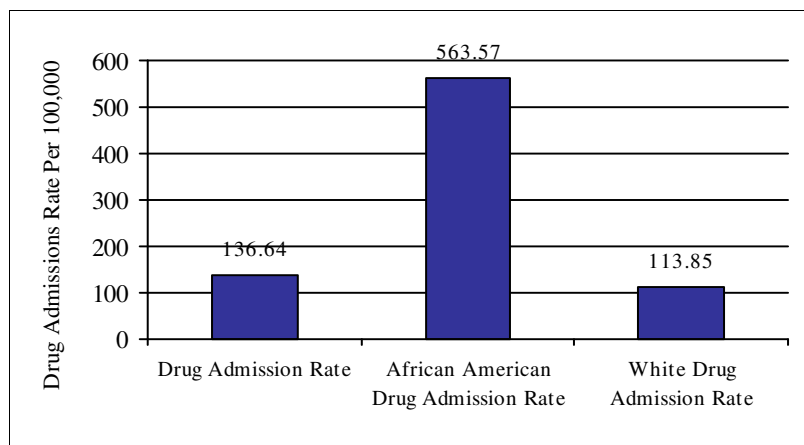


POLK COUNTY IOWA

Although counties have similar drug use rates nationwide, the rates at which people are sent to prison for drug offenses vary widely across counties. Similarly, African Americans and whites use and sell drugs at comparable rates, but according to a new study by the Justice Policy Institute, "The Vortex: The Concentrated Racial Impact of Drug Imprisonment and the Characteristics of Punitive Counties," African Americans are admitted to prison for drug offenses at higher rates than whites in 193 of the 198 counties. The report finds that counties are not monolithic in their social characteristics and spending practices. The report's findings may inform local social policy decisions.

African Americans in Polk County are admitted to prison for drug offenses at five times the rate of whites.



This figure represents 2002 data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Corrections Reporting Program, 2006

Of the 198 counties with population greater than 250,000 examined in this report and ranked by most drug admissions per 100,000, this county ranks: **16th**

According to findings from the report, social and financial characteristics have a significant relationship to drug admission rates in the county. Poverty, the percentage of African Americans in the community, the percentage of the budget spent on law enforcement and the judiciary, and the per capita spending on law enforcement and the judiciary have a significant relationship with county drug admissions. Though unemployment did not have a significant relationship in the study, it remains a social characteristic that should be explored further. The report calls for a balanced approach to address public safety concerns and for less reliance on simple enforcement of drug laws as a way of promoting public safety.

County Characteristic	County Statistic
Poverty Rate	8.00
Percentage of the Population that is African American	5.5
Unemployment Rate	3.6
Per Capita Spending on Law Enforcement	\$160.46
Per Capita Spending on the Judiciary	\$32.20

Data for this table come from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002.