



# ARKANSAS

In the first half of 2023, Arkansas State Hospital had 186 state hospital beds for adults. This puts Arkansas at 6.1 beds per 100,000 population for the SMI population. There are 36 beds for pediatric patients as well.

## Forensic Patients

Arkansas is one of only two states where all state hospital beds are reserved for forensic patients. Approximately one third of beds are occupied by NGRI patients and the average length of stay is approximately one year. When most or all of a state's beds are used for patients who are involved with the criminal legal system, it leaves people with severe mental illness who have no criminal behavior with few options for treatment. The shortage of civil beds in particular means civil patients who rely on state hospitals for care may have few options for treatment.

Arkansas' rank among the states  
#44 in beds per 100,000 population  
#1 in percentage of beds occupied by  
forensic patients

## Forensic Waitlist

At the time of data collection, 77 incarcerated individuals were on the waiting list for a state hospital bed. While waiting in jail for a bed to open, people with severe mental illness can experience deterioration, worsening psychotic symptoms, and even death. According to state officials, Arkansas does not track the amount of time incarcerated individuals spend in jail waiting for a bed to open.

## Hospital Occupancy Rates

Hospital occupancy rates greater than 85% are indicative of bed shortages. In Arkansas State Hospital, 99% of beds are occupied.

### Arkansas' State Hospital System:

[Arkansas State Hospital](#) is the only state hospital in Arkansas and is located in Little Rock, AR. The facility has a total of 186 beds, 32 of which are reserved for pediatric patients and are accordingly not included in bed counts for the adult SMI population.

Arkansas ranks among the lowest for adult beds in the United States and has no beds available for people with SMI who have not been charged with crimes. The hospital's high occupancy wait and long waitlist for beds are indicative of Arkansas' critical shortage of state hospital beds.