

Washington Rural Jails Network

A Community-Engaged Research Network



Jennifer Schwartz, PhD | Jennifer Sherman, PhD | Clay Mosher, PhD | Christian Maynard, MA | Megan Parks, MA | Marisa Cervantes, MA | Sandra Yokley, MA

"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

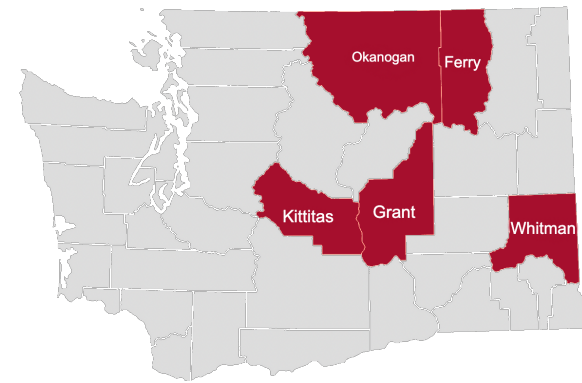
Washington Rural Jails Network is a community-engaged project at Washington State University led by the Department of Sociology

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.

Washington Counties Included in Study



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

Key Facts

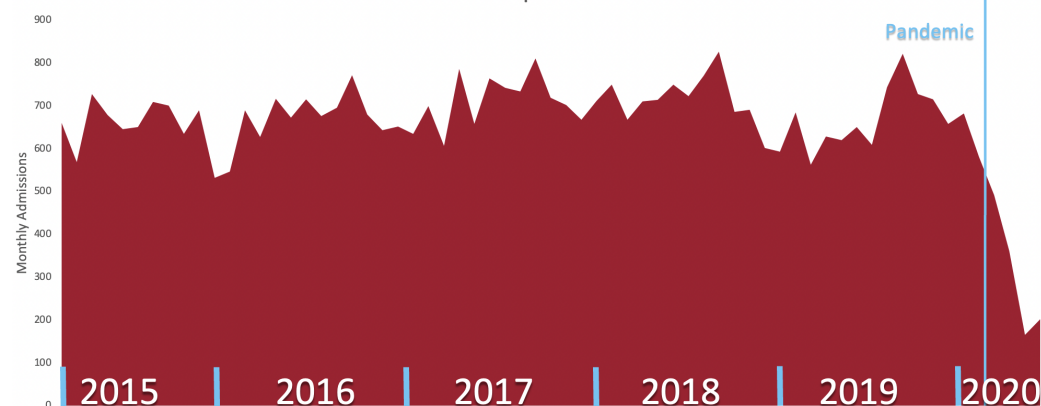
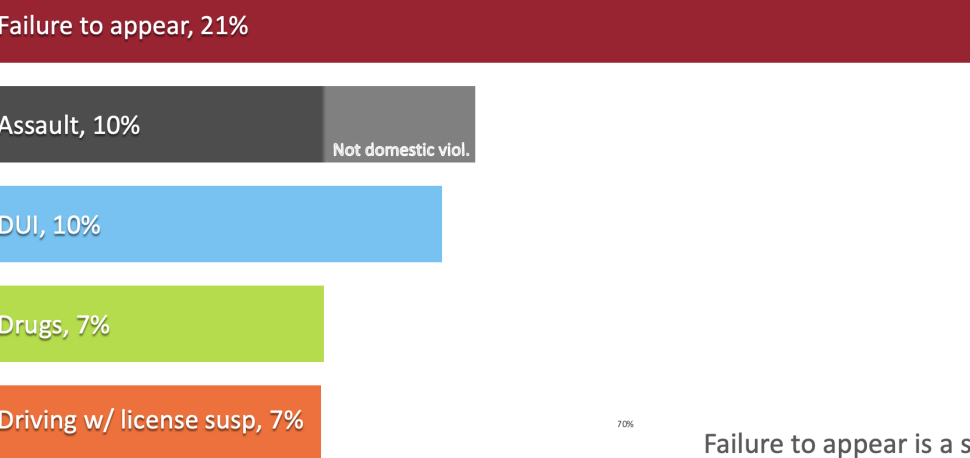
1. Failure to Appear was the dominant driver of pretrial incarceration and jail re-entry.
2. Driving with a suspended license was a common mechanism for pretrial jail entry.
3. Most assaults (68%) were related to domestic violence.
4. Some 7 percent of pretrial jail admissions were drug-related.

"People that go to jail . . . want to have a better life. But when you get in their system deep enough, you can't. You can't get a decent job. If you can't get a decent job, how do you pay to get your license back? If you can't get a license back, you can't get a decent job. It is this downward spiral effect that is really hard to hit the brakes and it is really hard to stop."

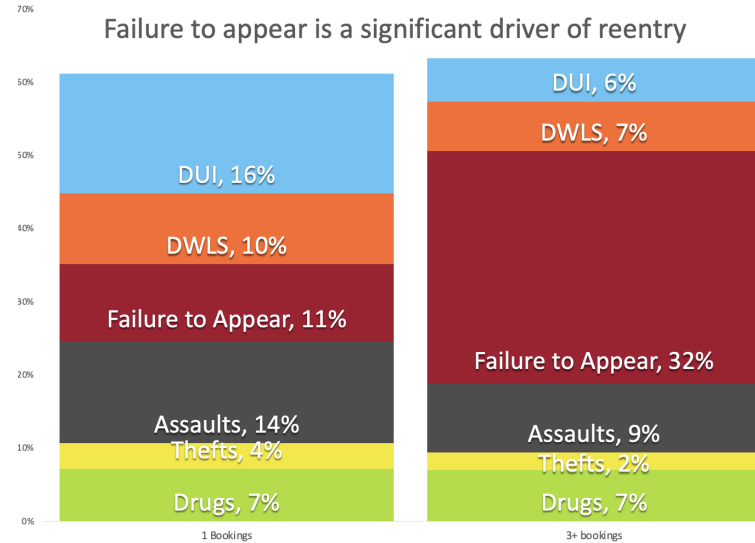
- 32 year-old white man, Grant County

One out of 5 people were jailed pretrial for "failure to appear"

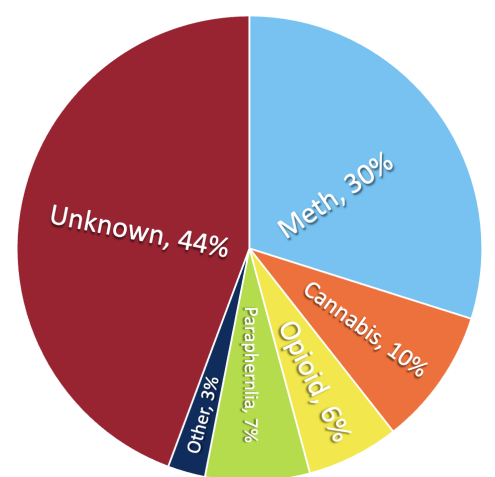
Pretrial jail admissions were stable prior to decreases during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic



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



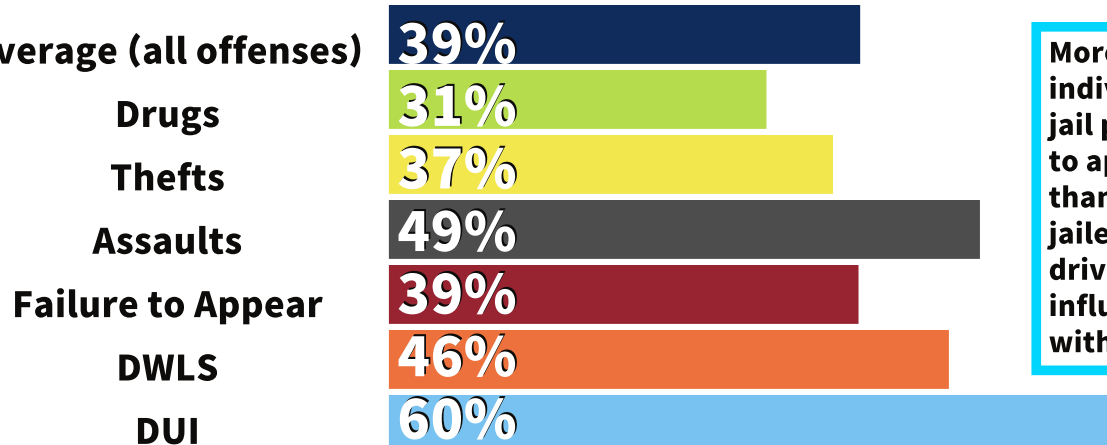
Most drug-related pretrial jail admissions involved meth or unknown drug type



Average # of pretrial days spent in jail by charge



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



More than half of individuals booked into jail pretrial for failing to appear stayed longer than a day. Most (60%) jailed at arrest for driving under the influence were released within 24 hours.

