DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER
Facts about the Death Penalty
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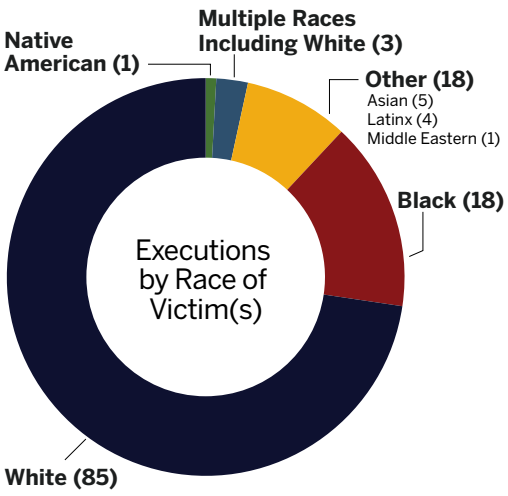
Facts about the Death Penalty in Oklahoma

Statewide Statistics

Racial Disparities in Death Sentencing and Executions

Oklahoma has imposed 414 death sentences and executed 117 people since 1972. Black people comprise just 8% of the total state population, but account for nearly a third of death sentences and executions. Overall, Oklahoma has the highest *per capita* execution rate in the U.S.



Importance of Race of Victim

In Oklahoma, the odds that a person charged with murdering a white female victim will receive a death sentence are **10 times greater** than if the victim is a minority male**.** Just 3% of homicides in the state from 1990-2012 resulted in a death sentence, and in 74% of those cases, the victim was white.

The Financial Costs...

Oklahoma capital cases are, on average, at least 3.3 times more expensive than non-capital cases; this conservative estimate does not include the costs of incarceration after conviction. The state spends twice as much money per day to house someone on death row as it spends to house someone sentenced to life in prison.

AVERAGE COST PER CASE

Including the costs for Defense, Prosecutor, Jail, and Oklahoma Indigent Defense Services.

Capital Case
$161,000

Non-Capital Case
$51,000

...And Human Costs

The **ten people exonerated** from Oklahoma's death row spent a combined 97 years wrongly Incarcerated. Oklahoma taxpayers have paid financial compensation to at least 5 capital exonerees. **Just one of these settlements cost $2,150,000**.

Read more about Oklahoma exoneree Robert Lee Miller, Jr.'s case here.

Native American Sovereignty

In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that Oklahoma has continually prosecuted criminal cases in violation of long-standing treaties with Native American tribes. At least three Native Americans have been executed in violation of tribal sovereignty, and at least four people remain on death row despite these violations.

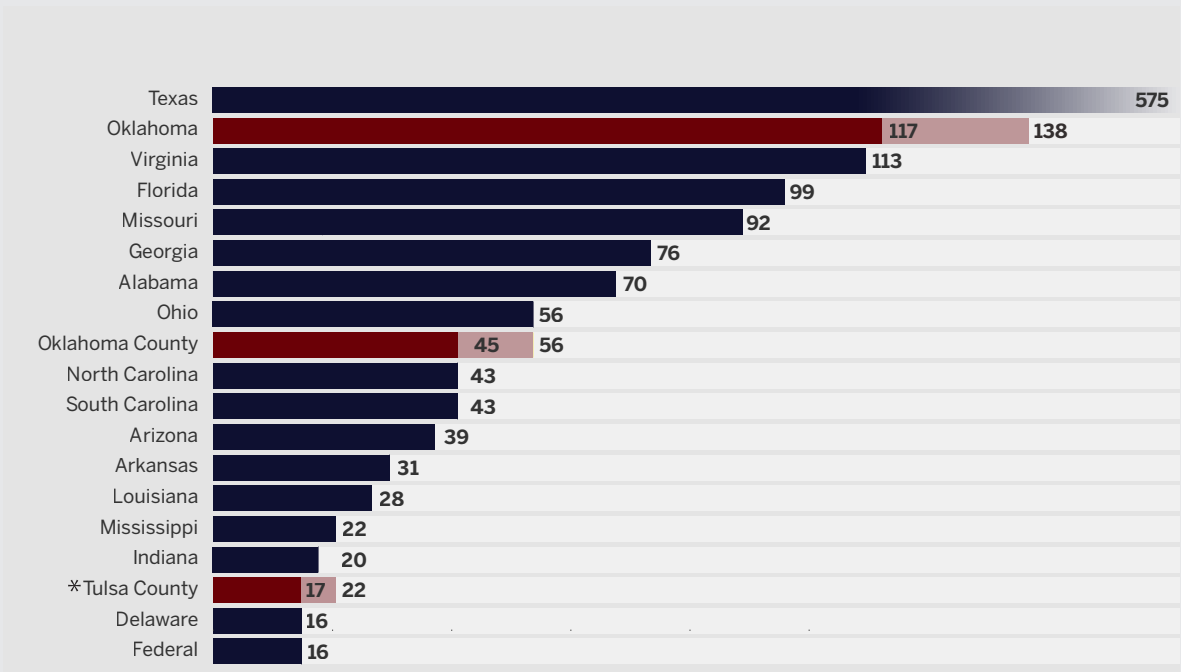
Oklahoma's Outlier Counties

Half of all death sentences imposed in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties have been reversed or have resulted in a commutation or exoneration, **making a death sentence no more statistically reliable than a coin toss.**

Oklahoma County

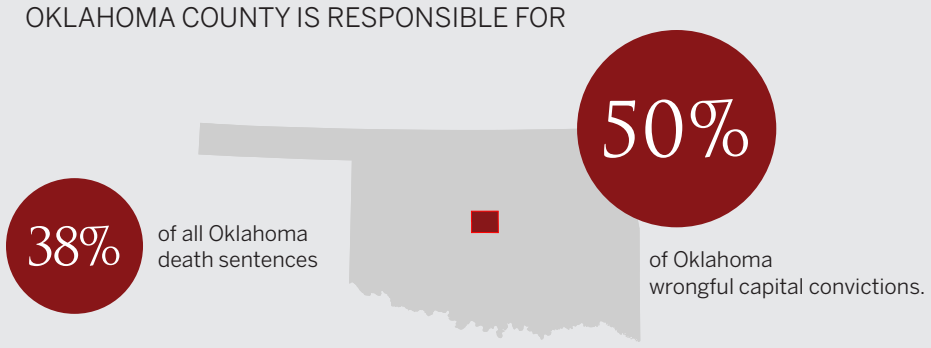
Oklahoma County has imposed more death sentences and carried out more than 2.5 times as many executions as any county its size (population between 750,000–1,000,000) in the United States. The county has executed more people than most states, including North Carolina which has a population over 13 times larger than Oklahoma County.

At least 30 instances of prosecutorial misconduct in Oklahoma capital cases resulted in reversals or exonerations; 11 (37%) of these instances were in Oklahoma County.



*Total number of executions if all scheduled executions take place

OKLAHOMA COUNTY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR



THE RACE OF VICTIM EFFECT HOLDS TRUE IN OKLAHOMA COUNTY

9 Black

Nine Black people have been executed for cases involving white victims in Oklahoma County.

0 White

No white people have been executed for cases involving Black victims in Oklahoma County.

Learn more about Oklahoma County capital defendants Malcolm Rent Johnson and Tremane Wood.

Tulsa County

Tulsa County is tied with Montgomery County, Texas as the most prolific executioner of any county between 500,000–750,000 in size and has the second largest per capita execution rate at 2.6 per 100,000 population. If all scheduled executions take place, it will surpass the state of Indiana in total executions, a state 10 times as populous as Tulsa County.

Roughly 1 in 10 (11%) people in Tulsa County are Black

Black people have received nearly half (46%) of death sentences inposed in Tulsa County

If all scheduled executions take place, it will surpass the state of Indiana in total executions, a state 10 times as populous as Tulsa County.

Source: Deeply Rooted: How Racial History Informs Oklahoma's Death Penalty.
A report by the Death Penalty Information Center.
Author: Tiana Herring , Edited by Ngozi Ndulue and Robert Dunham.
To read more of the report, please visit: deathpenaltyinfo.org