

As of 2015, **743 individuals in New Mexico prisons** had been there for 10 years or longer.

## A national crisis

**Too many people are serving decades-long prison sentences**, both in New Mexico and nationwide.

Nationally, 212,441 people - or one of every six people in state prisons - have been incarcerated for at least 10 years.

That includes **743 people, or 10%, of people in prison in New Mexico.**

Long sentences are not inevitable, but the result of punitive “tough on crime” approaches by lawmakers and prosecutors. Since 1999, the number of Americans in prison for 10 years or more **has increased by 83%.**

**New Mexico, meanwhile, has seen an increase of 65% since 2005.**

Many states have taken laudable steps to reduce the number of people behind bars for “low-level” offenses, but little has been done to bring relief to people needlessly serving decades in prison.

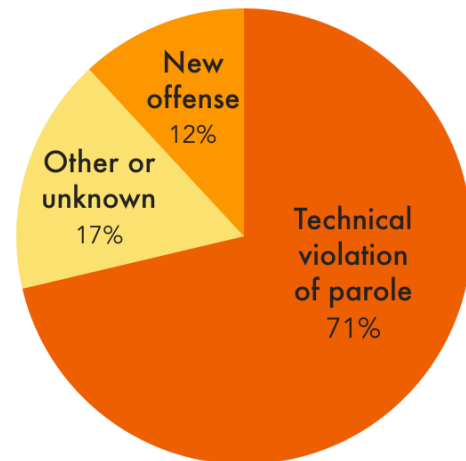
Our report *Eight Keys to Mercy* presents eight ways to immediately create meaningful opportunities for their release. (For more, see the link at the bottom of this page.)

## Parole is broken

For people who have worked hard to earn their release from prison, parole officers should do everything possible to support their reentry, rather than sending them back. But too many are **returned to prison for noncriminal “technical” violations**, like missing a substance abuse meeting.

**In New Mexico, technical violations are driving returns to prison from parole**

Reasons for returns to incarceration from parole, 2016



## The number of people serving long sentences has grown dramatically

Percent change in the number of people who had already served 10 years or more from 2005 to 2015, by state

