

In 2016 \$275 Million Was Awarded Or Paid To Wrongly Convicted Persons In U.S.

More than a quarter billion dollars is known to have been awarded or paid in 2016 as compensation to 139 people who were wrongly convicted in the United States. The people were imprisoned for a total of 2,033 years. The people were convicted in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

With the total compensation of \$274,972,084, the average was \$135,254 per year of wrongful imprisonment. However, there were significant differences between compensation obtained from states, and from federal lawsuits.

The five ways people obtained a compensation award or payment in 2016:

- Federal civil rights lawsuit under 42 USC §1983.
- Federal compensation lawsuit.
- State compensation claim/lawsuit.
- State legislative compensation bill.
- State compensation annuity. (Annuity for prior compensation award.)

The following observations relate to new compensation cases.

The 55 male compensation awards totaled \$250,227,185 for 972 years of wrongful imprisonment, for an average of \$257,435 per year. The four women were awarded a

	Homicide	Sexual Assault	Drugs	Arson	Kidnapping	Total Avg.
State compensation statute	\$134,108	\$46,591	\$2,275	\$48,205	\$240,000	\$111,071
State legislative damage bill	\$20,856	\$43,748	0	0		\$37,453
Federal civil rights lawsuit	\$397,184	\$416,505	\$500,000	0		\$401,155
Federal compensation lawsuit	\$330,840	0	0	0		\$330,840
Total average	\$292,312	\$147,754	\$137,605	\$48,205	\$240,000	\$264,257

total of \$19,315,000 for 48 years of wrongful imprisonment, for an average of \$402,396 per year. The four women were each convicted of a homicide related crime.

The individual awards for each year of wrongful imprisonment covered a wide range depending on the state and county/city where the person's conviction occurred.

The smallest state award was \$2,275 per year for Frank C. Davis' 6 years of wrongful imprisonment in Ohio for a drug conviction: a total of \$13,651. The largest state award was \$262,500 per year to four men for 16 years of wrongful imprisonment in Connecticut for murder: a total of \$4,200,000 each.

The smallest federal court award was \$20,588 per year to Alprentiss Nash for 17 years of wrongful imprisonment for murder, robbery and burglary in Chicago: a total of \$350,000. The largest federal court

award was \$1,224,444 per year to Nathson Edgar Fields for 18 years of wrongful imprisonment for murder in Chicago: a total of \$22,000,000.

Six awards were for a total of \$10 million or more, and 22 awards were for \$5 million or more -- all in federal court. There were 20 awards of \$1 million to \$5 million: 7 in federal court and 13 by states.

The most awards by state, and the number of federal court or state awards in those states:

- New York: 14 (10 federal and 4 state).
- California: 6 (3 federal and 3 state).
- Nebraska: 6 (all federal).
- Ohio: 5 (all state).
- Illinois: 5 (3 federal and 2 state).

The eight successful federal court compensation cases against New York City were more than any entire state other than New York.

Homicide was the primary crime in 73% of compensation cases, and in 20% of the cases sexual assault/molestation was the primary crime:

- Homicide: 43 cases
- Sexual assault/molestation: 12 cases
- Drugs: 2 cases
- Kidnapping: 1 case
- Arson: 1 case

The average time from an exoneration to a state compensation award was 3 years, while the average time for a successful federal lawsuit was 5-¼ years. Overall, a person was awarded compensation 4-1/3 years after being exonerated.

Three people had to wait ten or more years after their exoneration for a compensation award, with Troy D. Hopkins' 11 year wait

Chart summarizing the number of people and amount for each of the five methods:

	Men	Women	Yrs Imprisoned	Total Amt.	Yearly Avg.
New compensation cases					
State compensation statutes	26	0	415	\$46,094,545	\$111,071
State legislative damage bill	2	0	40	\$1,498,113	\$37,453
Federal civil rights lawsuit	25	4	512	\$204,415,000	\$399,248
Federal compensation lawsuit	2	0	53	\$17,534,527	\$330,840
Sub-total	55	4	1,020	\$269,542,185	\$264,257
Prior compensation cases					
State compensation annuity*	72	9	1,013	\$5,429,899	\$67,036
Total	127	13	2,033	\$274,972,084	\$135,254

* All annuities are by the State of Texas. The monthly amount paid is \$452,491.57.

Note: One man was awarded both state and federal compensation.

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after his 2005 exoneration of murder in Virginia the longest.

Eleven of the 57 people falsely confessed, and one was convicted based on the false confession of a co-defendant. So 21% the compensation awards were to a person convicted as the result of a false confession.

The leading reasons for an exoneration resulting in compensation were:

- DNA evidence: 19 cases – 33% of awards.
- Prosecution concealed exculpatory evidence (Brady violation): 6 cases – 10%.
- New evidence (other than DNA): 11 cases – 19%.
- Witness recanted testimony: 9 cases – 16%.

The following are several general observations that can be gleaned from the compensation awards or payments for 2016:

- Federal civil rights lawsuits overall result in significantly higher awards than state compensation schemes.
- The odds are significantly higher that compensation will be awarded for a homicide or sexual assault related conviction, than for other types of crimes.
- The average award per year of wrongful imprisonment was almost double for a homicide related exoneration as for sexual assault.
- The compensation for men and women convicted of homicide was comparable.
- Exonerations attributable to DNA and other types of new evidence resulted in more compensation awards than exonerations based on all other types of evidence combined.

Table summarizing persons awarded wrongful conviction compensation in 2016

This table doesn't include the 81 people in Texas paid total annuity compensation of \$5,429,899 as a continuation of their compensation cases. Information about the cases in the table and the Texas annuity cases is in the Innocents Database online at, www.justicedenied.org/innocentsdatabase.htm.



Name	Compensation	State	Crime
Sean Adams	4,200,000	CT	Murder & Assault
LaMonte Armstrong	6,420,000	NC	Murder
Carlos Ashe	4,200,000	CT	Murder & Assault
Devon Ayers	8,000,000	NY	Murder
Phillip Bivens	5,500,000	MS	Murder & Rape
Ronnie Bridgeman (aka Kwame Ajamu)	1,979,100	OH	Murder
Wiley Bridgeman	2,399,584	OH	Murder/Robbery
Francisco Carrillo Jr.	10,100,000	CA	Murder
Dahn Clary Jr.	552,900	TX	Child sexual assault
Christopher Coleman	220,000	IL	Sexual Assault, Robbery & Burglary
Reginald Connor	3,000,000	NY	Kidnapping
Michael Cosme	8,000,000	NY	Murder
Frank C. Davis	13,651	OH	Drugs
Derrick Deacon	6,000,000	NY	Murder
James Dean	2,190,000	NE	Aiding & abetting 2nd-degree murder
Jack M. Dempsey	337,434	OH	Arson & Burglary
Bobby Ray Dixon	5,500,000	MS	Murder & Rape
Angel Echavarria	450,000	MA	Murder & Robbery
Nathson Edgar Fields	22,040,000	IL	Murder
Eric Glisson	8,000,000	NY	Murder
Angel Gonzalez	220,000	IL	Rape & Kidnapping
Kathy Gonzalez	2,190,000	NE	Aiding & abetting 2nd-degree murder
John Grega	1,550,000	VT	Murder
Willie Grimes	3,250,000	NC	Rape & Kidnapping
Michael Ray Hansen	917,000	MN	Second-degree murder
Darcus Henry	4,200,000	CT	Murder & Assault
Tyrone Hicks	1,500,000	NY	Attempted rape & attempted sodomy
Michael James Holmes	2,500,000	MO	Drugs
Troy D. Hopkins	229,419	VA	Murder & Robbery
Ricky Jackson	2,647,056	OH	Murder/Robbery
Johnnie Johnson	4,200,000	CT	Murder & Assault
Luther Jones Jr.	936,880	CA	Child molestation
Koua Fong Lee	395,000	MN	Vehicular homicide
Bruce Lisker	7,600,000	CA	Murder
Roger Logan	3,750,000	NY	Murder
William Lopez*	12,450,000	NY	Murder & Robbery
Kevin Martin	4,300,000	DC	Manslaughter
Michael Kenneth McAlister	1,268,694	VA	Attempted rape and Abduction
Marco Milla	654,500	CA	Murder
Alprentiss Nash	350,000	IL	Murder & Rape
Robert E. Nelson	318,000	MO	Sexual Assault & Robbery
Alan Newton	12,000,000	NY	Rape, Robbery & Assault
Martin Nnodimele	2,000,000	NY	Murder & Robbery
Roger Lee Olsen	475,000	MN	Child sexual assault
Freddie Peacock	6,200,000	NY	Rape
Carlos Perez	8,000,000	NY	Murder
Larry Pohlschneider	762,440	CA	Child molestation
Kash Delano Register	16,700,000	CA	First-degree murder & robbery
Larry Donnell Ruffin	5,500,000	MS	Murder & Rape
Rodell Sanders	15,000,000	IL	Murder
Debra K. Shelden	1,825,000	NE	Aiding & abetting 2nd-degree murder
Willie Stuckey Jr.	2,016,000	NY	Murder, Kidnapping & Robbery
Ada JoAnn Taylor	7,300,000	NE	Second-degree murder
Santae A. Tribble	13,234,527	DC	Murder & Robbery
Cathy Watkins	8,000,000	NY	Murder
Joseph White	7,300,000	NE	Murder
Charles Wilhite	1,400,000	MA	Murder
Thomas Winslow	7,300,000	NE	Aiding & abetting 2nd-degree murder