

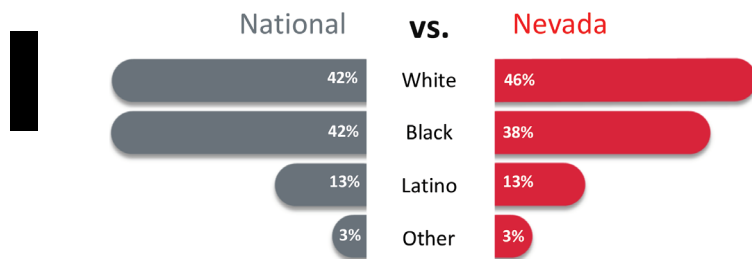
Death Row in Nevada, 2019

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The number of people on death rows across the United States has decreased over the last two decades. For example, in 1999, there were 3,625 prisoners awaiting an execution compared to 2,673 individuals in 2019 (NAACP, 1999-2019). Nevada currently houses 74 death row prisoners (NAACP, 2019). This Stat Sheet presents the demographic information on these prisoners, along with current

Key Stats

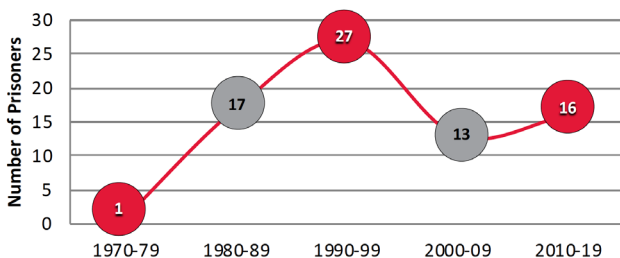
Racial Composition of Nevada vs. National Death Row Prisoners (2019)



The racial composition of Nevada’s death row is comparable to the national trend.

On the national level, 42% of death row prisoners are White. However, in Nevada, their representation is slightly higher (46%). The percentage of Black death row inmates is lower in Nevada (38%) than nationwide (42%). Other races are equally represented in Nevada and nationally (16%).

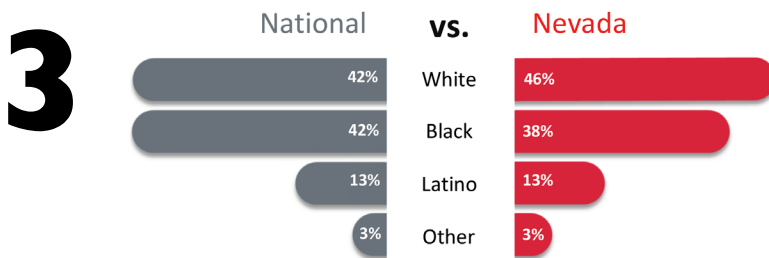
Nevada Death Row Prisoners (Decade of Sentence)



No death sentences were rendered in years 1992, 2001, and 2002.

The decade during which most current death row prisoners received capital punishment was the 1990s. Specifically, 1995 was the most active year in the history of Nevada’s death penalty; seven men who remain on death row in 2019 were sentenced to death in 1995. Nationally, the number of death sentences is decreasing.

Racial Composition of Nevada vs. National Death Row Prisoners (2019)



The average age of a Nevada death row prisoner is 53 years.

Following the national trend of aging prison populations (Hurley, 2014), the majority of death row inmates in the state are between 40 and 60 years old (57%). The youngest individual on death row in Nevada was sentenced to death in 2017 and is now 27- years-old. The oldest inmates are both 79, and were sentenced in 1991 and 2010.

Death Row Specifications

The male death row unit is in Ely State Prison in Ely, NV. The prison was opened in 1989 and can hold up to 1,183 inmates (Nevada Department of Corrections, 2020). A new execution chamber was built on site in 2016, following the closure of the previous site in Nevada State Prison in Carson City, NV (Whaley, 2016). Female death row prisoners are to be housed in the Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center in North Las Vegas, NV; however, there are currently no women on death row in Nevada.

Executions in Nevada

Since 1976, which marks the beginning of the modern era of the U.S. death penalty, 12 prisoners were executed in Nevada. Eleven of these individuals voluntarily dropped their appeals to proceed with their executions. All of these inmates were male, and the vast majority of them (75%) were White/Caucasian (Death Penalty Information Center, 2020). The last execution was the 2006 execution of Daryl Mack.

Prisoners can only be executed in Nevada by a lethal injection that contains drugs chosen by the Director of the Department of Corrections, following a consultation with the Chief Medical Officer (NRS 176.355, 1999).

Death Penalty Statutes in Nevada

Based on Nevada's Revised Statutes (NRS 200.030, 1999), first-degree murder, with one or more aggravating circumstances (not outweighed by mitigating circumstances), is the only crime punishable by death. The NRS specifies 15 aggravating circumstances, such as murder being committed for monetary gain. Seven mitigating circumstances can also be presented during trial including the defendant's lack of a serious criminal record. The intellectually disabled and defendants under the age of 18 cannot be sentenced to death in Nevada (NRS 176.025, 1999)

Nevada in the American Context

Twenty-nine states in the U.S., including Nevada,



retain the death penalty for first-degree murder. Nonetheless, Nevada is one of 10 states where no prisoner has been executed for at least 10 years, although no formal moratorium has been imposed (DPIC, 2020). Currently, the state has the 9th most populous death row in the nation (NAACP, 2019)

Limitations and Conclusion

Data regarding those on death row in Nevada provide a compelling snapshot of what the population looks like, although systematic information on the demographic profiles of those convicted of first-degree murder and those sentenced to death in Nevada is limited. Such data would allow researchers to further examine the characteristics of those who are on death row and the dynamics of capital cases.

For references in this Stat Sheet, see the CCJP website: www.unlv.edu/CCJP

Stat sheets are produced by the Center for Crime and Justice Policy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The Center is housed in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs. *Stat Sheets* provide summaries of various criminal justice practices in Nevada and other states.