

Washington Rural Jails Network

A Community-Engaged Research Network



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"We're at an unprecedented time in our nation's history where fixing our broken justice system is not only possible but, in some places, it has already become a reality. Looking ahead, it's imperative that we empower and resource overlooked rural counties so they can implement locally tailored reforms."

Nancy Fishman | Former Vera Institute of Justice Project Director

Okanogan County Spotlight

Washington Rural Jails Network is a community-engaged project at Washington State University led by the Department of Sociology

In 2019, the Vera Institute of Justice awarded WSU & UGA each a \$235,000 grant, funded by Arnold Ventures, to pilot a hub site to document and understand trends in rural incarceration.

The project had several goals:

- ☑ Gather and analyze administrative jail data from select rural counties in Washington.
- ☑ Build knowledge of specific factors affecting jail population trends.
- ☑ Gain perspective of justice-involved people and justice staff via interviews
- ☑ Share lessons from research and data analysis with local representatives and stakeholders.

Sheriff's offices in **Ferry, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Whitman** counties shared jail data for January 2015 to June 2020.



Key Facts

1. Failure to Appear was the dominant driver of pretrial incarceration and jail re-entry.
2. Driving with a suspended license was a common mechanism for pretrial jail entry.
3. Some 11 percent of pretrial jail admissions were for DUI.

"I had all of these warrants everywhere. I could never get my license reinstated, so therefore I would never have insurance. And, you know, I would be driving to work and get pulled over and get a no insurance ticket and no license ticket and maybe lose my car. It just - it was a lot of traffic [infractions]"

- 38 year-old white man, Okanogan County

One out of 3 people were booked into jail pretrial for "failure to appear"

Failure to Appear, 29%

DUI, 11%

Holds, 10%

Assault, 10%

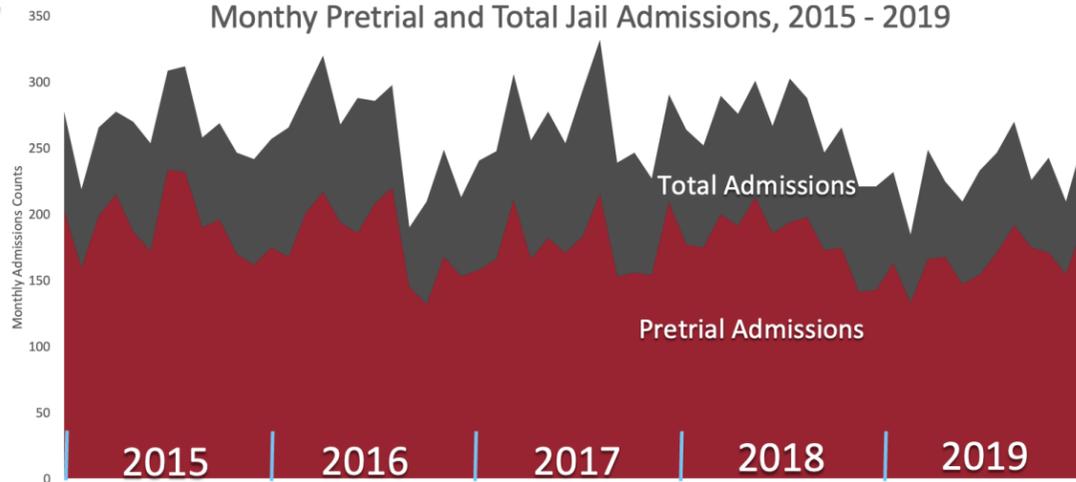
Not domestic viol.

DWLS, 6%

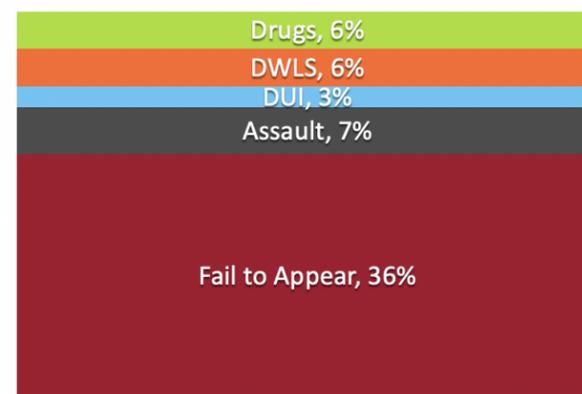
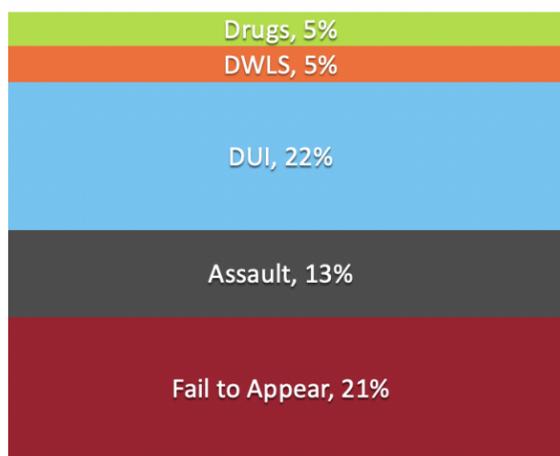
Rural Context:

Rural counties like Okanogan face resource constraints, staffing shortages; limited health, mental health, and substance treatment services; and scant communication, transportation, and legal infrastructure.

Monthly Pretrial and Total Jail Admissions, 2015 - 2019



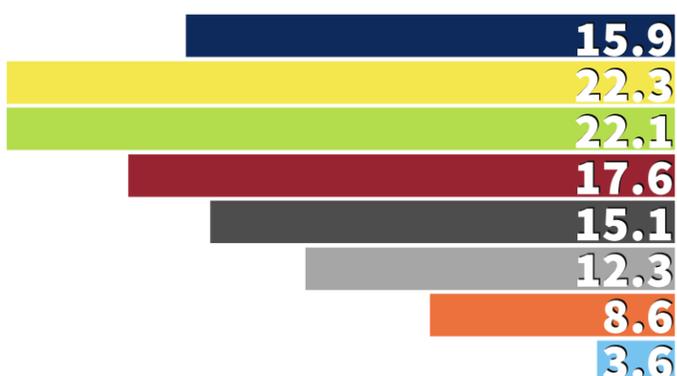
Failure to Appear is a significant driver of reentry



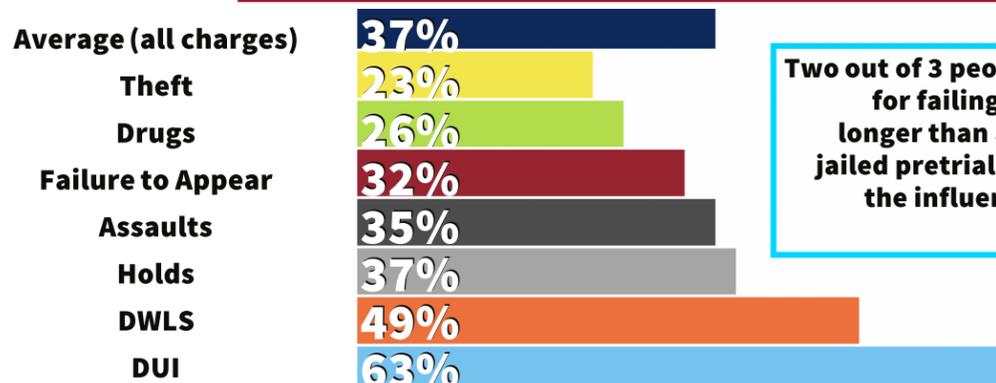
One booking

3+ pretrial bookings

Average # of pretrial days spent in jail by charge



% of people who spend 24 hours or less in jail pretrial by charge



Two out of 3 people jailed pretrial for failing to appear stayed longer than a day. Most (63%) jailed pretrial for driving under the influence were released within 24 hours.

