

Going Downstate

Map by Sarah Kanouse, Photos by Lauren Zadikow

Going to prison in Illinois often means going downstate. Correctional centers are frequently located in small, rural towns quite distant from major population centers and often unserved by public transportation, often making it very difficult and costly for families to visit. Furthermore, prison communities are frequently majority white, and in the not-so-distant past more than a few were “Sundown Towns” - communities that violently excluded African Americans from settling. Today, these towns find their populations swollen with largely minority prisoners double-bunked in overcrowded prisons. This map offers a glimpse into the complex and contradictory economies of money and (im)mobility produced by prisons in Illinois.



Centralia
Level 4: Medium-Security Adult Male
Opened: October 1980
Capacity: 750
Average daily population 1,528
Total Centralia population: 14,136 (2000)
Percentage of population represented by prisoners: 111%
Annual cost per inmate: \$19,435
Per capita income: \$17,174
Miles from Chicago: 267
Drive time from Chicago: 4 hours 40 minutes
Amtrak fare from Chicago: \$27
Amtrak travel time: 4 hours
Highway miles from station to prison: 5
Estimated cab fare from station to prison: \$10
Estimated cab travel time: 10 minutes



Menard
Maximum-Security Adult Male
High Medium-Security Male
Opened: March 1878
Capacity: 1,938
Average Daily Population: 3,315
Total Menard population: 5,185 (2000)
Percentage of population represented by prisoners: 64%
Annual cost per inmate: \$19,190
Per capita income: \$22,190 (2000)
Highway miles from Chicago: 346
Drive time from Chicago: 5 hours 45 minutes
Standard Amtrak fare from Chicago: \$30
Amtrak travel time: 5 hours 30 minutes
Highway miles from Amtrak station to prison: 39
Estimated cab fare: \$85



Shawnee
High Medium-Security Adult Male
Opened: December 1984
Capacity: 1,046
Average daily population: 1,998
Total prison population, including adjacent prison: 3593 (2005)
Total Vienna population: 1,234 (2000)
Percentage of town population represented by prisoners: 291%
Annual cost per inmate: \$14,839
Per capita income: \$13,662 (2000)
Miles from Chicago: 346
Drive time from Chicago: 5 hours 30 minutes
Standard Greyhound fare from Chicago: \$45
Greyhound travel time: 9-15 hours
Miles from Greyhound station to prison: 7
Estimated cab fare: \$16

-  Illinois Department of Corrections Adult Prison
-  Federal Bureau of Prisons Adult Prison
-  Illinois Department of Corrections Youth Prison
-  Illinois Adult Prison in Sundown Town
-  Federal Prison in Sundown Town