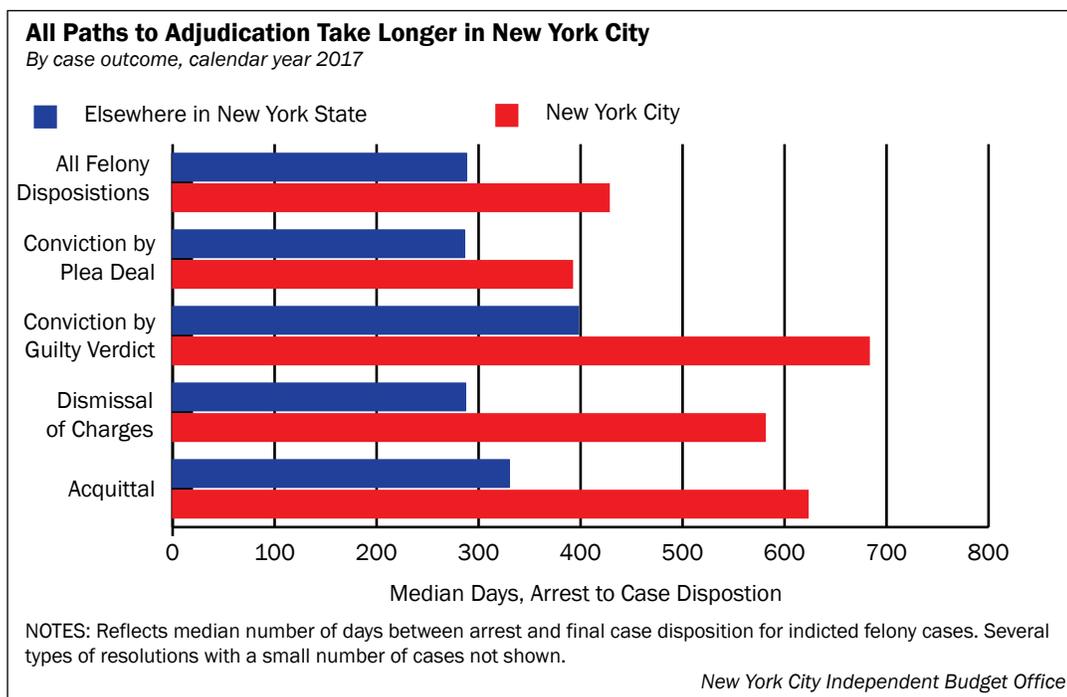


Does It Take the Court System Longer in New York City to Process Indicted Felony Cases Than Elsewhere in the State?

Much of the effort to reduce the number of inmates on Rikers Island and at other city jails has focused on bail reforms for defendants held while awaiting resolution of their cases. But that is not the only factor influencing the number of inmates in the city's jails. Another key to the size of the city's inmate population is how long it takes the state-run court system to resolve defendants' criminal cases.

Over three-quarters of the roughly 8,000 inmates currently held in city jails are categorized as detainees, meaning their cases have not yet been settled. Detainees accused of the most serious crimes are generally those who have been indicted by a grand jury on felony charges. About two-thirds of detainees, or roughly half of all inmates held in city jails, are facing felony indictments.



- It takes substantially longer to resolve cases with felony indictments in New York City than in the rest of the state. A median of 424 days from arrest through final disposition was needed to resolve about 15,000 cases concluded in New York City during 2017, almost 50 percent more than the 288 days for roughly 13,000 cases elsewhere in the state. While not all defendants facing felony indictments are detained while their cases are adjudicated, they are more likely to be jailed than those facing less serious charges.
- There were 1,228 cases with felony indictments in New York City that ended in 2017 with a dismissal of charges after a median case-processing period of 581 days. Elsewhere in New York State the median case-processing time for 693 felony cases concluding with dismissal of charges was 287 days, less than half of the comparable city figure. Likewise, there were 234 cases with felony indictments in the city that ended with an acquittal after a median case-processing period of 623 days. In the rest of the state the 193 felony cases that ended in acquittal in 2017 took a median of 330 days.
- Several factors likely contribute to the longer adjudication process in the city. One factor could be New York City's higher share of violent felonies, which generally take longer to adjudicate than other offenses. Violent felonies accounted for 41 percent of cases with indictments in the city compared with 27 percent elsewhere in the state. Yet the median processing time for violent felonies was also higher in New York City than the rest of the state, as was the case for all felony dispositions. A recent report by the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform noted that only 38 percent of felony cases with grand jury indictments that were settled in 2017 met the state court system's own timeliness standards. The commission has called for a number of reforms to address the pace of criminal case processing in the city, including a 30-day cap on the length of adjournments during adjudication.