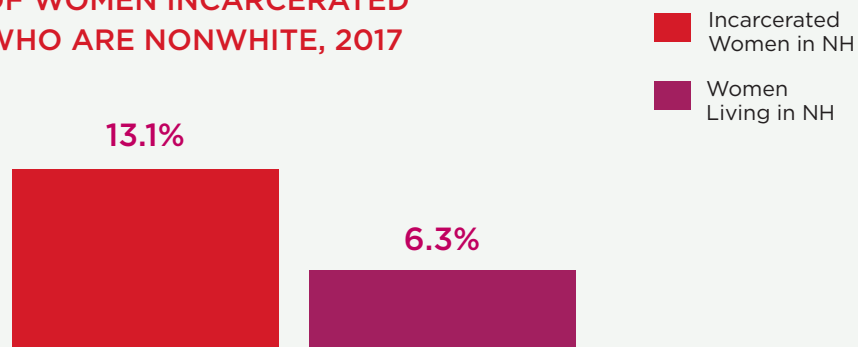
WOMEN INCARCERATED BY NH COUNTIES, 2017



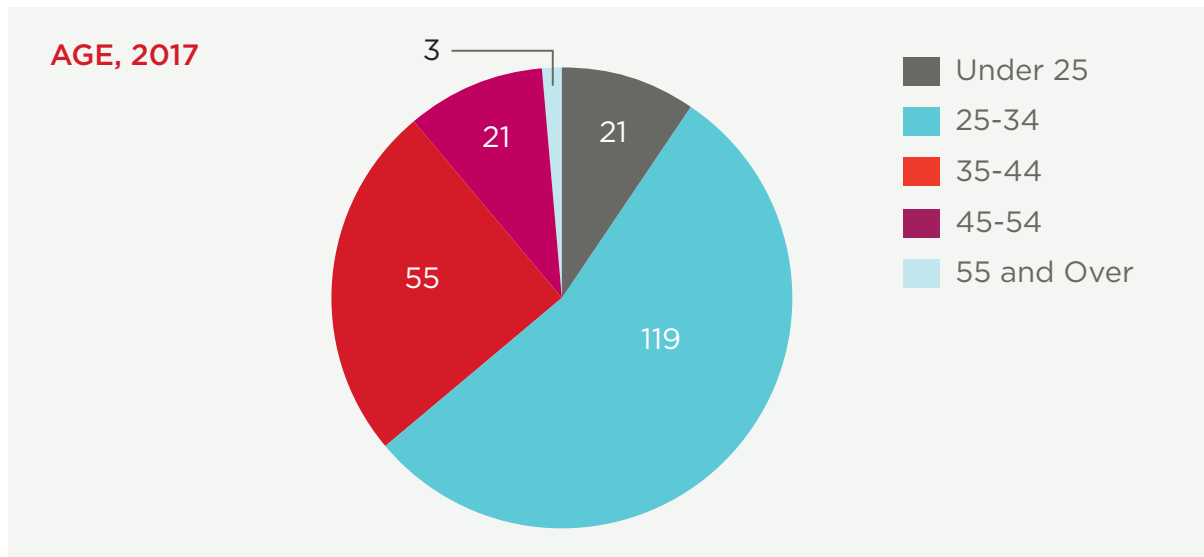
Who?

Of the women subject to county corrections supervision for whom data is available, approximately 13.8 percent are nonwhite. That's more than twice the percentage of women living in New Hampshire who are nonwhite.¹⁰

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INCARCERATED BY COUNTIES WHO ARE NONWHITE, 2017



Of the women subject to county corrections supervision for whom data is available, a majority are between the ages of 25 and 44.¹¹



Like NHDOC, some county correctional authorities do not keep data about parental status. We received parental status data from less than one-third of the authorities surveyed. Based on that data, we estimate that more than 60 percent of women subject to county supervision have children under age 18.

NOTES

- ¹ Unless otherwise stated, research for this report was provided by the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies. Researchers at the Center collected data through New Hampshire Department of Corrections Annual Reports, a simple survey instrument, and correspondence with state and county officials. In all cases, the data reported is a point-in-time count in a constantly-changing population. We note at the outset that different correctional authorities collect different data, and in different ways; some were able to provide more data than others. We have endeavored to present the data that is the most reliable and the most widely available across facilities. This short report is focused on the demographic characteristics of New Hampshire's incarcerated women, not on the programs and services available to them. Additional research into and ongoing monitoring of the services available to women is undoubtedly warranted.
- ² NHDOC data is as of July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2012, unless otherwise noted.
- ³ U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons, Inmate Statistics: Inmate Gender as of October 28, 2017, available at https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_gender.jsp (last accessed December 4, 2017).
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Prisoners in 2015" (December 2016) at 5, Table 2, available at <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p15.pdf> (last accessed December 4, 2017).
- ⁵ Two additional women who were sentenced by New Hampshire courts are incarcerated in out-of-state facilities. They are not included in the data discussed in this report.
- ⁶ NHDOC Glossary of Terms, available at https://www.nh.gov/nhd/doc/divisions/victim/documents/savin_glossary.pdf (last accessed December 5, 2017).
- ⁷ 2017 race data for the state of New Hampshire was not available as of the writing of this report. We used 2016 data.
- ⁸ Email from Kristina Toth, Director, NHDOC Family Connections Center, to NH Center for Public Policy Studies contractor Allyson Ryder, October 6, 2017. Reporting of parental status was voluntary; not all women were asked, and not all provided answers.
- ⁹ As we did not receive data about the number of men incarcerated by Hillsborough County, we do not know the total number of men subject to county supervision.
- ¹⁰ Hillsborough County, which houses women from both Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties, did not provide data about race and age. Strafford County provided data for a population including 18 women who are subject to the jurisdiction of NHDOC, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We were unable to separate out that subgroup for the purpose of this analysis.
- ¹¹ Id.



Women at New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women in Goffstown; Photo Courtesy of New Hampshire Public Radio

CONCLUSION

The number of women incarcerated in New Hampshire grew by 21 percent in the last five years. Combined with a troubling track record of gender discrimination, this growth calls for increased attention to the status of women's corrections in the Granite State. The opening of the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women in Concord during 2018 is a promising first step toward remedying gender disparities in corrections. But it is indeed only a first step. As NHDOC moves into the next era by opening the new women's facility, it is essential that the services delivered within its walls acknowledge the particular needs of women through understanding women's pathways to criminal behavior and with evidence-based, gender-responsive policies and programs. The State must commit to funding the NHDOC positions necessary to provide such services.

NHDOC, the county corrections systems, nonprofits working with incarcerated women, and policymakers need more and better information about incarcerated women. We are concerned that shortcomings in data collection and availability will prevent the state from fulfilling its long-neglected obligation to provide parity between men's and women's corrections. The lack of consistency in data collection and availability across systems, as well as the dearth of information about key factors like parental status, hampers the advancement of evidence-based, gender-responsive corrections. The New Hampshire Women's Foundation recommends that the state invest in a careful review of what information each system collects and doesn't collect, with an eye toward development of consistent, comprehensive data collection approaches at the state and county levels. We look forward to continued public dialogue about this important topic.



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