

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**CITY JAIL POPULATION DROPS BELOW 4,000 FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1946**

*The City's daily jail population has fallen by more than 1,500 amid COVID-19 safety concerns*

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio announced today that the jail population fell below 4,000 last week, the lowest figure since 1946. The rapid decrease of incarcerated people comes as a direct result of the City's response to the unique health and safety threat COVID-19 poses to the jail system.

"We have reached a historic milestone, and done so in a way that is both humanitarian and just," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "When I took office, there were over 11,000 people in our jails; six years later we have a population of fewer than 4,000. This achievement is one part of the overall effort to create a system that is smaller, safer, and fairer for all."

Following the Mayor's March 16 executive order, City officials worked with the Department of Correction to implement a plan for reducing the jail population in the safest way possible, with a focus on the people in custody most vulnerable to COVID-19 first.

The City has worked closely with its partners across the criminal justice system—from the courts to district attorneys, public defenders to State parole officials—to find the best balance between the public health needs created by COVID-19 and legitimate public safety concerns.

Since March 16, the number of people entering jail fell to about 600 people, compared to 3,300 over the same time period last year. At the same time, more than 2,000 people have departed the jail system. This has dropped the number of people in the jail system on any day by approximately 1,500 since the start of the COVID-19 health emergency.

This includes more than 300 people serving shorter city sentences who were released by the Department of Correction commissioner through a furlough program that allows the remainder of these sentences to be served at home, under supervision.

Additionally, working in conjunction with the State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and others, the City has been able to release more than 500 people who were held on Rikers Island after an alleged technical violation of their parole conditions, such as missing an appointment or failing a urine sample test. Efforts with local judges and prosecutors have also secured the release of more than 600 people held pretrial to be released back to their communities. Hundreds more people have been released through judges granting writs of habeas corpus filed by defense counsel on behalf of their incarcerated clients.

Prior to COVID-19 outbreak, New York City was already the safest large city in America, with the lowest incarceration rate in the nation. This was the result of years of efforts to safely reduce the jail population, down from 11,089 on the day Mayor de Blasio took office in 2014 to 5,447 on March 16, 2020—a decrease of nearly 51%. At the same time, crime has remained overall at historic lows.

“The city has worked single-mindedly with our partners over the past six years to reduce reliance on incarceration while increasing safety,” said **Liz Glazer, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice**. “We are mindful of the tragic circumstances that have resulted in the historic drop in the number of New Yorkers in city jails over the past few weeks. But we are hopeful that the pathways we are creating now may further the sea change underway for the past few years, demonstrating that parsimonious use of jail and deliberate investment in supports can create a safer New York with a lighter touch from the justice system.”

“This dramatic reduction in the detainee population is a significant development which has allowed us to increase social distancing within our facilities as we deploy all available measures to fight the COVID-19 virus,” said **Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann**. “We are doing all we can to ensure the health and well-being of everyone who works or lives in our jails.”

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Avery Cohen  
Deputy Press Secretary, Office of the New York City Mayor  
212-341-9412  
917-594-9721