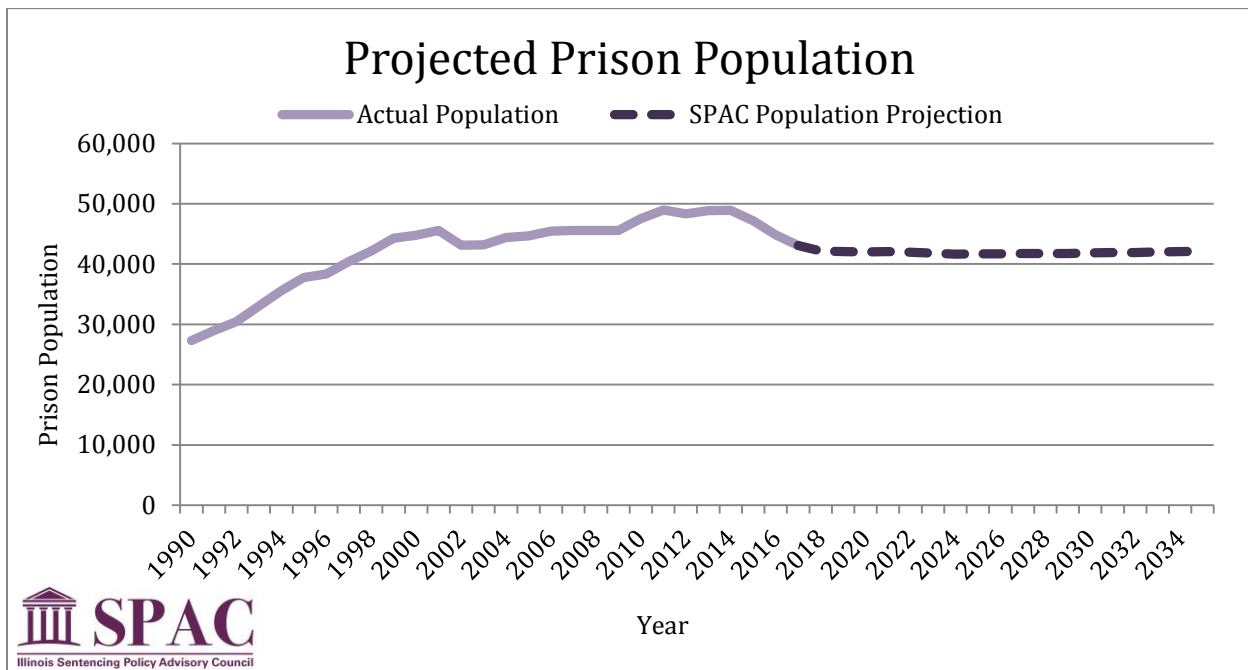


## Baseline Illinois Department of Corrections Population Projection

The SPAC prison population projection takes the two key policy levers—admissions and length of stay—to create a reasonable estimate of the state’s future prison population. Both admissions and the average prison terms are held constant from the average of the past year. This approach gives a plausible baseline to compare any simulated policy changes. The implicit assumptions are also familiar to system stakeholders. For example, if a reader believes admissions were abnormally low for the past year, s/he can read the model’s output as a conservative underestimate of the future prison population. Likewise, a reader who believes admissions will continue to fall can read the output as an overestimate of the future prison population. Both can understand the projection based on familiarity with past experience.

SPAC projected the prison population for FY2018-2035 using the average prison admissions, sentences, and policy positions of FY2017. The projection model projects the prison population to decrease to around 42,000 and then to stay relatively flat with a slight annual increase occurring in the future.



The assumption of constant admissions results in a fairly flat projection. The model currently overestimates the population, at least in the short-term, because of the assumption that future admissions will look like the average FY2017 admissions. Prison admissions have declined and continue to decline every month, and the higher admissions of early FY2017 cause the projection to be high. However, the use of historical admissions presents a realistic estimate of future prison populations if the downward trend of admissions slows and eventually stabilizes.