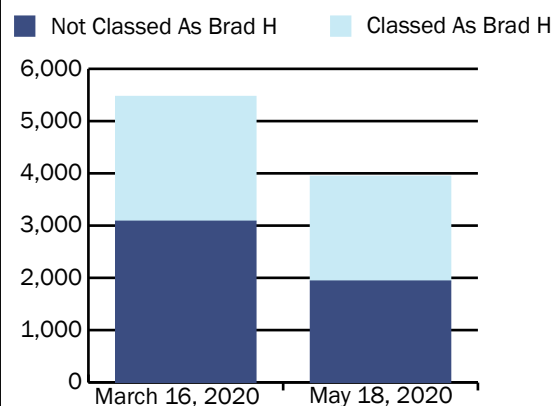


Covid-19 Spurred Discharges From the City's Jails, But Were Some Groups of People in Custody More Likely to Be Released Than Others?

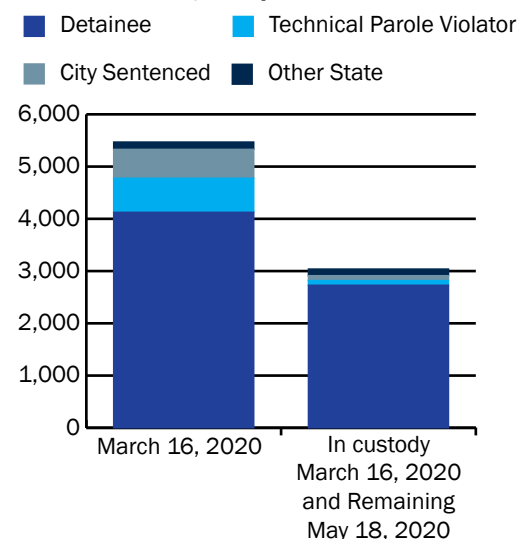
In mid-March, as transmission of Covid-19 increasingly threatened people in custody and correction staff, the de Blasio Administration began releasing people from the city's jails and calling for fewer new admissions. Some groups prioritized for release were those over 50, those with underlying health conditions, and those near the end of their city sentence. Some of the effect of this new policy can be seen by looking at who was in the jails on March 16 (the Monday before releases began) and who among them was still in jail as of May.

- The total city jail population dropped 28 percent from March 16 through May 18, from 5,471 to 3,943. Of those 5,471 who had been in Department of Correction custody on March 16, 2,431 (44 percent) were discharged and 3,040 (56 percent) remained on May 18—though some of the discharges may have resulted from reasons other than the Covid-19 policy such as people posting bail or finishing their sentences.
- As the overall jail population has decreased, the share of the population who suffer mental health problems has increased. On March 16, people in jail for at least 24 hours and who received mental health treatment—known as Brad H class members—made up about 44 percent of the population. By May 18, they made up nearly 51 percent of the jail population.
- A smaller share of detainees with mental health problems were released over the March 16-May 18 period compared with those from the general population. Among the Brad H detainees held in the city's jails on March 16, 36 percent (851 people) were released by May 18. But among the general population on March 16, 51 percent (1,580 people) were discharged by May 18.
- There are three main categories of people in custody—pretrial detainees (those waiting for their case to be adjudicated), city-sentenced detainees (people with sentences of a year or less) and technical parole violators (people on parole from state prison who are alleged to have violated noncriminal terms of their release). On March 16, the largest group of incarcerated people was pretrial detainees: 4,126 people, or 75 percent of the jail population. On May 18, they were still the largest group, with 66 percent, or 2,730, of them remaining in jail since March 16.
- In contrast, city-sentenced detainees only made up 10 percent of the population on March 16, and the majority of them (83 percent, or 459 people) were discharged by May 18.
- Technical parole violators, 12 percent of the March 16 population and previously the only group growing as the rest of the jail population **decreased**, also shrank over the two months. Of the 652 technical parole violators held on March 16, 86 percent (563) were released by May 18.
- The share of people discharged over the March-16-May 18 period also varied by age and gender. On March 16,

The Share of Brad H Class Members in Jail Has Grown Since March 16



A Larger Share of City Sentenced and Technical Parole Violators Incarcerated on March 16 Were Since Released, Compared With Pretrial Detainees



New York City Independent Budget Office

83 percent of the population was under 50, 13 percent 50 to 60 years of age, and almost 4 percent over age 60. Sixty-one percent of those aged 50 and over in the city's jails on March 16 were discharged by May 18, as opposed to 41 percent of those under 50.

- Women made up only about 6 percent of the jail population on March 16. Fifty-nine percent of women incarcerated on March 16 were discharged by May 18 compared with 43 percent of men.

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SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Correction data, <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/Daily-Inmates-In-Custody/7479-ugqb>, accessed daily.