REDUCING JAIL POPULATIONS:
JAIL DATA INITIATIVE DEMONSTRATION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES NACo

COUNTY GUIDE FOR REDUCING JAIL POPULATIONS AND COSTS

SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

County officials are implementing data-driven and evidence-based policies, practices and programs to decrease jail populations, reduce associated costs and meet the social and safety needs of communities. Annually, county jails process 8 million admissions and spend $29 billion on correctional facilities.[1] The Pew Charitable Trusts <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/01/local-spending-on-jails-tops-$25-billion-in-latest-nationwide-data> reported in 2021 that county corrections costs increased 521 percent from 1977 to 2017.

Through collaborative efforts such as local public safety planning boards or criminal justice coordinating councils, counties are looking at data from various departments and entities to identify factors that drive jail population growth and exploring solutions to improve outcomes.

Common drivers of jail populations include:[2]

- Bookings and/or arrests, especially for low-level charges such as misdemeanors
- Pretrial length of stay
- Technical violations of community supervision, and
- Recidivism.

NEW RESOURCE: JAIL DATA INITIATIVE

When determining local jail population drivers, counties may choose to look at neighboring counties' data or others within their state and/or nationally as comparisons. The **Jail Data Initiative** <https://jaildatainitiative.org/> at New York University, in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts, is gathering data on jail populations around the country. Using online data rosters from roughly a third of the jails in the United States, the project analyzes daily populations, lengths of stay, charge and demographic profiles of those incarcerated, admissions, release statistics and more. Visit their website <https://jaildatainitiative.org/> to explore and compare local data metrics.

https://www.naco.org/resources/county-guide-reducing-jail-populations-and-costs

BOOKINGS AND/OR ARRESTS

Reducing the number of people arrested and booked into jails for low-level offenses and misdemeanors through diversion and citations, as well as outstanding warrants for failing to appear in court or not paying fines and fees, can help reduce jail populations by reserving detention beds for people who are a risk to public safety or a serious flight risk. This can also improve outcomes for individuals by keeping them connected to their communities.

COUNTY SOLUTIONS & EXAMPLES +

EXTERNAL RESOURCES ×

- Baltimore Behind Bars (Justice Policy Institute, 2009)
- Citations in Lieu of Arrest (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- County Jails at a Crossroads (National Association of Counties, 2015))
- Examining Law Enforcement Use of Citations Across the United States (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2016)
- How the Backlog May Reshape the Future of Courts (Thomson Reuters)
- Jail Population Management: Elected County Officials Guide to Pretrial Services (National Association of Counties, 2009)
- Policy Reforms Can Strengthen Community Supervision (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2020)
- Stepping Up: A National Initiative Reducing Overincarceration of People with Mental Illnesses
- Reducing Fines and Fees in the Criminal Justice System (National Association of Counties)
- Tailoring Crisis Response and Pre-Arrest Diversion Models for Rural Communities (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019)
- Think Local, Act Local: How Cities and Counties Can Lead Fines and Fees Reform (Fines & Fees Justice Center, 2022)

WEBINAR SERIES

- JAIL DATA INITIATIVE DEMONSTRATION (December 5)
- DECREASING PRETRIAL LENGTH OF STAY BY IMPROVING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND PRETRIAL SERVICES AND SUPERVISION (January 5)
- REVISITING TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION TO DECREASE JAIL ADMISSIONS AND LENGTH OF STAY (February 2)
- DECREASING BOOKINGS AND/OR ARRESTS THROUGH DIVERSION, CITATIONS AND WARRANT AVOIDANCE AND RESOLUTION (March 2)
- LOWERING RECIDIVISM THROUGH JAIL- AND COMMUNITY-BASED TREATMENT AND SERVICES (April 6)

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SPEAKERS

Kyleigh Clark-Moorman, Ph.D. (she/her)
Principal Associate
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Orion Junius Taylor (he/him)
Lead Data Scientist
NYU Public Safety Lab

Q&A

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Kyleigh Clark-Moorman, Ph.D. (she/her)
Principal Associate
The Pew Charitable Trusts
kclarkmoorman@pewtrusts.org

Orion Junius Taylor (he/him)
Lead Data Scientist
NYU Public Safety Lab
ojt212@nyu.edu

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National Association of Counties
660 North Capitol Street, N.W. | Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20001
202.393.6226 • www.NACo.org

Nastassia Walsh, MA | she/her(s)
Director, Programs & Operations
Counties Future Lab
nwalsh@naco.org 202.942.4289