



Orleans Parish Jail Population by the numbers

A monthly report produced by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Coordination

December 2024

Purpose

This report aims to address two broad questions: "Who was detained in the Orleans Justice Center last month?" and "What was the flow of people into and out of the jail last month. To that end, the report presents information about average daily jail population, admissions, and releases over the past month.

Data sources

The data behind the graphics comes from the **Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office** and the **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court** via the OCJC Data Warehouse. OCJC undertakes additional data processing to better enable tabulations and analyses.

Summary

- **The average daily jail population in December 2024 was 1,494 people.**
 - A 2.4% decrease from November 2024, when the average daily jail population was 1,531 people.
 - A 24% increase compared to December 2023, when the daily average was 1,187 detained people.
- **744 people were admitted to the jail in December, a 4.7% decrease compared to November, when 781 people were admitted to the jail.** Over half – 51.9%, or 386 people – admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking.
- **770 people were released from the jail in December, a decrease of 2% from November, when 787 people were released from jail custody.**
- **The average length of stay for the 770 people released from the jail in December was 48 days** (min = less than 1 day; max = 2,698 days; standard dev. = 159.1).
 - **The median length of stay for all people released in December was 3 days, the same as November 's median.**
 - 368 people (47.8% of releasees) left jail custody within 2 days of admission, and 63.9% of those released in December left jail custody within 13 days of admission.
 - People who were released more than 2 days after admission had an average jail stay of 91 days (n = 402 people; min = 3 days; standard dev. = 211.1) and a median length of stay of 34 days.
- Racial disparities persisted in the jail population in December.
 - **Black people were detained in the jail at 4.6 times the rate of white people, per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race.**
 - **African Americans were admitted to the jail at 3 times the rate of white people for felony and state misdemeanor weapons charges** as the most serious offense at booking, per 100 jail admissions by race.

The average daily jail population for December 2024 was **1,494 people** (standard dev. 15.6), a 2.4% decrease from November, when the average daily population was 1,531 detained people. The average daily population in December 2024 increased by 24% compared to the December 2023 average of 1,187 detained people.

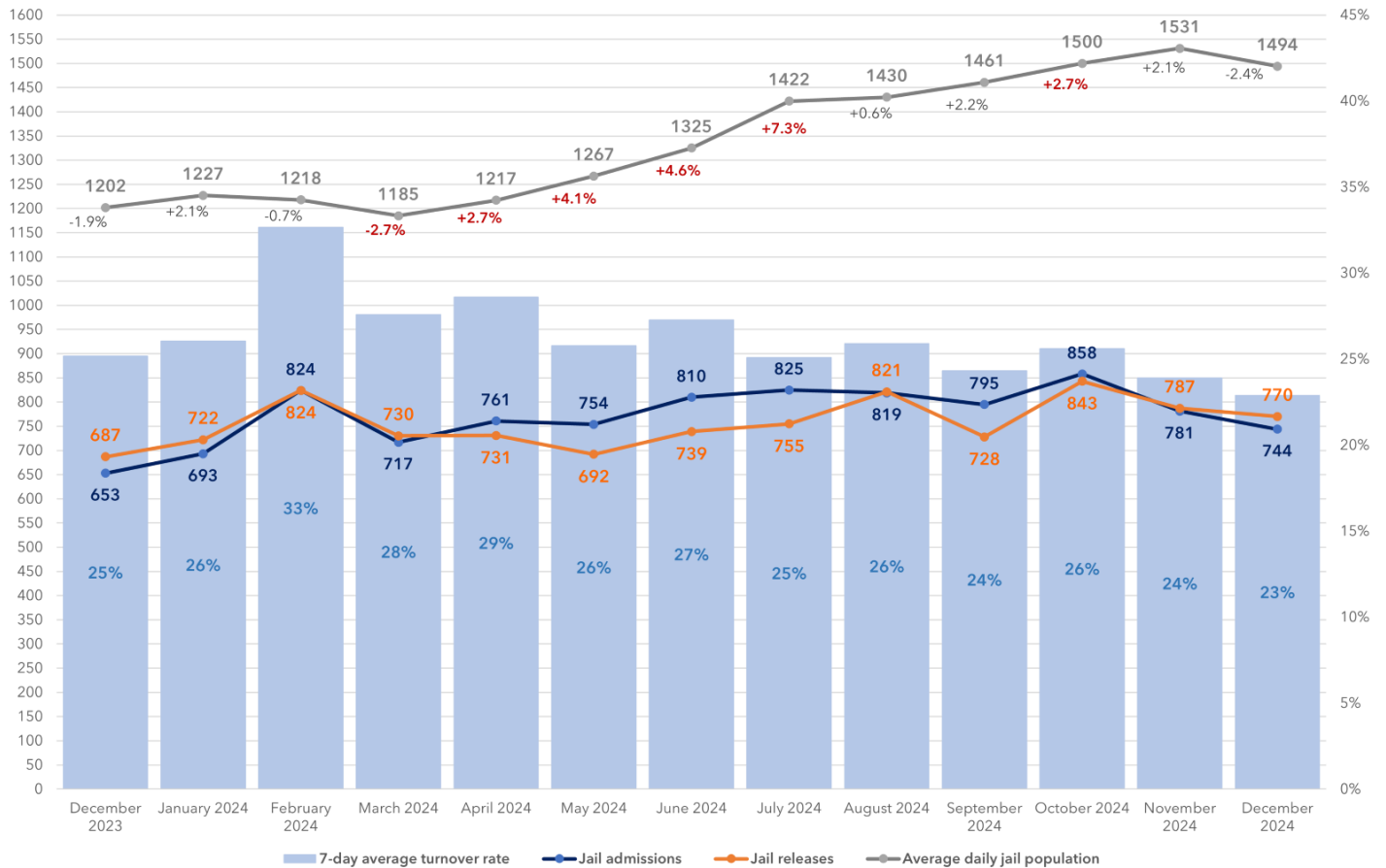


Figure 1. Historical trends in average jail population; month-to-month population changes; monthly admissions; monthly releases; and 7-day average turnover rates, December 2023 - December 2024.

The 7-day average jail turnover rate for December 2024 was **23%**, 1 percentage point lower than November’s rate. The jail turnover rate is a ratio of jail admissions and releases to the average daily population for the reporting month. On average, more than 1 in 5 people detained during a 7-day period in December was newly admitted to or about to be released from jail custody.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that in 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national average 7-day turnover rate for jails the size of OCJ was 31%. For more information on the turnover rate, please click [here](#).

Last month, the jail was at its lowest population on December 24 and December 25 when 1,471 people were detained in the jail. The daily jail population hit its peak on December 2, when 1,539 people were in custody.

On average, 24 people were admitted to the jail daily in December (standard dev. = 6.6) and reached a peak on December 16, when 37 people were admitted to the jail. 23 people were admitted to the jail on the last day of the month. In all, 744 people were admitted to the jail in December 2024.

Daily jail releases varied more widely than jail admissions in December (daily average = 25 releases; standard dev. = 10.6). On December 3, 49 people were released from the jail, the largest number of releases during the month. 13 people were released from jail on the last day of the month. In all 770 people were released from the jail in December 2024.

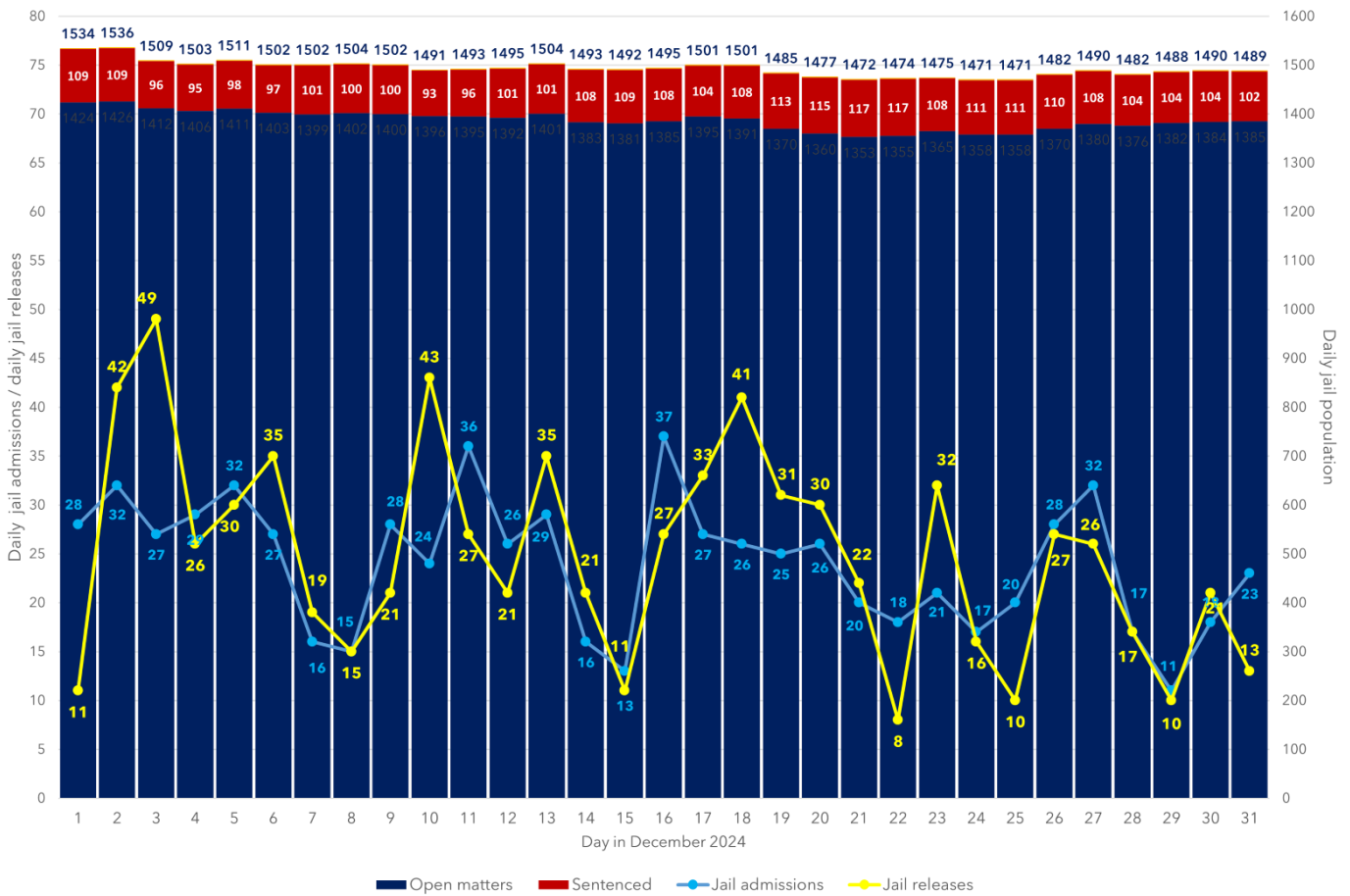


Figure 2. Daily population by legal status; daily jail admissions; and daily jail releases, December 2024

On average, 93% of people detained in the jail in December were in custody on open matters. By “open matters”, we refer to people whose court cases have not yet reached a final disposition and those booked solely on open warrants and/or probation/parole detainees.

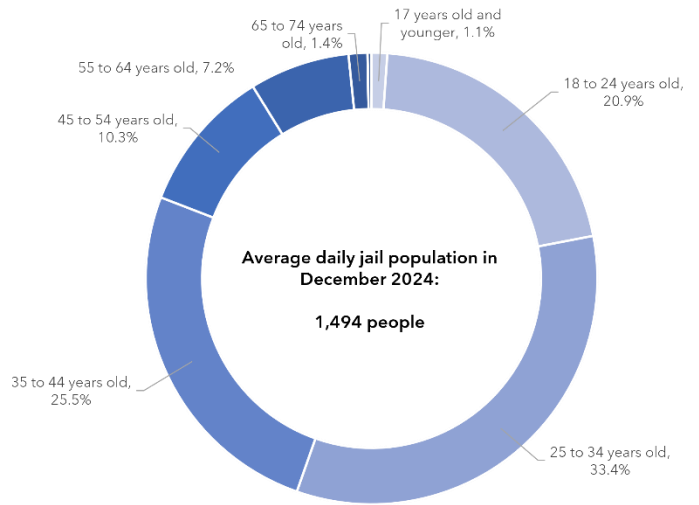
7% of the average daily population – about 105 people each day in December – comprised people who have been sentenced to the Louisiana Department of Corrections or the Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System and are awaiting transport to those facilities.

On average, 9 out of 10 people detained in the jail in December were between the ages of 18 and 54 years as of the last day of the month.

17 youths under the age of 18 years, on average, were in jail custody last month and made up 1.1% of the average daily jail population in December.

Figure 3 (at right). Average daily jail population in December 2024 by age ranges.

Note that age is calculated as the difference in years between date of birth and December 31, 2024, rounded down. On average, 0.3% of the last month's jail population comprised people aged 75 years or older.



Focus on racial equity: Overrepresentation and disparity in jail detention

New Orleans is a majority-Black city, yet African Americans are overrepresented in the average jail population. In December, Black people comprised 88% of the average daily jail population, yet make up 59% of the New Orleans population, according to Census population estimates. Conversely, white people are underrepresented in the December average jail population. Last month, white people made up 10% of the average jail population yet make up 31% of the city's population.

For more information about how we define overrepresentation, please see the Glossary at the end of the report.

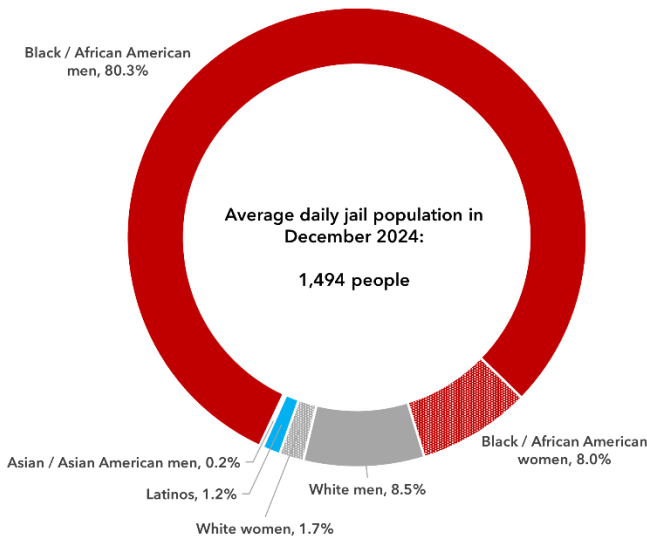


Figure 4. Average daily jail population by race/ ethnicity and sex, December 2024.

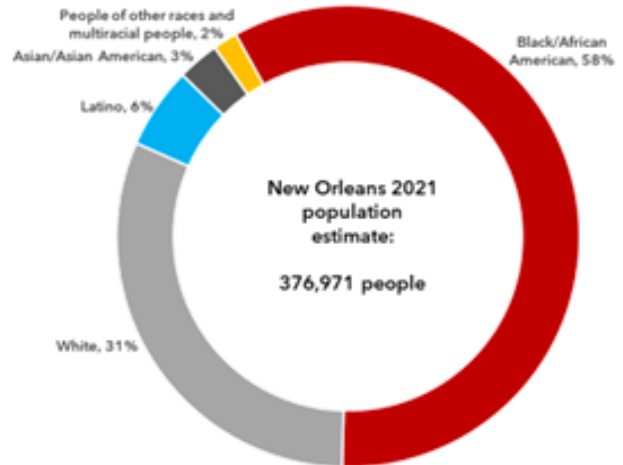


Figure 5. New Orleans population estimate, 2024, Source: Summary file 5, American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Focus on racial equity: Overrepresentation and disparity in jail detention, continued.

'Wide' disparities by race persisted in jail detention rates in December 2024. Even when we control for the difference in size between Black and white populations in our city, we find that **Black people are detained in the jail at over 4 times the rate of white people, per 100,000 New Orleans by race** (relative rate index [RRI] = 4.6). For every 100,000 Black / African American New Orleanians, 599 Black people were in jail custody, on average, in December. For every 100,000 white New Orleanians, 129 white people were detained in the jail last month. The December jail detention rate for all New Orleanians was 396 detained people per 100,000 residents.

More than 4 Black people were detained in the jail... ...For every 1 white person detained in the jail



per 100,000 Black New Orleanians



per 100,000 white New Orleanians

Figure 6. Relative rate index (RRI) of detention rates per 100,000 New Orleans residents by Black and white race categories, December 2024. Note that population estimates are from the 2021 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

744 people were admitted to the jail in December 2024

In December 2024, 744 people were admitted to the jail, a 4.7% decrease from November, when 781 people were admitted to the jail. 51.6% of those admitted to the jail – 386 people – who were admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking, and 28.6% – 213 people – were admitted to the jail with a new state misdemeanor as the most serious charge at booking.

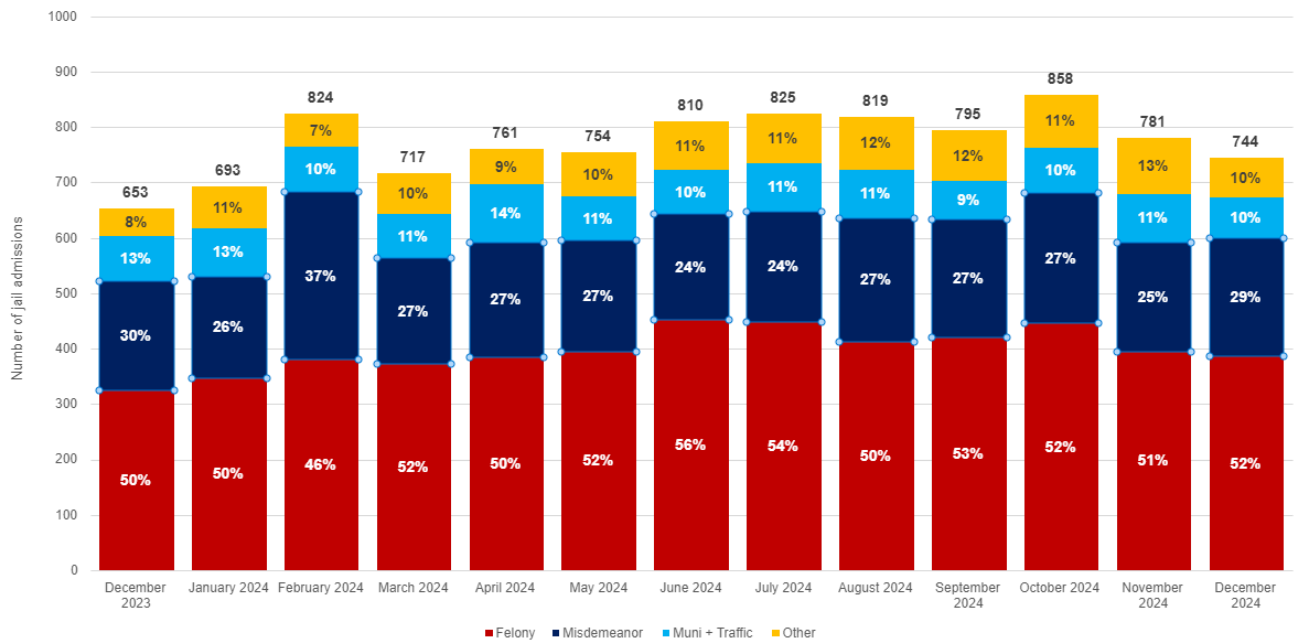
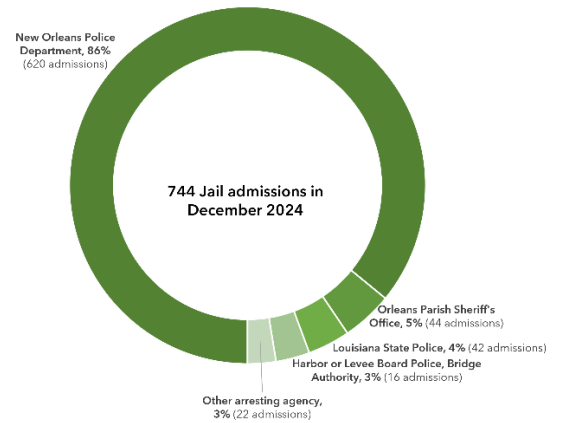


Figure 7. Historical trends in jail admissions by most serious charge category at booking and average monthly jail population, December 2023 - December 2024. Note that "Other" admissions include people booked into the jail for warrants or detainers only; people remanded to jail custody by the Court; and people brought to the jail on writs.

83%, or 620 of the 744 people admitted to the jail last month, had been arrested by NOPD officers.

Louisiana State Police (LSP), having expanded their presence in our city beyond patrolling the French Quarter in 2024, arrested 44 people (6%) who were admitted to the jail in December, a 22% increase from the 36 LSP arrests that resulted in jail admissions in November.

Figure 8 (at right). December 2024 jail admissions by arresting officers' agency. Note that "Other arresting agency" December include campus police departments, HANO police, and LA Probation & Parole.



More than 4 out of 5 jail admissions (80.1%) in December were for felonies or state misdemeanors, an increase of nearly 5 percentage points from November, when 592 people out of a total 781 admissions were admitted with state-level charges. In December, 389 people were admitted to the jail with felony charges (51.9% of all jail admissions), and 213 people were admitted to the jail with state misdemeanor charges (28.6% of all jail admissions).

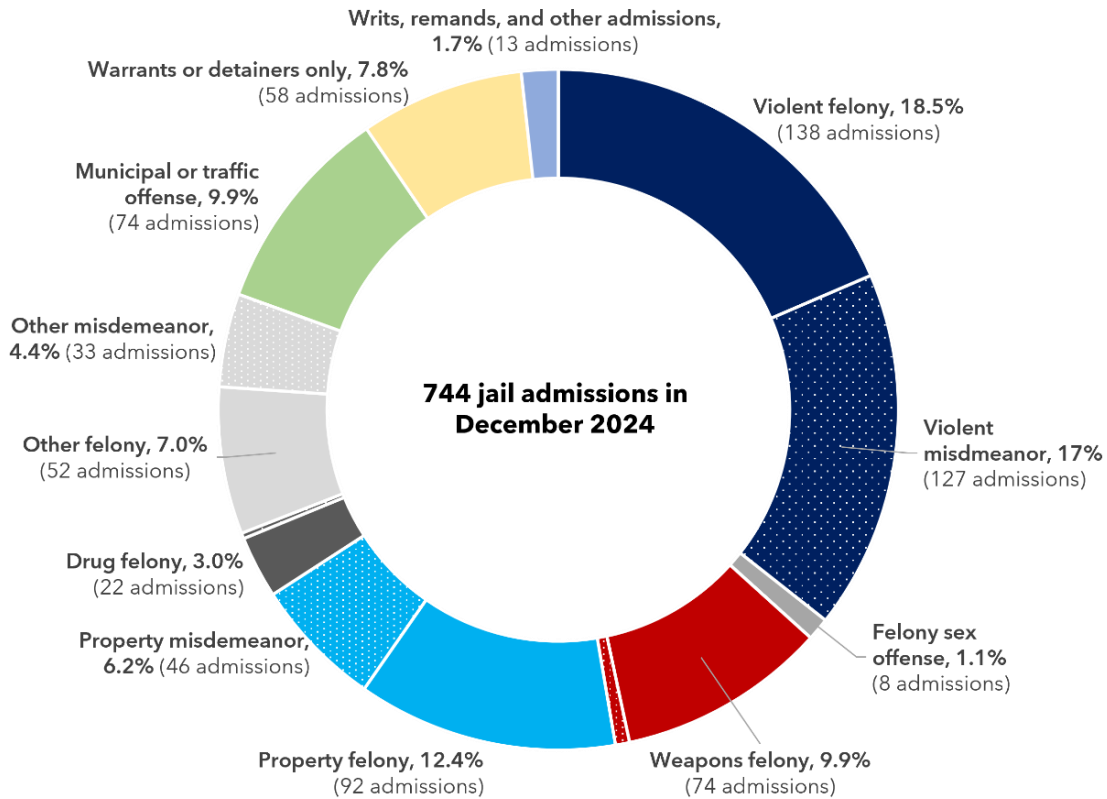
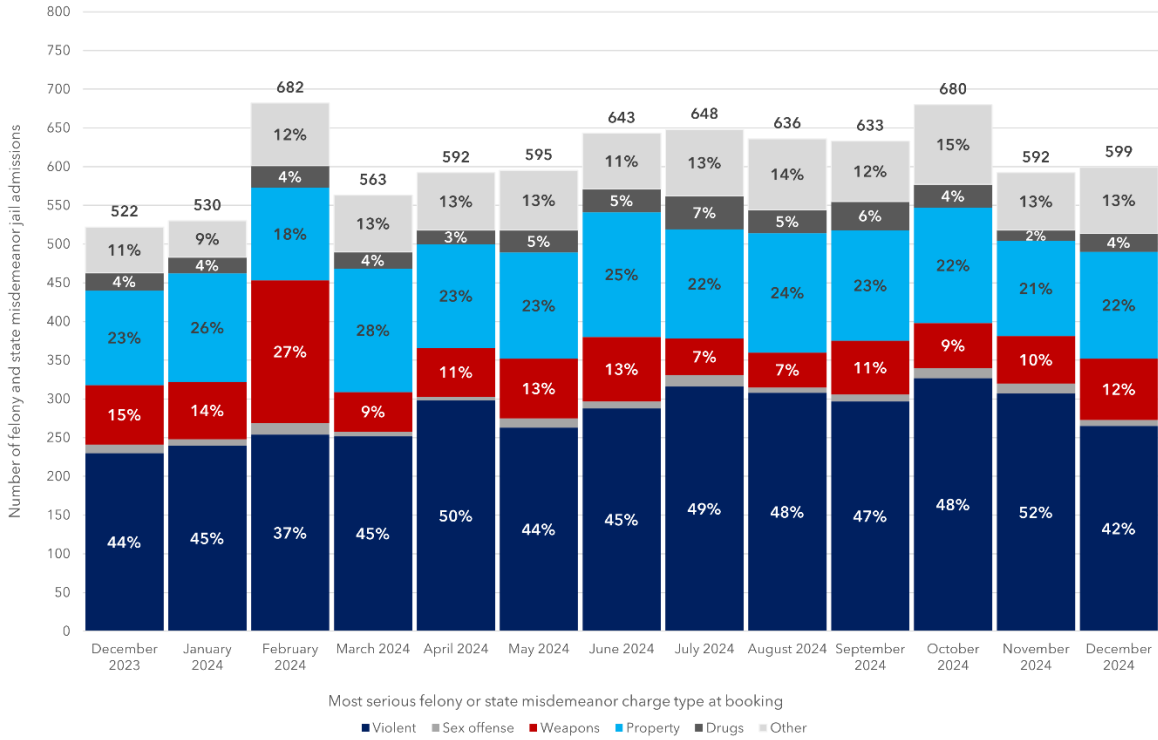


Figure 9. Jail admissions by most serious charge category at initial booking, December 2024.

Note that 5 people (0.7% of all December jail admissions) had misdemeanor weapons charges, and 2 people (0.3%), misdemeanor drug charges as the most serious offense at admission. No one was admitted to the jail with a misdemeanor sex offense as the most serious charge at booking in December.

In December, 265 people (42% of 599) admitted to the jail on felony and state misdemeanor charges had been booked on violent offenses. This is a 13.6% decrease from November, when 307 people were admitted on violent felonies and state misdemeanors, and admissions on violent offenses made up 52% of all admissions on state-level charges.



Focus on racial equity: Disparities in jail admission rates

Racial disparities in jail admission rates persisted in December 2024. **Black people were admitted to the jail at over twice the rate of white people** (RRI = 2.6) for every 100,000 New Orleanians by race. 290 Black people were admitted to the jail for every 100,000 Black New Orleans residents, while 104 white people were admitted to the jail for every 100,000 white New Orleanians.

More than 2 Black people were admitted to the jail...

...For every 1 white person admitted to the jail.



per 100,000 Black residents in New Orleans



per 100,000 white residents of New Orleans

Figure 11. Relative rate index of jail admission rate per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race, December 2024. Population estimates are from the 2021 American Community Survey, Summary File 5, US Census Bureau.

Focus on racial equity: Disparities in jail admission rates, continued.

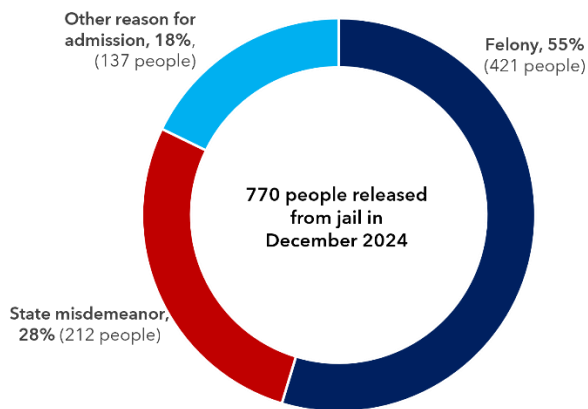


We also observed racial disparities in jail admissions per 100 admissions by most serious charge at booking. Notably, **African Americans were admitted to the jail with weapons felonies and state misdemeanors as the most serious offense at booking at 3 times the rate of white people** per 100 jail admissions by race.

Figure 13. Relative rate indexes per 100 jail admissions for Black and white people admitted to the jail in December by most serious charge category at admission.

770 people were released from jail, having spent an average of 48 days in custody

The median length of stay was 3 days for the 770 people released from jail in December, the same as November’s median ((average = 47.9 days; min = less than one day; max = 2,698 days; standard dev. = 159.1).



54.7% – 421 of the 770 people released from jail in December – had been admitted to the jail on felony offenses had an average length of stay of 77 days (median = 10 days; min = less than 1 day; standard dev. = 208.7).

212 people (27.5% of all people released in December) had state misdemeanors as the most serious charge at admission and stayed in jail, on average, 15 days (median = 2 day; min = less than 1 day; max = 350 days; standard dev. = 35.8).

17.8% of those where were released in December (137 people) had been admitted to the jail for warrants or detainers only; municipal or traffic offenses; on writs; or were remanded to the jail by the Court. On average, this group of released people stayed in jail an average of 9 days (median = less than 1day; max = 157 days; standard dev. = 24.4).

Figure 14. Jail releases by most serious charge type at admission, December 2024

Nearly 2 out of 3 people who were released from jail in December spent less than two weeks in custody (63.9%).

47.8% –368 people – had a length of jail stay of 2 days or fewer. The 402 people who stayed in jail for 3 days or more (52.2% of the 770 people released last month) had an average length of stay of 91 days and a median length of stay of 34 days (s max = 2,698 days; standard dev. = 208.7).

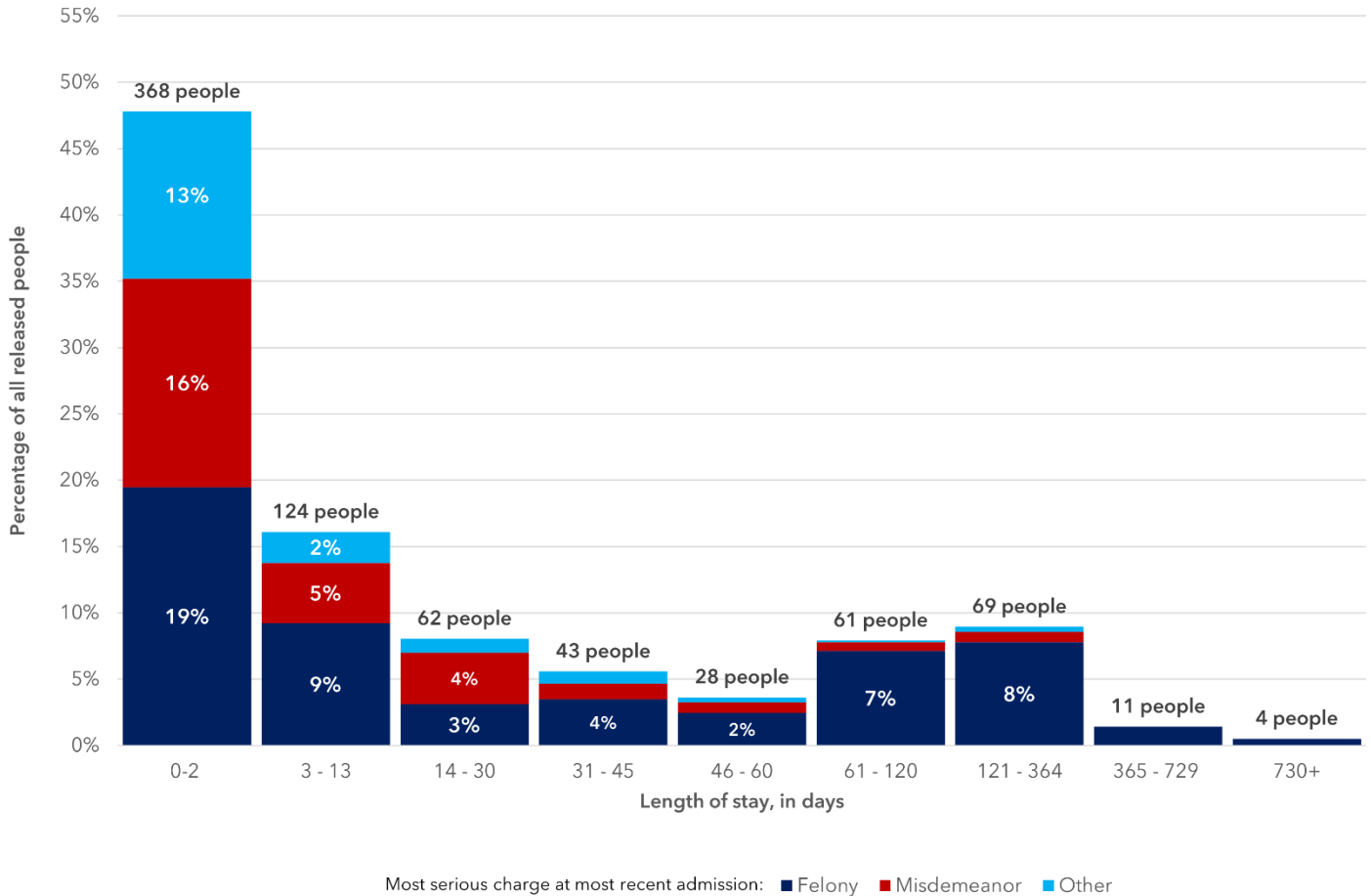


Figure 15. Jail releases by length of stay and most serious charge at admission, December 2024. N = 770

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in lengths of jail stays

In December 2024, African American people spent 15 days longer, on average, than white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American people and people of “other” and “unknown” race, combined, who were released from jail. The 613 Black people who left jail custody spent an average of 51 days in jail, compared to their 157 non-Black peers, who spend an average of 36 days in jail.

Compared to November 2024, the average length of stay for Black people who were released from jail in December decreased by 10 days, and the length of stay for white releasees has increased by 12 days. The disparity between lengths of stay for Black releasees and white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American released people decreased by 24 days in December compared to November.

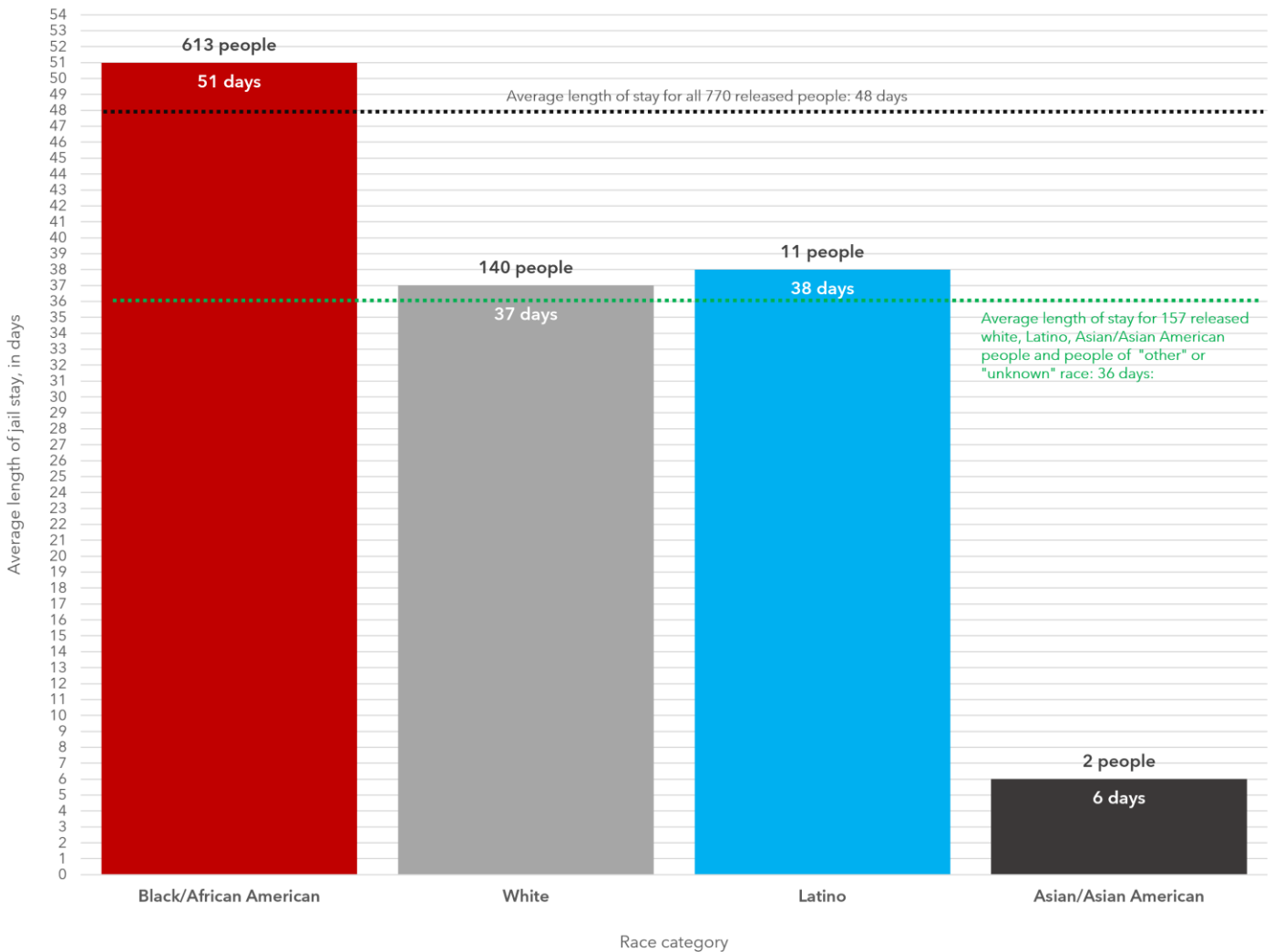


Figure 16. Average length of jail stays, in days, by race / ethnicity, December 2024. N = 770.

Note that 1 Indigenous person and 1 person of “unknown” race were released from the jail last month; their lengths of stay are excluded from the graphic but included in the average calculation for non-Black released people.

Glossary of terms and technical notes

Criminal legal system definitions

Average monthly jail population. The sum of all the daily detainee counts divided by the number of days in the month. We use an average, rather than a population snapshot (i.e. the daily count on a single day of the month) so that we can report one figure that takes into consideration all the daily counts and day-to-day fluctuations in jail population during the month. We also contextualize the average monthly jail population by reporting the minimum and maximum daily populations and the standard deviation for all daily jail counts in the month.

Jail admissions. We acknowledge that the term, *jail admission*, may be defined differently in correctional, pretrial, and other spaces. Here, we define jail admissions as the transfer of custody from an arresting agency to the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office following custodial arrests that occurred outside of the jail. Certainly, people can be and are booked on new charges after admission to the jail (for example, for offenses that can only take place within a jail, such as battery of a correctional officer), our tabulations and analyses only consider bookings that brought a person from the community into the jail, consistent with the central aims of the report.

Jail releases. A person's exit from jail custody. Note that the term, *releases*, can refer to releases back into the community (for example, when someone is released on their own recognizance or posts bond); releases to another jurisdiction's law enforcement agency (for example, in the case of someone admitted to the jail on an out-of-state warrant); or releases to the Department of Corrections after sentencing.

Length of jail stay. The difference, in days, between the date of jail admission and the date of jail release. Note that the length of stay is only calculated for people who have been released from jail to ensure a final, static figure.

Average length of stay. The mean of all jail stays for people released during the month, calculated as the sum of all lengths of stay for people released during the month divided by the number of people released during the same month. To contextualize our reporting of the average length of stay, we also report the shortest lengths of stay (i.e. the minimum; usually less than 1 day); the longest length of stay (i.e. the maximum); and the standard deviation for all lengths of stay for people released during the month.

Median length of stay. When a released person has been released from jail custody after a very long jail stay, that person's length of stay can skew the average length of stay upward. We report the median length of stay, the midway point between all observed lengths of jail stays for people released during the month.

Most serious charge at booking. We use a hierarchy of charge categories to determine the most serious charge at booking. In the hierarchy, all charges are categorized into four types: 1) felonies; 2) state misdemeanors; 3) municipal and traffic offenses; 4) warrants, attachments, and Louisiana parole and probation detainers. All felonies are more serious than state misdemeanors, and within the felony and state misdemeanor categories is a sub-hierarchy of offense types, listed here in order of seriousness: a) violent offenses; b) sex offenses; c) weapons offenses; d) property offenses; e) drug offenses; and f) 'other' offenses.

Average 7-day jail turnover rate: A measure "borrowed" from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average 7-day jail turnover rate aims to capture in broad terms the movement of people into and out of the jail. We calculate the jail turnover rate by dividing the average daily population for the month by the sum of jail admissions and jail releases, multiplying by 7, and dividing by the number of days in the month.

How we operationalize measures of inequality

Disproportionality and over- and underrepresentation. We use these terms to compare the demographic characteristics of a group (like people detained in the jail) to the demographic characteristics of the larger community from which most of that group came (like Orleans Parish). When both groups share similar proportions of people by demographic characteristics, we observe proportionality. We observe disproportionality when one demographic group -- for example, Black people or white people detained in the jail--is overrepresented (in the case of Black people in the jail) or is underrepresented, in comparison with the demographic characteristics of Orleans Parish.

Disparity. We use the term, disparity, to refer to differences in the rates at which something occurs among 2 or more groups. To explore the possibility of disparity in our jail population reports, we first calculate the rate of jail detention per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race/ethnicity. The jail detention rate is the average jail population for a group (say, Black people detained in the jail during the month) divided by the estimated number of Black people in New Orleans, then multiplied by 100,000. Generating a rate per 100,000 is useful when comparing rates between groups of differing sizes (for example, the population of New Orleans, a majority [58%] African American city), we can "control" for the differences in size by comparing rates per 100,000 residents.

Further, we can "relate" the jail detention rate for Black people with that of white people to generate a relative rate index (RRI). To do this, we divide the Black jail detention rate per 100,000 Black people in New Orleans by the jail detention rate for white people per 100,000 residents. By using the white rate as the denominator in the calculation, we effectively index the white rate to 1 and defensibly make the statement that, in December 2023 (for example), Black people were jailed at a rate 4.8 times that of white people. We observe parity – a measure of equality – when the RRI = 1.

Notes about race / ethnicity categories

Our reporting on racial and ethnic demographics of people detained in the jail is based on data collected by Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) deputies during the jail admission process. OPSO uses the following mutually exclusive categories for race: Black; White; Hispanic; Asian; American Indian; and Unknown. The race and ethnicity categories currently in use by OPSO do not quite align with those used by the US Census Bureau, which defines race and ethnicity as separate constructs.

Our reporting is rooted in an understanding that the inequalities that we observe are reflections and symptoms of systemically racist systems. We view mass incarceration in the US as the cumulative effects of systemic racism that impact everyone's lives before any one person is ever booked into jail. Accordingly, our reporting about racial disproportionalities should not be interpreted as critiques of Black people or Black culture; nor should it be interpreted as evidence to support detention of more white people to reduce inequalities.

One thing to keep in mind: we use these measures and categories as a kind of shorthand to describe inequalities, but they certainly don't tell the whole story. Race – like other categories like gender – is a broad social construct that is shaped by history and contains other constructs, like socio-economic status and access to essentials such as education and health care. Accordingly, the purpose of the sections is to highlight some observed areas of inequality, in the hope that it sparks continued conversation about how to make our community more just and equitable.

We welcome your feedback and questions!

As a stakeholder, have you noticed something and wondered if data exists to confirm or contextualize your observations? At OCJC, we are interested in your observations and data questions. Please reach out to Adrienne Tobler at adrienne.tobler@nola.gov to further discuss the possibility of exploring your questions about the jail population.

For technical questions, please contact Theresa McKinney at theresa.mckinney@nola.gov.