

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

Kittitas 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.

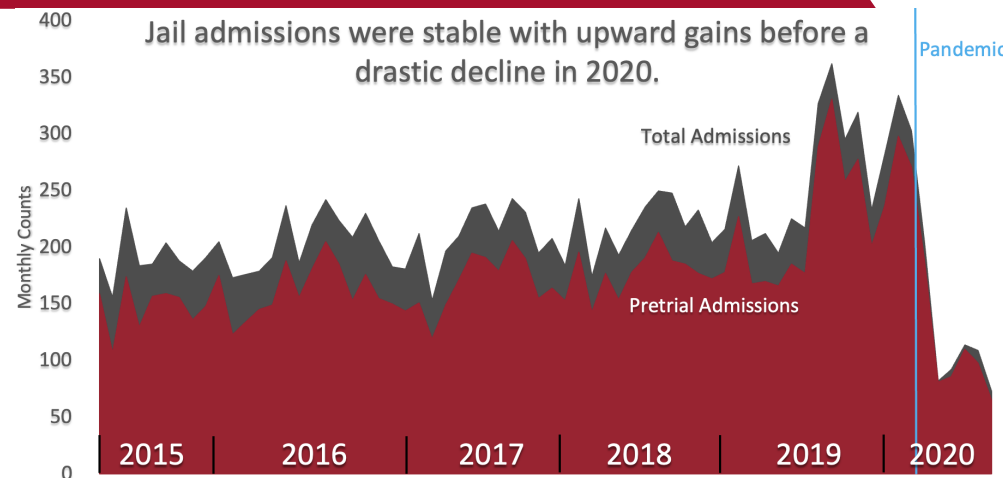
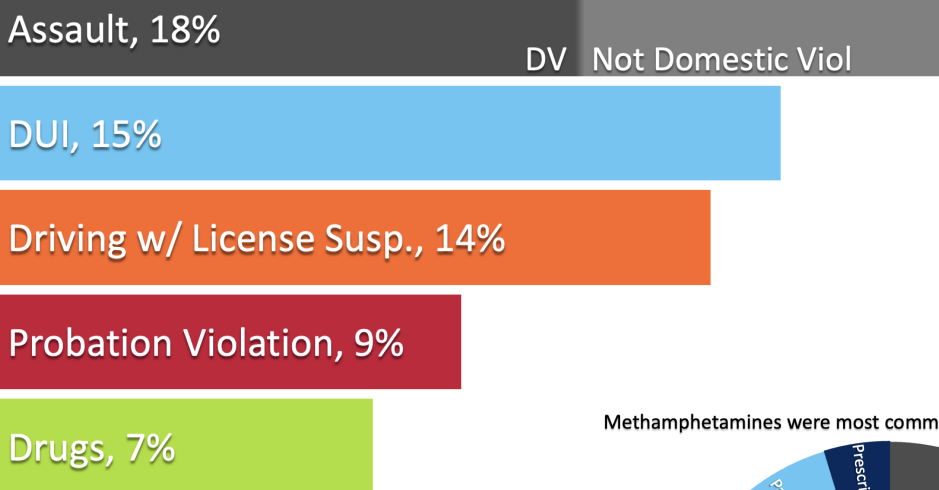
Key Facts

1. Most Assaults (61%) were related to domestic violence.
2. Driving with a suspended license was a common mechanism for jail entry.
3. DUI was a common reason for single entry into jail.
4. Some 7 percent of pretrial jail admissions were drug-related.

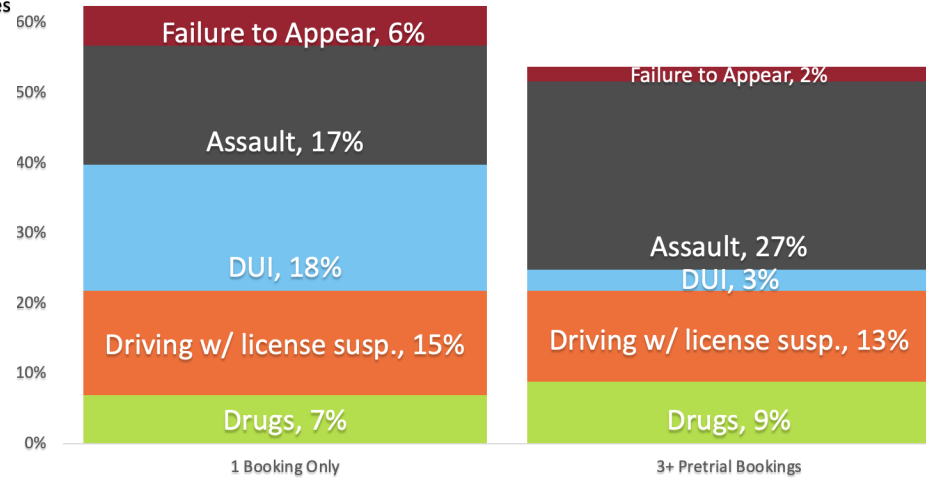
"I had an unpaid speeding ticket from going 24 [mph] in a 20 [mph zone] in front of CWU [Central Washington University] in front of ... the campus, and my license had gotten suspended because I had moved to the [homeless encampment], right? So I left my life behind and was not checking my mail. So this all went down, like, three or four weeks. You know, all of a sudden have no license, and now they are searching my car"

- 39-year-old white woman

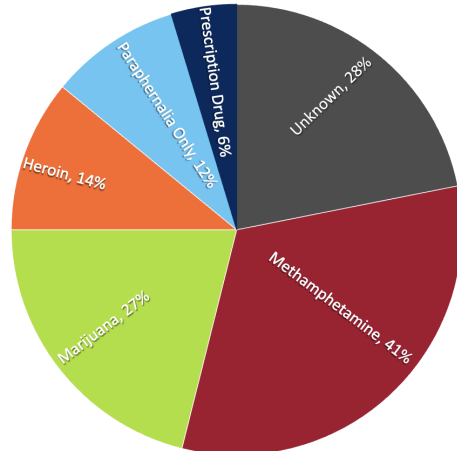
One in 5 people were booked into jail pretrial for assault



Assaults were a key driver of pretrial reentry

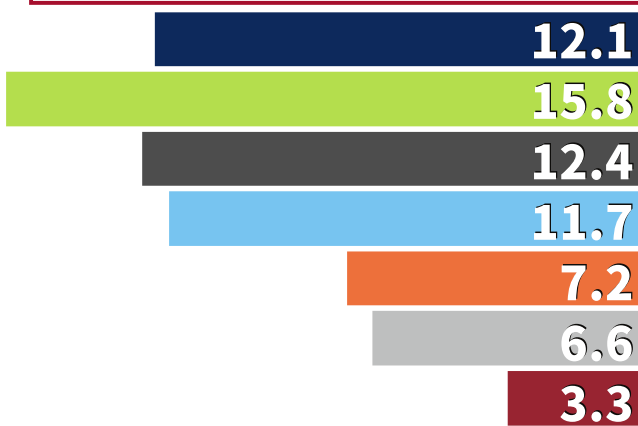


Methamphetamines were most common in drug-related offenses

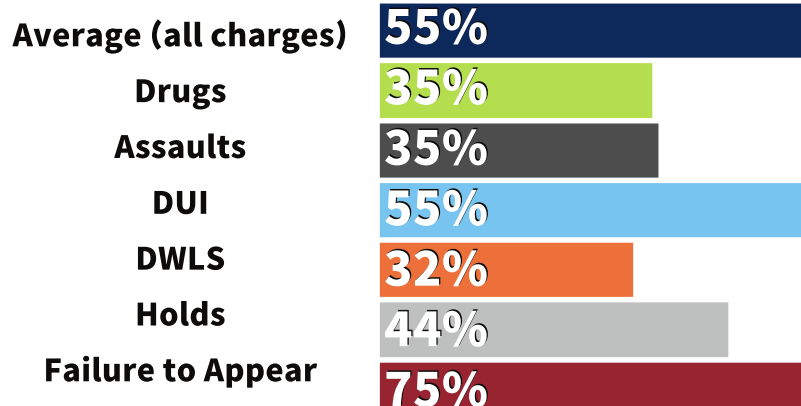


Rural Context: Rural counties like Kittitas face resource constraints, staffing shortages; limited health, mental health, and substance treatment services; and scant communication, transportation, and legal infrastructure.

Average # of pretrial days spent in jail by charge



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



Over half of those booked into jail pretrial for failing to appear were released within one day. By contrast, 27 percent of those booked into jail for DUI were released within 24 hours.

