



# Orleans Parish Jail Population by the numbers

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

## August 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

- On average, **1,430 people were detained in the jail daily in August 2024.**
  - A 0.6% increase from the average daily jail population of 1,422 people in July 2024.
  - A 26% increase compared to August 2023, when 1,133 people, on average, were detained in the jail,
- **819 people were admitted to the jail in August**, a 0.7% decrease compared to July, when 825 people were admitted to the jail. Over half – 50.3%, or 412 people – admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking.
- **821 people were released from the jail in August**, an increase of 9% from July when 755 people were released from jail custody.
- **The average length of stay for the 821 people released from the jail in August was 53 days** (min = less than 1 day; max = 1,179 days; standard dev. = 139.7).
  - The median length of stay for all people released in August was 3 days, the same as July's median.
  - 401 people (49% of releasees) left jail custody within 2 days of admission.
  - People who were released more than 2 days after admission had an average jail stay of 102 days (n = 420 people; min = 3 days; standard dev. = 181.9) and a median length of stay of 37 days.
- Racial disparities persist in the jail population. In August 2024, **Black people were detained in the jail at 5.2 times the rate of white people**, per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race.
  - The August jail detention rate for Black people was 524 Black detainees per 100,000 Black residents, compared with the white rate of 101 white detainees per 100,000 white residents.
  - The August jail detention rate for all New Orleanians was 379 detained people per 100,000 residents.

The average monthly jail population in August 2024 was 1,430 people (standard dev. = 14.7), a 0.6% increase from July, when the average jail population was 1,422 people. The small increase is a break in the steady upward trend in the jail population that we have observed since March 2024. The average monthly population has increased by 26% compared to August 2023, when, on average 1,133 people were detained in the jail.

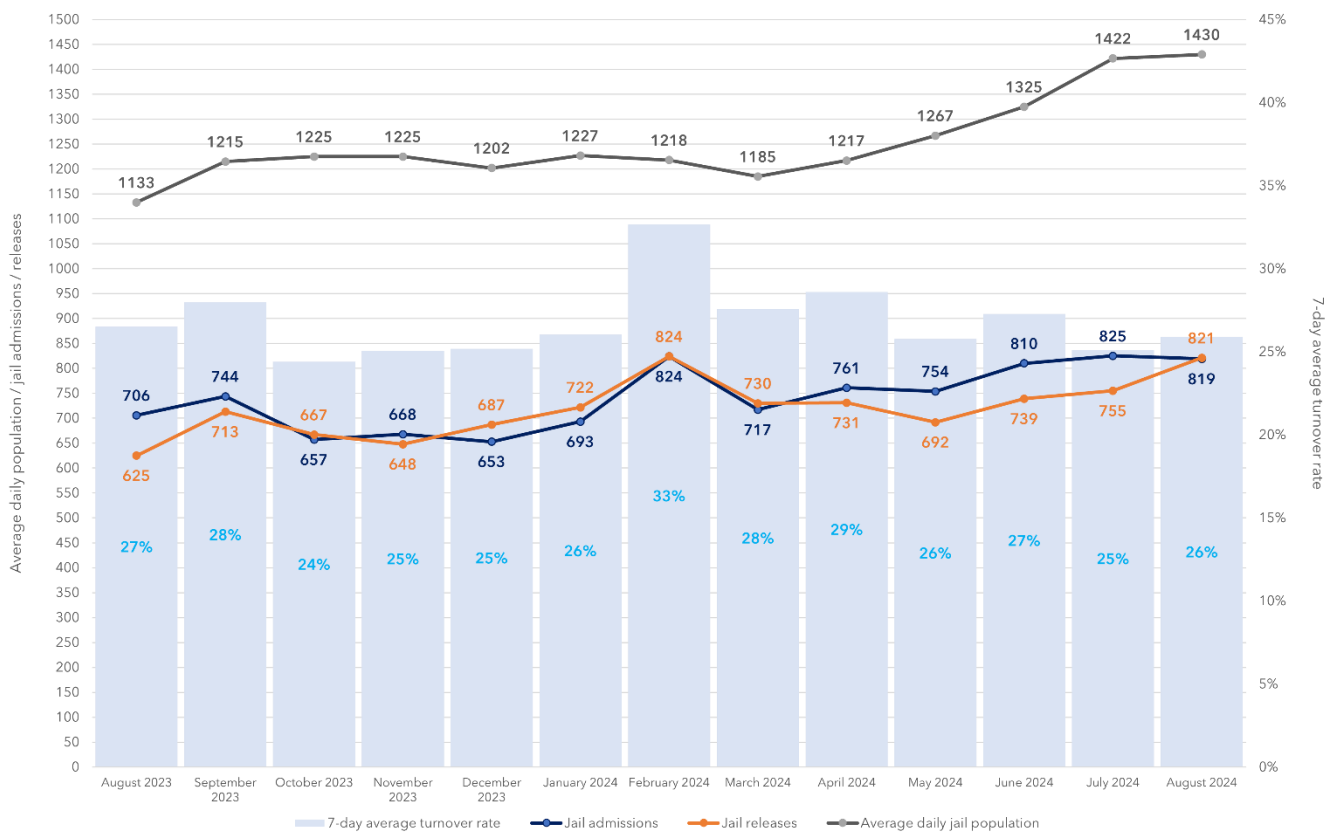


Figure 1. Historical trends in average jail population, monthly admissions, monthly releases, and 7-day average turnover rates, August 2023 - August 2024

The 7-day average jail turnover rate for August 2024 was 26%, 1 percentage point higher than July's rate. The jail turnover rate is a ratio of jail admissions and release to the average daily population. On average, 1 out of 4 people detained during a week in August were newly admitted to or about to be released from custody. Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that in 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national average weekly turnover rate for jails of our size was 31%.

The lowest daily jail population was on August 6<sup>th</sup>, when 1,389 people were detained in the jail. The daily jail population hit its peak on August 26<sup>th</sup>, when 1,457 were detained in the jail. 1,351 people were in jail custody on the last day of the month.

Daily jail admissions varied daily in August (daily average = 26 admissions; standard dev. = 7.5) and reached a peak on August 16<sup>th</sup>, when 41 people were admitted to the jail. 20 people were admitted on the last day in August. In all, 819 people were admitted to the jail last month.

Jail releases fluctuated more widely than jail admissions in August (daily average = 26 releases; standard dev. = 10.6). On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 50 people were released from the jail, the largest number of releases during the month. 19 people were released from the jail on the last day of the month. In all, 821 people were released from jail in August 2024.

Most people in jail custody in August – 94%, on average – were detained on open matters. By “open matters”, we’re referring to people whose court cases have not yet reached their final disposition and those who were admitted to the jail with open warrants and/or probation or parole detainers only.

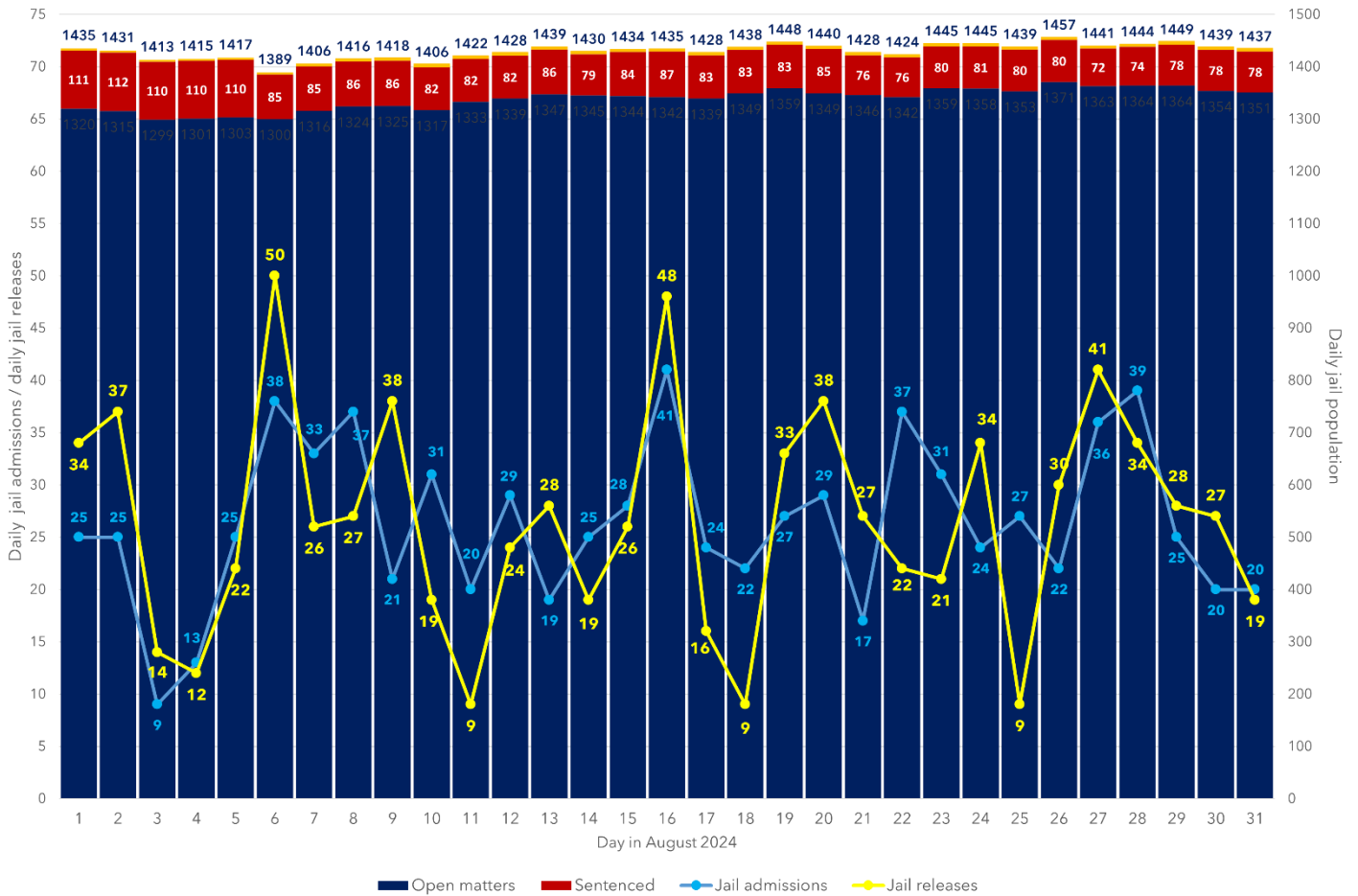


Figure 2. Daily population by legal status; jail admissions; and jail releases, August 2024

6% of the average daily jail population – about 86 people in custody each day in August – comprised detained people with closed matters. By “closed matters”, we mean that at least one case associated with their current jail stay has reached its final disposition. Included in this group are people who have been sentenced to the Department of Corrections or the Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System and are awaiting transport to those facilities.

Focus on racial equity: Overrepresentation and disparity in jail detention

Black people are overrepresented in the jail population

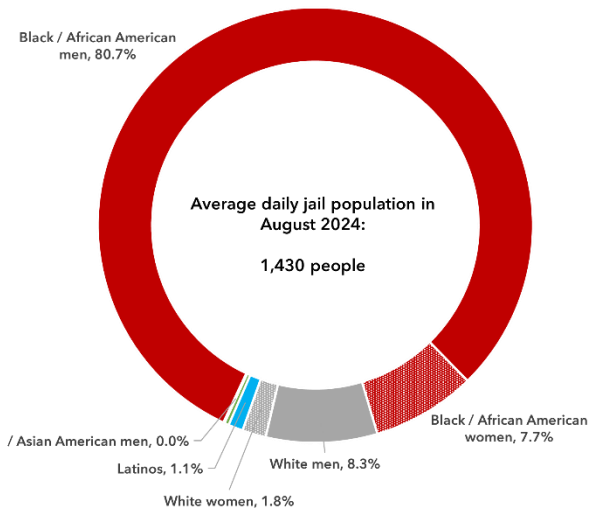


Figure 3. Average daily population by race/ethnicity, August 2024.

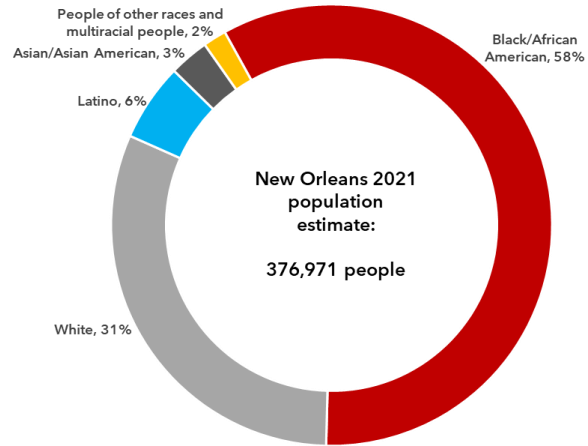


Figure 4. New Orleans population estimate, 2021. Source: Summary Files, 2021 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

**New Orleans is a majority-Black city, yet African Americans remain overrepresented in the average jail population.** In August, Black/African American people comprised 88% of the average daily jail population. In comparison, Black people are 59% of the New Orleans population, based on 2021 Census estimates.

If Black people are disproportionately represented in the average jail population, white people are under-represented in the jail population. In August, white people made up 10% of the average jail population, while making up 31% of the New Orleans population, based on 2021 Census estimates.

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

**'Wide' disparities persist in jail detention rates**

Even when we control for the difference in population sizes of Black and white New Orleans residents, we find that, per 100,000 New Orleanians by race, **Black people are detained in the jail at nearly five times the rate of white people (RRI = 5.2)**. For every 100,000 Black/African American New Orleanians, 524 Black people were in detained in August 2024; for every 100,000 white New Orleanians, 101 white people were in jail custody.

**5 Black people were detained in the jail...**



per 100,000 Black New Orleanians

**...For every 1 white person detained in the jail**



per 100,000 white New Orleanians

Figure 5. Relative rate index of jail detention rates by Black and white race categories, August 2024. Population estimates are from the 2021 American Community Survey, Summary File 4, US Census Bureau.

819 Jail admissions in August 2024

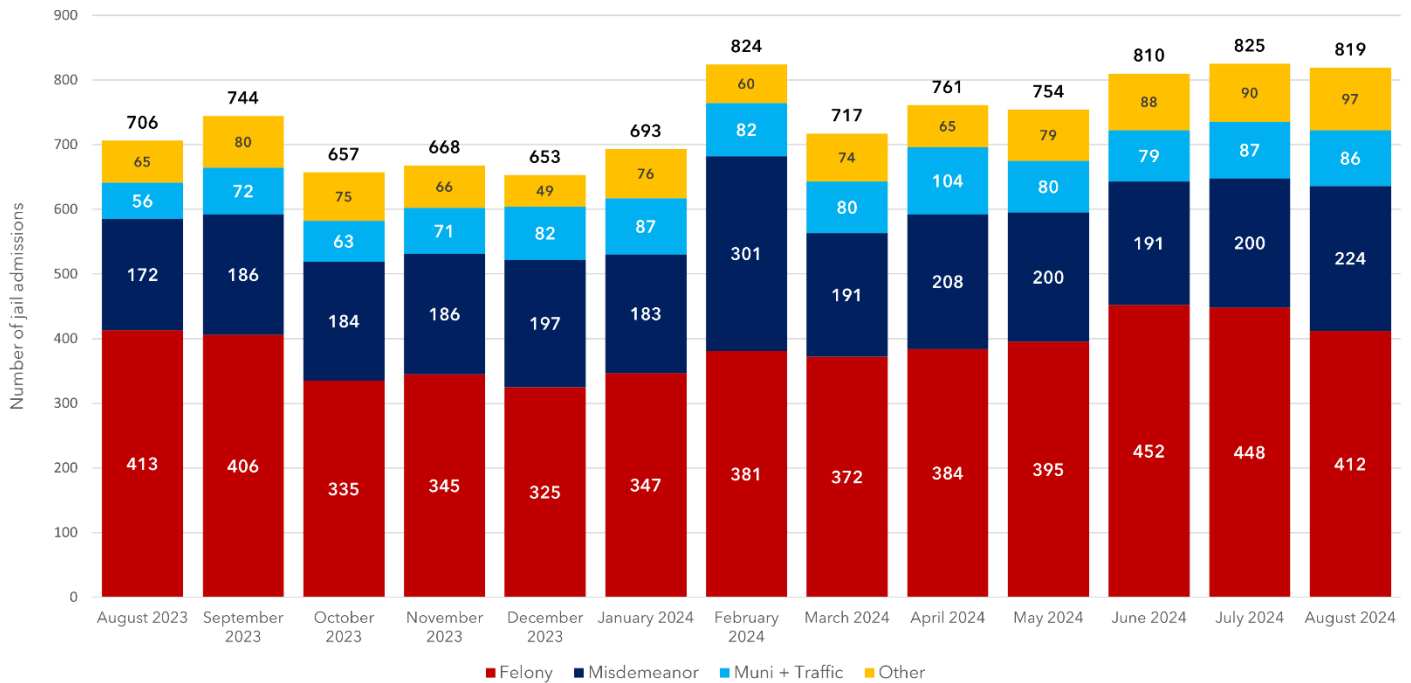


Figure 6. Jail admissions by most serious charge category at booking, August 2023 - August 2024. Note that "Other" admissions include people booked into the jail for warrants or detainers only; people remanded to jail custody by the Court; and people brought to the jail on writs.

819 were people admitted to the jail in August 2024, a 0.7% decrease from July, when 825 people were admitted to the jail. Over half – 50.3%, or 412 people – admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking, and 27% – 224 people – were admitted to jail with a new state misdemeanor as the most serious charge at booking.

Most people who were admitted to the jail in August – 84%, or 691 out of the 819 jail admissions – had been arrested by NOPD officers.

Louisiana State Police, which earlier this year expanded their presence in the city beyond patrolling the French Quarter, arrested 2%, or 14 people, who were admitted to the jail in August.

In previous months, OCJC reported around 8% of monthly jail admissions had incomplete or missing arresting agency data. We have updated our processes and will report revised figures for February through July 2024 in a future report.

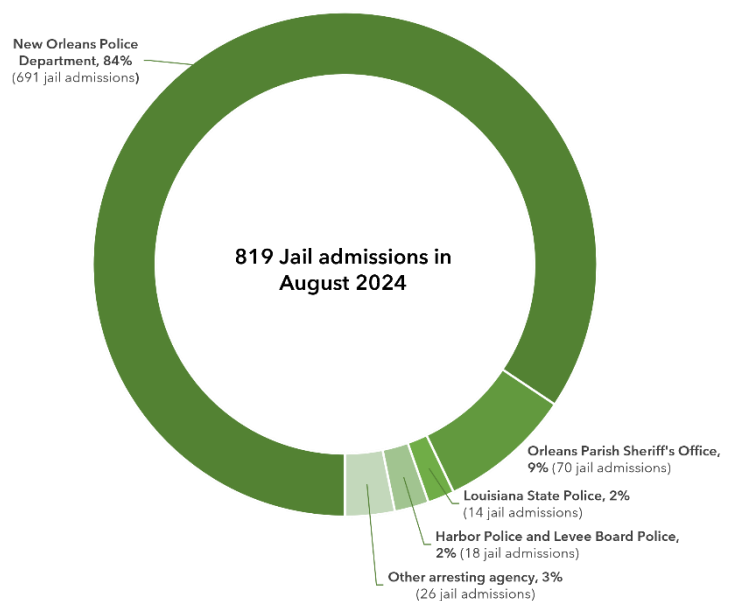


Figure 7. August 2024 jail admissions by arresting officer's agency. Note that "Other arresting agency" August include campus police departments, HANO police, and LA Probation & Parole.

Nearly 8 out of 10 jail admissions in August 2024 – 77.7%, or 636 people out of the 819 people admitted in August – were for felonies or state misdemeanors. 412 people were admitted to the jail with felony charges (50% of all jail admissions in the month), and 224 people were admitted to the jail with state misdemeanor charges (27% of all jail admissions).

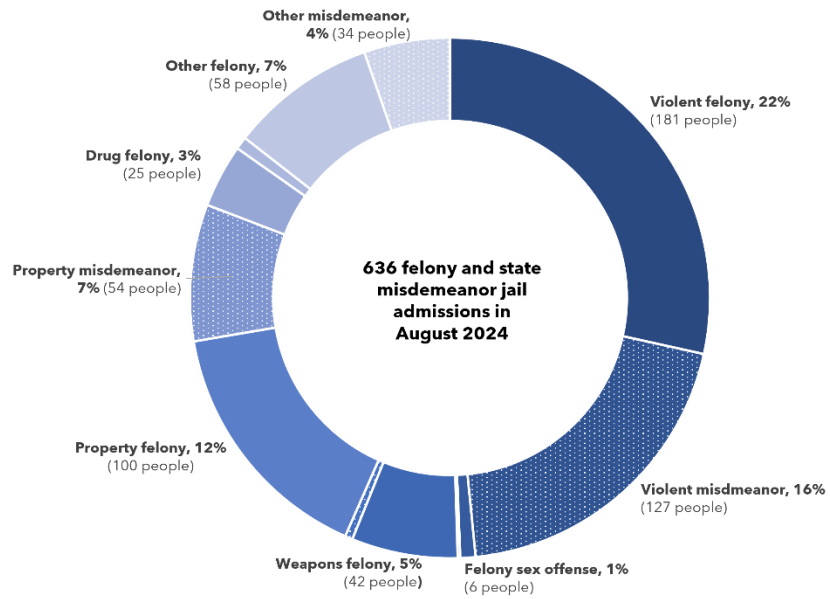


Figure 8. Jail admissions by most serious charge at admission, August 2024. 1 person was admitted with a misdemeanor sex offense; 3 people were admitted with a weapons misdemeanor; and 5 people were admitted with a drug misdemeanor as the most serious charge at admission in August.

People admitted to the jail with violent felonies and misdemeanors made up the plurality – 48% – of jail admissions in August 2024.

People admitted to the jail with weapons charges as the most serious offense at booking held steady at 7% of felony and state misdemeanor admissions, after notable decrease from June to July. New concealed carry laws took effect on 4 July 2024.

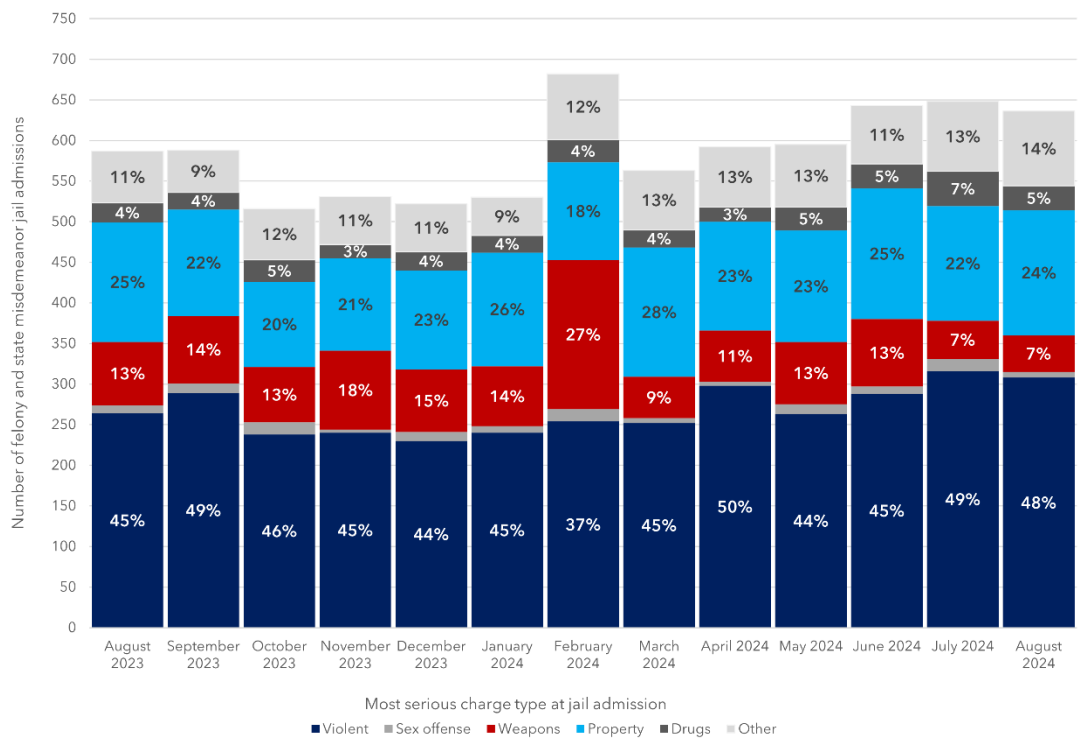


Figure 9. Historical trends in jail admissions with felonies and state misdemeanors by most serious charge type at admission, August 2023 – August 2024.

**Focus on racial equity: Disparities in jail admission**

Disparities by race in jail admissions persisted in August 2024. **Black people were admitted to the jail at nearly 3 times the rate of white people for every 100,000 New Orleans by race** (RRI = 2.8). Overall, New Orleans admitted 219 people into the jail for every 100,000 parish residents in August 2024. When we compare jail admission rates by race, we find that, in August, 303 Black people were booked into the jail for every 100,000 Black New Orleanians, and 109 white people were admitted to the jail for every 100,000 white New Orleanians.

**For nearly every 3 Black people admitted to the jail...**



*per 100,000 Black New Orleanians*

**...One white person was admitted to the jail**



*per 100,000 white New Orleanians*

Figure 12. Relative rate index, jail admission rate per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race, August 2024. Population estimates are from the 2021 American Community Survey, Summary File 4, US Census Bureau.

**The disparity in rates of jail admission for Black people booked into the jail on with weapon charges rose sharply in August**, from an RRI of 2.6 in July to 8.4 in August. The rate of admissions on weapons charges as the most serious offense at booking was 6.6 per 100 African Americans admitted to the jail, compared to 0.8 white people per 100 white people admitted to the jail.

The increase in RRI for jail admissions for weapons charges in August comes after a threefold decrease observed July, when the RRI fell from 7.4 in June. At the same time, both the number of jail admissions on weapons charges and the proportion of admissions of weapons out of all felony and state misdemeanor admissions has decreased since June.

In all, 44 Black people and 1 white person were admitted to the jail in August with 78 weapons charges as the most serious offense at admission. The most frequent weapons charge types were illegal carrying with drugs (27 charges, or 35% of the 78 total charges) and possession of a firearm by a person with a felony conviction (also 27 charges, or 35% of the 78 total charges).

**For every 8 Black people admitted to the jail with a weapons charge as the most serious offense..**



*per 100 Black people admitted to the jail*

**One white person is admitted to the jail with a weapons charge as the most serious offense.**



*per 100 white people admitted to the jail*

Figure 13. Relative rate index, jail admissions for which weapons charges were the most serious charge at booking per 100 jail admissions by race, August 2024

Using the relative rate index measure (RRI), where “1” represents racial parity, we observed disparities by race per 100 jail admissions across nearly all most-serious-charge-at-admission categories. For example, Black people are admitted to the jail with a drug offense as the most serious charge at booking at 2.6 times the rate of white people, and at half the rate of white people when warrants or possible probation or parole violations were the most serious charges at admission.

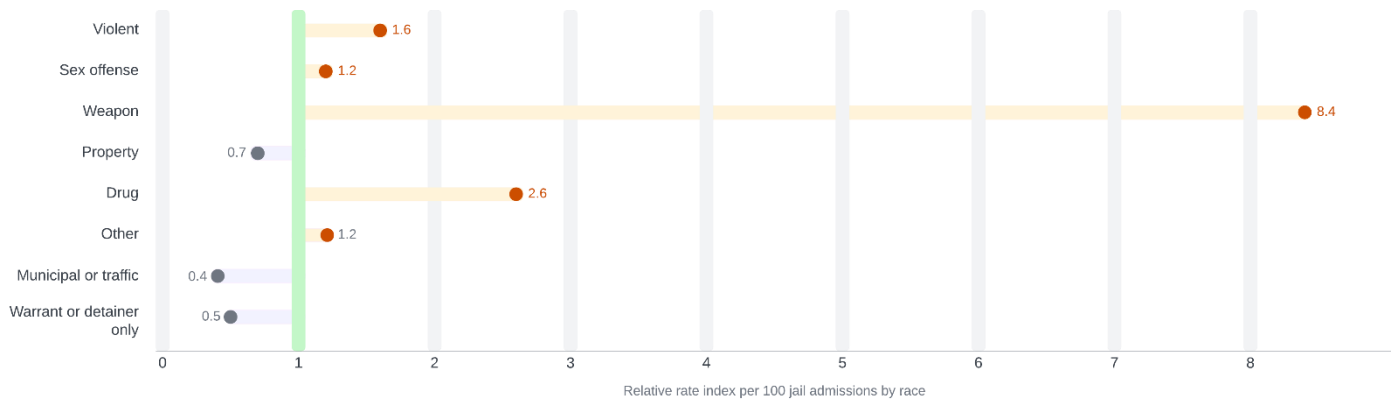


Figure 14. Relative rate indexes for most-serious-charge-at-admission categories per 100 jail admissions by race for Black and white people admitted to the jail, August 2024



**821 Jail releases and an average length of stay of 53 days in August 2024**

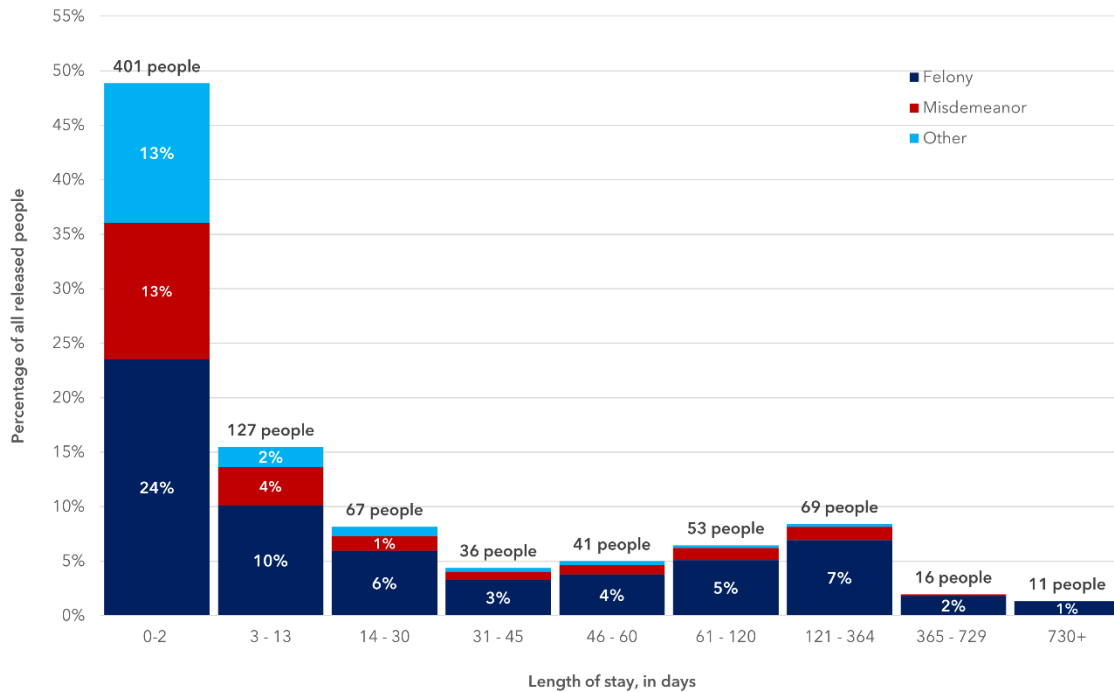


Figure 15. Jail releases by length of stay, in days, and most serious charge type at admission, August 2024, N = 821

**The median length of stay for the 821 people released from jail in August was 3 days**, the same as July’s median (average = 52.6 days; min = less than one day; max = 1,179 days; standard dev. = 139.7).

49% of the people released in August stayed in jail for 2 days or fewer. The 420 people who stayed in jail for 3 or more days had an average length of stay of 102 days and a median length of stay of 37 days (standard dev. = 181.9).

67% – 549 of the 821 people released from jail – had been admitted to the jail with at least one felony offense at admission and had an average length of stay of 71 days (median = 5 days; min = less than 1 day; standard dev. = 165.4).

171 people (21% of all people released in August) had at least one state misdemeanor as the most serious charge at admission and stayed in jail, on average, for 20 days (median = 1 day; min = less than 1 day; max = 370 days; standard dev. = 45.0).

12% of those who were released in August (101 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 = 0 days; max = 252 days; standard dev. = 30.0).

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in lengths of stay

In August 2024, the 666 African American people released from the jail spent an average of 57 days in jail – 25 days longer than the average length of stay of 32 days for the 155 white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American people and people of “unknown” race released from jail last month.

Compared to July 2024, the average length of stay for Black people who were released from jail has stayed the same, and the length of stay for white releasees decreased by 4 days. The disparity between lengths of stay for Black releasees and white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American released people decreased by 10 days in August compared to July.

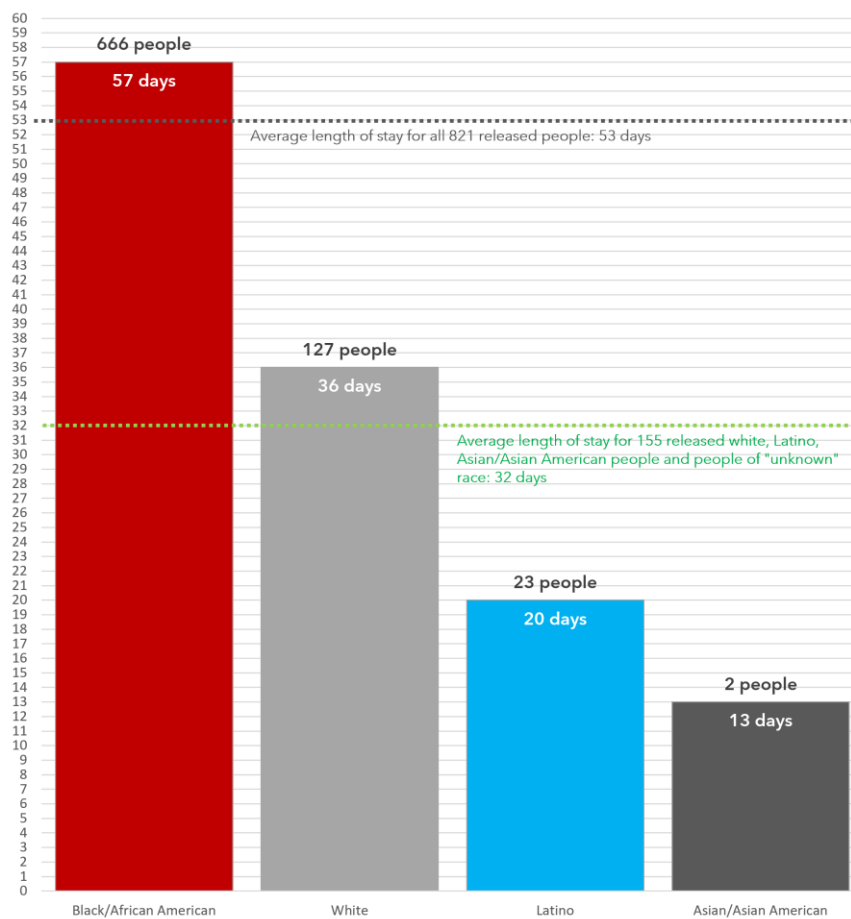


Figure 16. Average length of jail stays by race, August 2024, N = 755 released detainees. Note that 3 people with “unknown” or missing race data were released from jail last month; lengths of jail stay for this group are excluded from the graphic but included in the average length of stay calculation 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 snapshot (the jail population on a single day of the month which represents the jail population for the month) so that we can report one figure that takes into consideration the fluctuations in jail population during the month.

**Jail admissions.** We acknowledge that the term, *jail admission*, August be defined differently in correctional, pretrial, and other spaces. Here, we define jail admissions as bookings into the jail from the community; that is, jail admissions resulting from 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 'releases' can refer to releases back into the community (for example, when someone is released on their own recognizance or posts bond); release 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 release 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 divided by the number of people released.

**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 on 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.

### Glossary: How we operationalize measures of inequality, continued

**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 August 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 your observations? At OCJC, we are interested in your observations and data questions. Please reach out to Adrienne Tobler at [adrienne.tobler@nola.gov](mailto:adrienne.tobler@nola.gov) to further discuss the possibility of exploring your questions.

For technical questions, please contact Theresa McKinney at [theresa.mckinney@nola.gov](mailto:theresa.mckinney@nola.gov).