

Washington Rural Jails Network

A Community-Engaged Research Network



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Whitman County Spotlight 2020-22

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

Key Facts

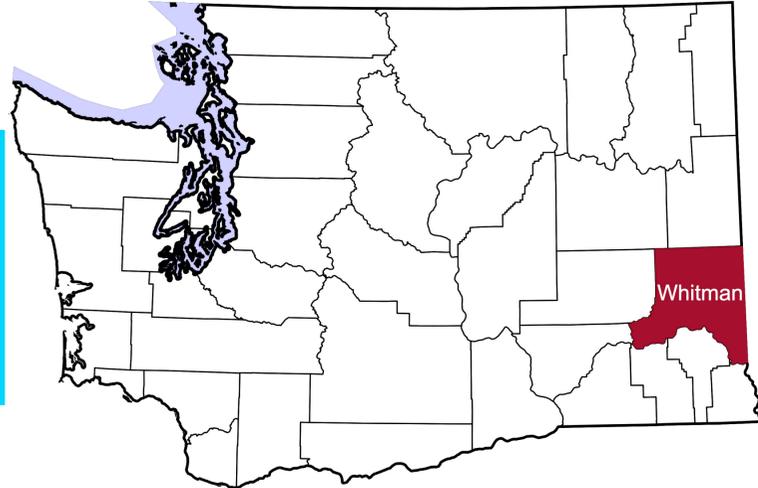
1. Warrants were the dominant driver of incarceration and jail re-entry.
2. Two in ten jail admissions were for DUI.
3. Assaults accounted for one in ten admissions.

In 2019, the Vera Institute of Justice awarded WSU a grant, funded by Arnold Ventures, to document and understand trends in rural incarceration. Since 2022, National Institute of Justice has funded this work.

The project had several goals:

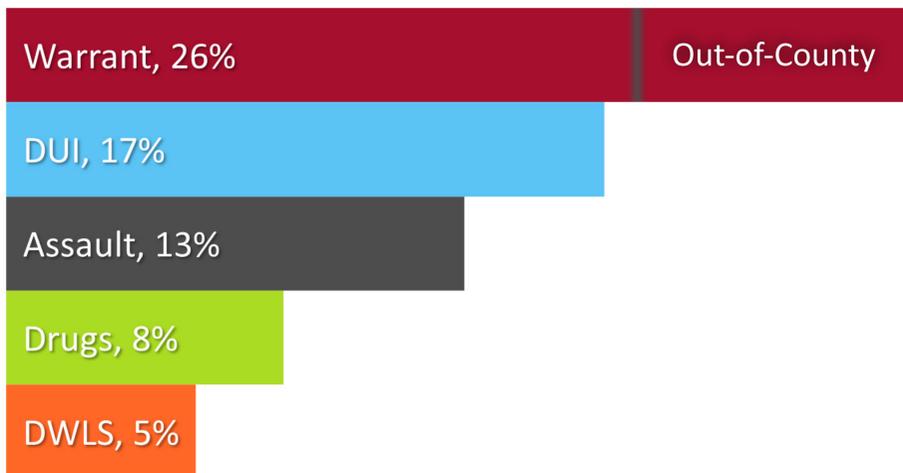
- ~ Gather and analyze administrative jail data from select rural counties in Washington.
- ~ Build knowledge of specific factors affecting jail population trends.
- ~ Gain perspective of justice-involved people and justice staff via interviews
- ~ Share lessons from research and data analysis with local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

Sheriff's offices in **Ferry, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Whitman** counties shared jail data through the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs for 2020-2022.

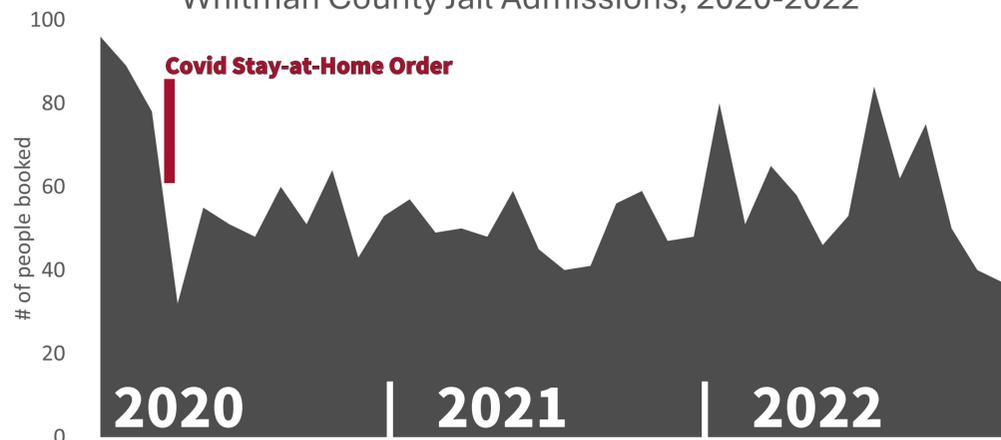


"I guess a warrant had been put out for my arrest that I wasn't aware of. Um – so I had started treatment. I went to treatment...On the way home, I noticed that I'm being followed by a police officer...He got up kind of by me and I don't really know what happened then...He said, well, there is a bench warrant for your -- some kind of warrant...Once he laid his eyes on me, he couldn't just let me go. He had to take me in, which I started begging him, um, not to."
 - 32-year-old white woman

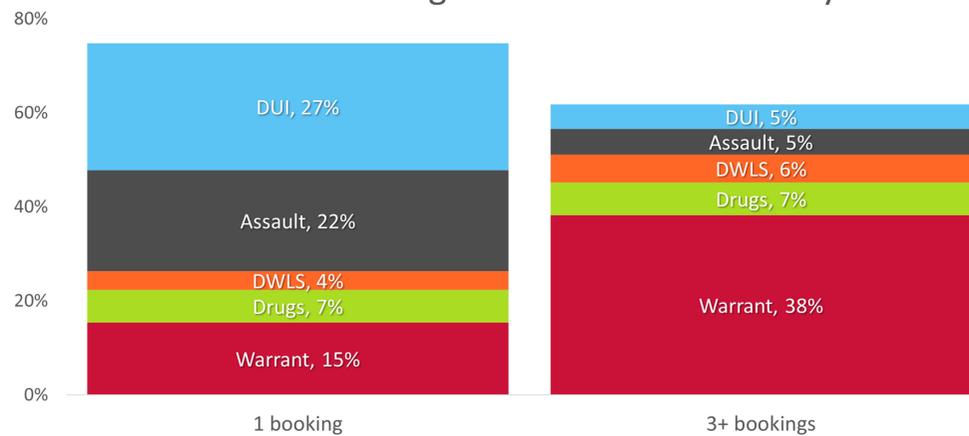
One in four people were booked for a warrant



Whitman County Jail Admissions, 2020-2022



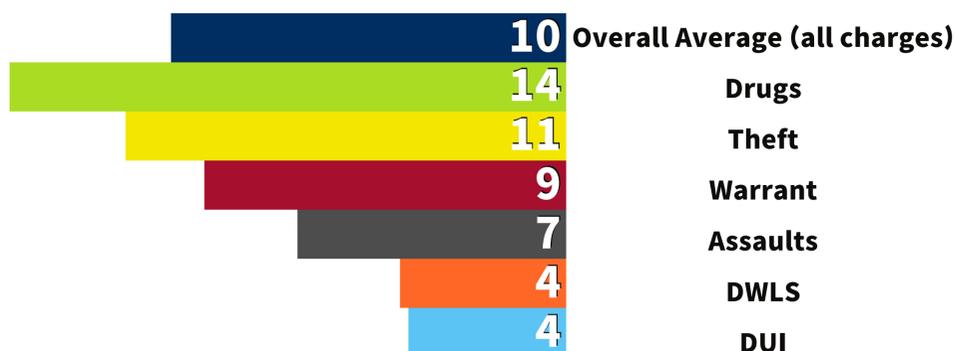
A warrant is a significant driver of reentry



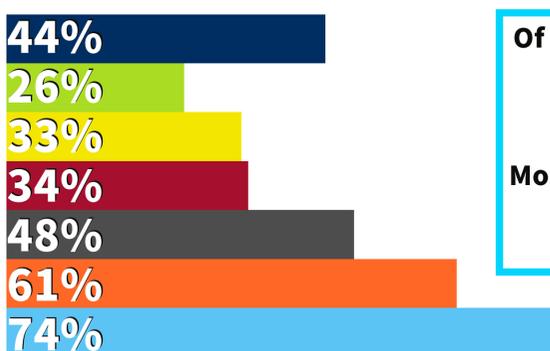
Rural Context:

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

Average # of days spent in jail by charge



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



Of those booked for warrants, few (34%) were released within 24 hours.

Most (74%) booked for driving under the influence were released within 24 hours.

