



Orleans Parish Jail Population by the numbers

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

February 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, **1,218 people were detained in the jail daily in February 2024**
 - A very small decrease from the January 2024 average daily jail population of 1,227 people.
- Compared to February 2023, when 1,008 people, on average, were detained in the jail, the average jail population has increased by nearly 21%.
- **824 people were admitted to the jail**, a 19% increase from January, when 677 people were admitted to the jail. 49%, or 381 people, were admitted to the jail with a felony as the most serious charge at booking.
- **824 people were released from the jail**, a 14% increase from January, when 722 people were released from jail, and 91% -- 749 people -- were released before the final disposition of their cases.
- **The average length of stay for the 824 people released from the jail in February was 50 days** (min = less than 1 day; max = 1,897 days; standard dev. = 165.7).
 - The median length of stay for all released people was 2 days, a decrease of one day from January's median.
 - 449 people (54%) were released from jail within 2 days of admission.
 - People who were released 2 days or more after admission had an average jail stay of 109 days (n = 375 people; min = 3 days; standard dev. = 232.4) and a median length of stay of 26 days.
- Racial disparities persist in the jail population. In February 2024, **Black people were detained in the jail at nearly 5 times the rate of white people**, per 100,000 New Orleans residents.
 - The jail detention rate for Black people was 487 Black detainees per 100,000 Black residents, compared with the white rate of 106 white detainees per 100,000 white residents.
 - The jail detention rate for all New Orleanians in February 2024 was 323 detained people per 100,000 residents.

The average monthly jail population in February 2024 was 1,218 people, a small decrease from January, when the average jail population was 1,227 people. The average monthly population has increased by nearly 21% compared to February 2023, when on average 1,008 people were detained in the jail.

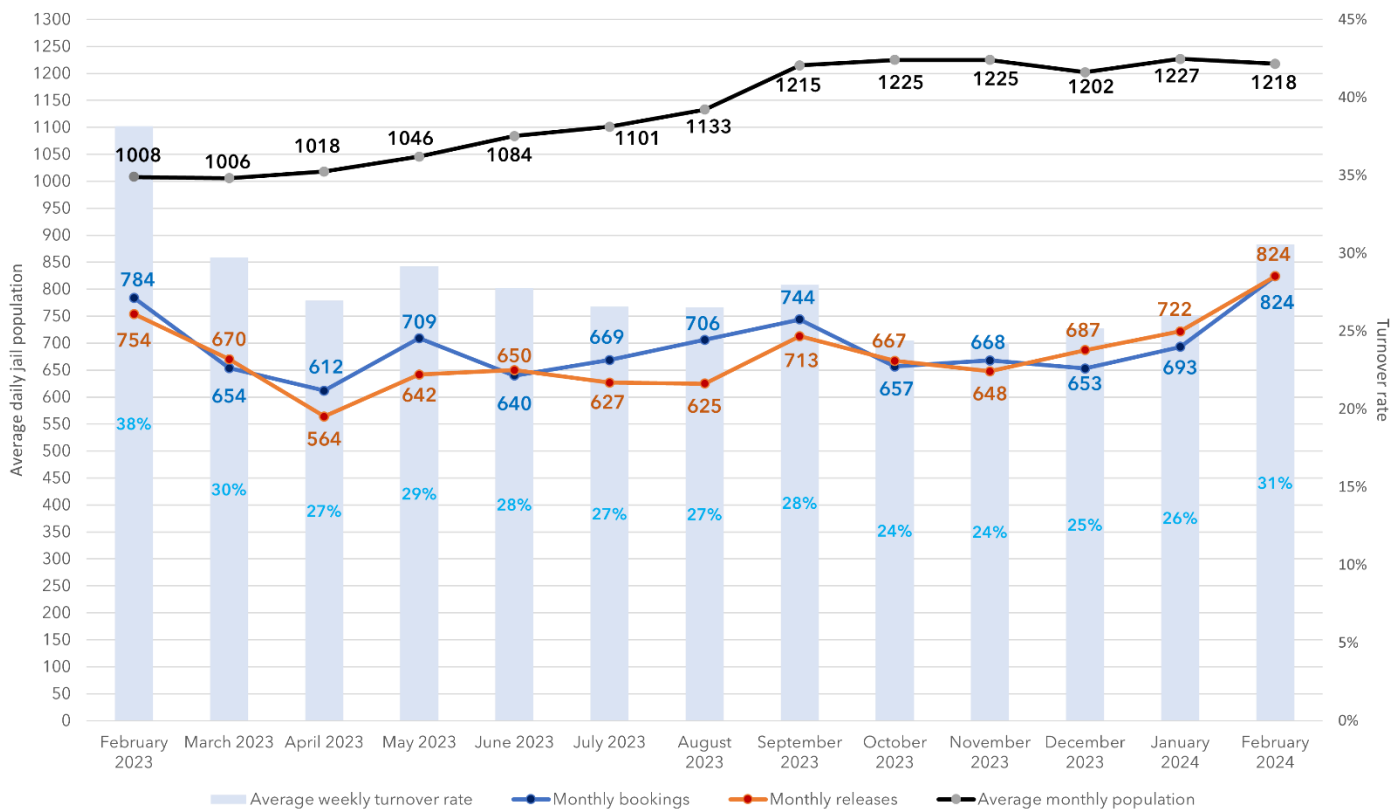


Figure 1. Historical trends in average jail population, admissions, and releases, February 2023 - February 2024

The average weekly jail turnover rate for February 2024 was 31%. The jail turnover rate is a ratio of jail admissions and release to the average daily population; it measures the “flow” of people into and out of the jail. On average, about 3 out of 10 people detained during any week in February were newly admitted to or about to be released from custody. February’s jail turnover rate was 5 percentage point higher than January’s rate. The 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 February 3rd, when 1,182 people were detained in the jail. The daily jail population hit its February peak on Ash Wednesday, when 1,256 were detained in the jail. The daily jail population on the last day of the month, 29 February, was 1,203 people.

Jail admissions trended upward in the days leading to Fat Tuesday, February 13th, and reached their peak on Sunday, February 11th, when 66 people were admitted to the jail. 19 people were admitted on the last day in February. In all, 824 people were admitted to the jail last month.

Jail releases fluctuated more widely than jail admissions in February. On Lundi Gras, 12 February, and Fat Tuesday, 52 and 54 people were released from the jail, the largest number of releases during the month. 36 people were released from the jail on the last day of the month. In all, 824 people were released from jail in February 2024.

Most people in jail custody in February-- 92%, 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.

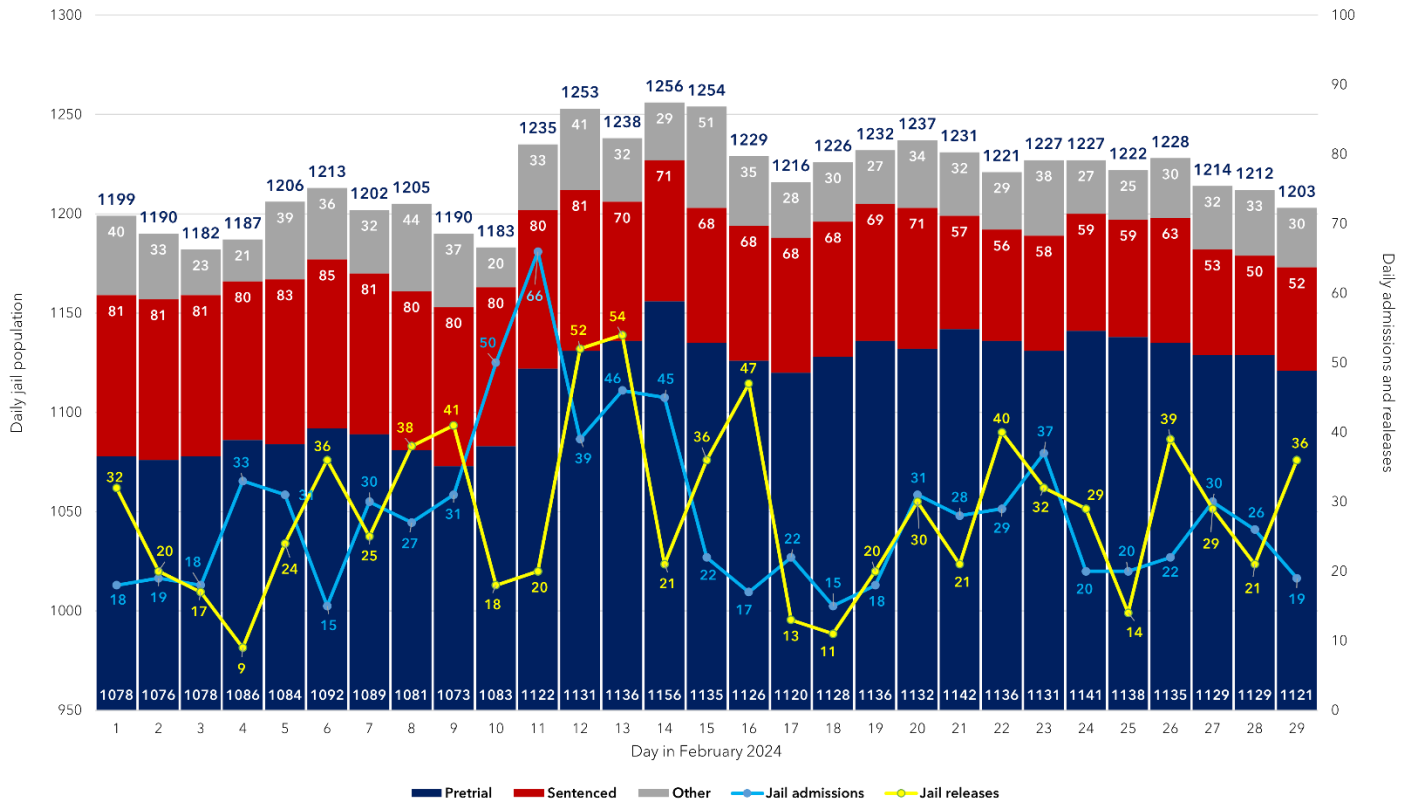


Figure 2. Daily population by legal status, jail admissions, and jail releases, February 2024

6% of the average daily jail population – about 70 people -- 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 had been sentenced to the Department of Corrections or the Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System and people who were serving short sentences for low-level offenses.

The remaining 3% of February’s average daily population – about 32 people - were in jail custody for "other matters", including outstanding local, out-of-parish, and out-of-state warrants; and possible parole and/or probation violations. People detained on "other matters" were not admitted to the jail with new offenses.

Focus on racial equity: Overrepresentation and disparity in jail detention

Black people are overrepresented in the jail population

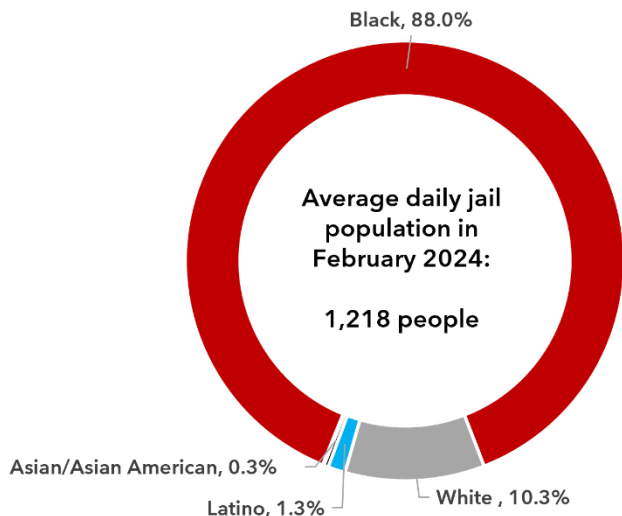


Figure 3. Average daily population by race/ethnicity, February 2024.

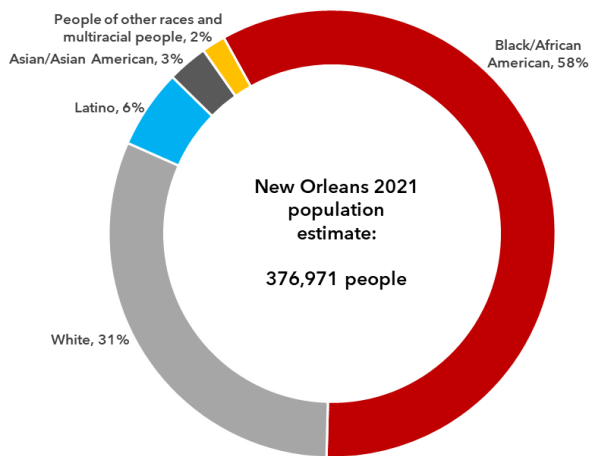


Figure 4. New Orleans population estimate, 2021. Source: Summary Files, 2021 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

New Orleans is a majority-Black city, yet African Americans remain overrepresented in the average jail population. In February, 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 February, 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 exist in jail detention rates

Even when we control for differences 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 = 4.6)**. For every 100,000 Black/African American New Orleanians, 487 Black people were in detained in November 2023; for every 100,000 white New Orleanians, 106 white people were in jail custody.

Nearly five Black people are detained in the jail...



...For every one white person is detained in the jail



Figure 5. Relative rate index of jail detention rates by Black and white race categories, February 2024.

For more about our definitions and the Relative Rate Index (RRI), please see the Glossary at the end of this report.

824 Jail admissions in February 2024

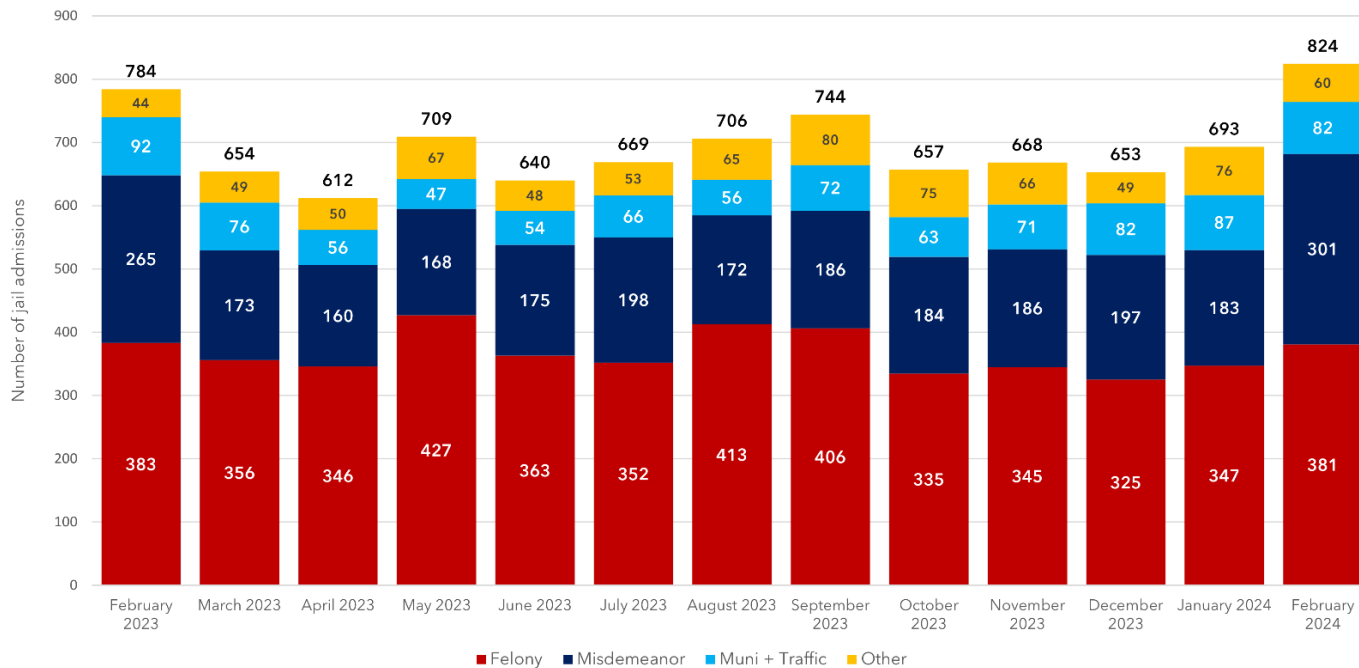


Figure 6. Jail admissions by most serious charge category at booking, February 2023 - February 2024

824 were people admitted to the jail in February 2024, a nearly 19% increase from January, when 693 people were admitted to the jail. 49%, or 381 people admitted to the jail last month had a new felony charge as the most serious charge at booking, and over 36% -- 301 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 February -- 81%, or 670 out of the 824 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 3%, or 22 people who were admitted to the jail in February.

Arresting agency data was missing for 56 people admitted to the jail, about 7% of February jail admissions. OCJC will revise this data graphic when the tables are updated.

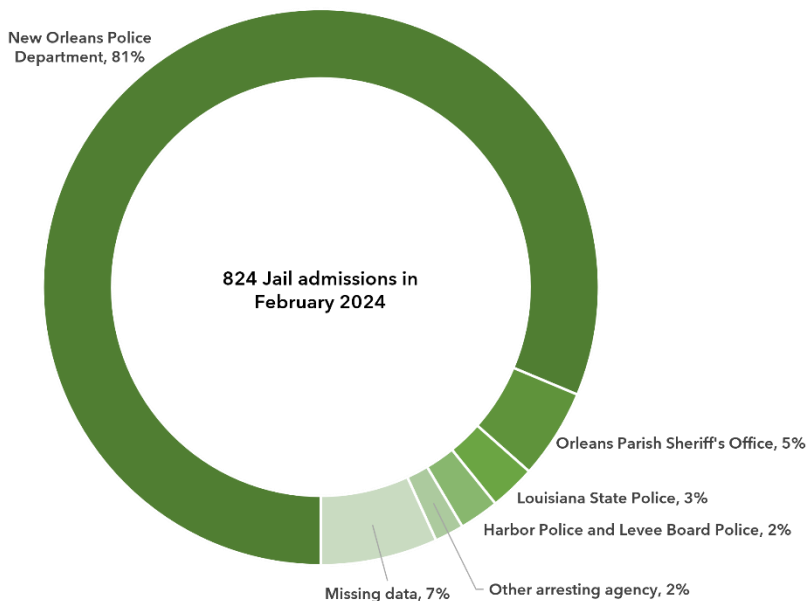


Figure 8. February 2024 jail admissions by arresting agency

Of the 682 jail admissions in February 2024 with a felony or state misdemeanor as the most serious charge at booking, **37% of jail admissions were for violent offenses**, a decrease of 8 percentage point from January, when violent offense bookings made up 45% percent of the 530 felony and misdemeanor admissions.

184 people were admitted to the jail in February with weapons offenses as the most serious charge at booking (27% of the 682 people booked on felony or state misdemeanor charges).

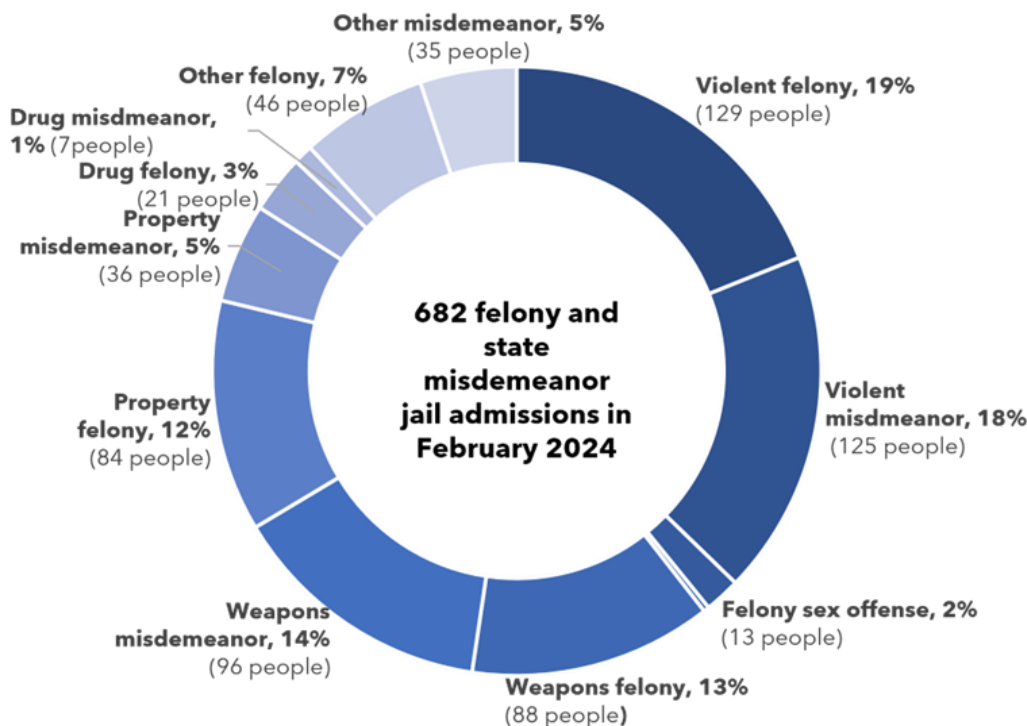


Figure 9. Felony and state misdemeanor jail admissions by most serious charge category, February 2024, N = 682

In February 2024, 2 people - less than 1% of felony and state misdemeanor admissions - were booked into the jail with misdemeanor sex offenses as the most serious charge at booking.

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in jail admission

Disparities by race in jail admissions persisted in February 2024. **Black people were admitted to the jail at a rate 2.5 times that of white people for every 100,000 New Orleans by race.** Overall, New Orleans admitted 219 people into the jail for every 100,000 residents in February 2024. When we compare jail admission rates by race, we find that, in February, 303 Black people were booked into the jail for every 100,000 Black New Orleanians, and 119 white people were admitted to the jail for every 100,000 white New Orleanians (RRI = 2.5).

For every 2.5 Black people admitted to the jail...



...One white person was admitted to the jail



Figure 10. Relative rate index, jail admission rate per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race.

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in jail admission for weapons and drug charges

Disparities by race are even wider when we look at the admissions by race by the most serious charge at booking. **Black people were admitted to the jail on weapons charges at nearly 5 times rate of white people in February.** For every 100 Black people booked into the jail, 26 have a weapons offense as the most serious charge at admission, compared to 5.7 white people for every 100 white people booked into the jail (RRI = 4.6).

For nearly every 5 Black people admitted to the jail with a weapons charge as the most serious offense..

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



Figure 11. Relative rate index, jail admissions for which weapons charges were the most serious charge at booking per 100 jail admissions by race, February 2024

In February, Black people were admitted to jail with drug charges as the most serious offense at booking at a rate nearly 3 times that of white people. For every 100 Black people admitted to the jail in February, 3.9 had a weapons violation as the most serious charge at booking. In comparison, for every 100 white people admitted in February, 1.4 had a drug charge as the most serious offense (RRI = 2.7).

For nearly every 3 Black people admitted to the jail with a drug offenses as the most serious charge...

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



Figure 12. Relative rate index, jail admissions for which drug charges were the most serious charge at booking per 100 jail admissions by race, February 2024

824 Jail Releases in February 2024

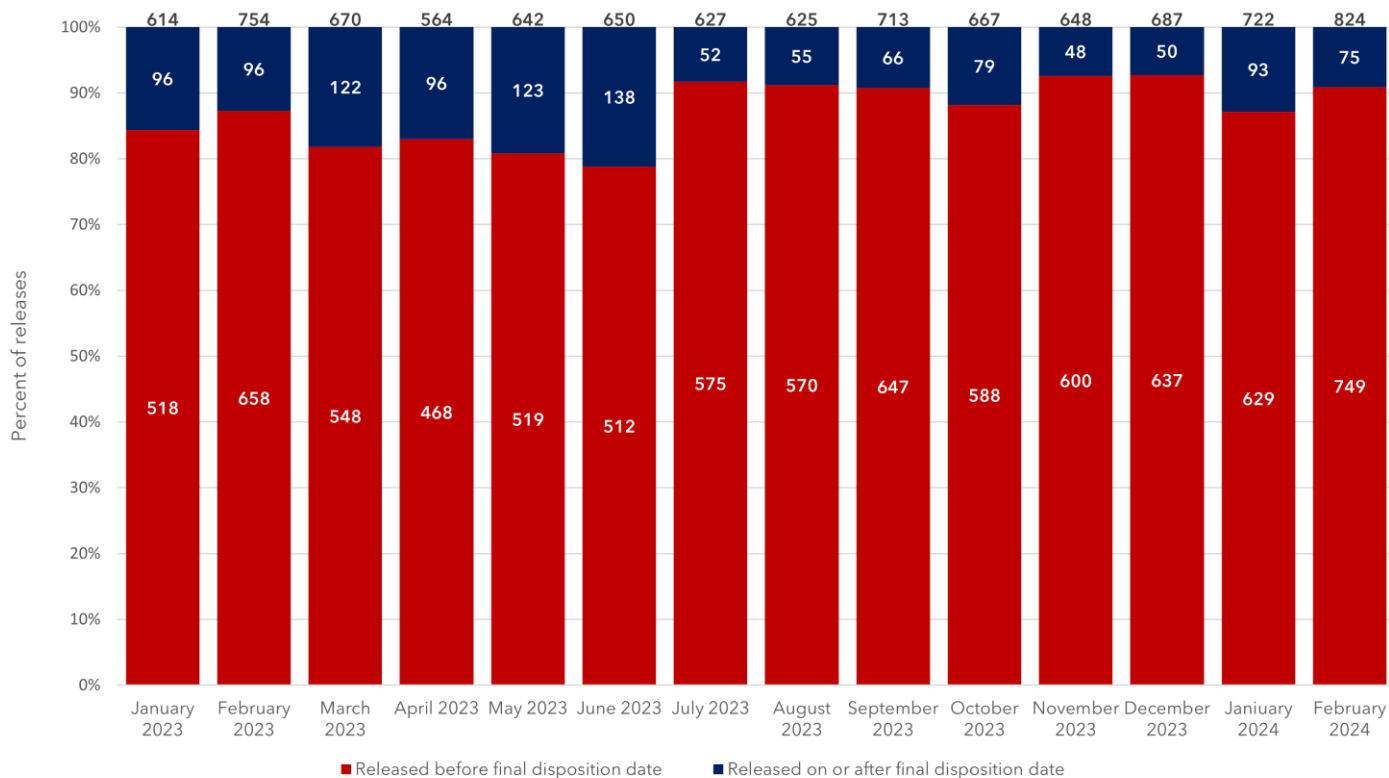


Figure 13. Jail releases by final case disposition status at time of release, February 2023 - February 2024, N = 824

824 people were released from jail custody in February 2024, a 14% increase from January, when 722 people were released from jail. 91% -- 749 people -- were released from jail **left jail custody before the final disposition** of their cases, typically after having been granted a release on recognizance (ROR) or securing a surety bond to post bail set at first appearance.

People released before the final disposition of their case left jail custody before their cases were “closed”, whether by a refusal or a verdict, such as “not guilty”. Note that some people released from jail custody may have more than one case in progress. For the purposes of this graph and tabulation, we focus on the disposition of the case associated with the charge(s) that brought a person to be admitted to the jail from the community.

The average length of jail stays for all people released in February 2024 was 50 days

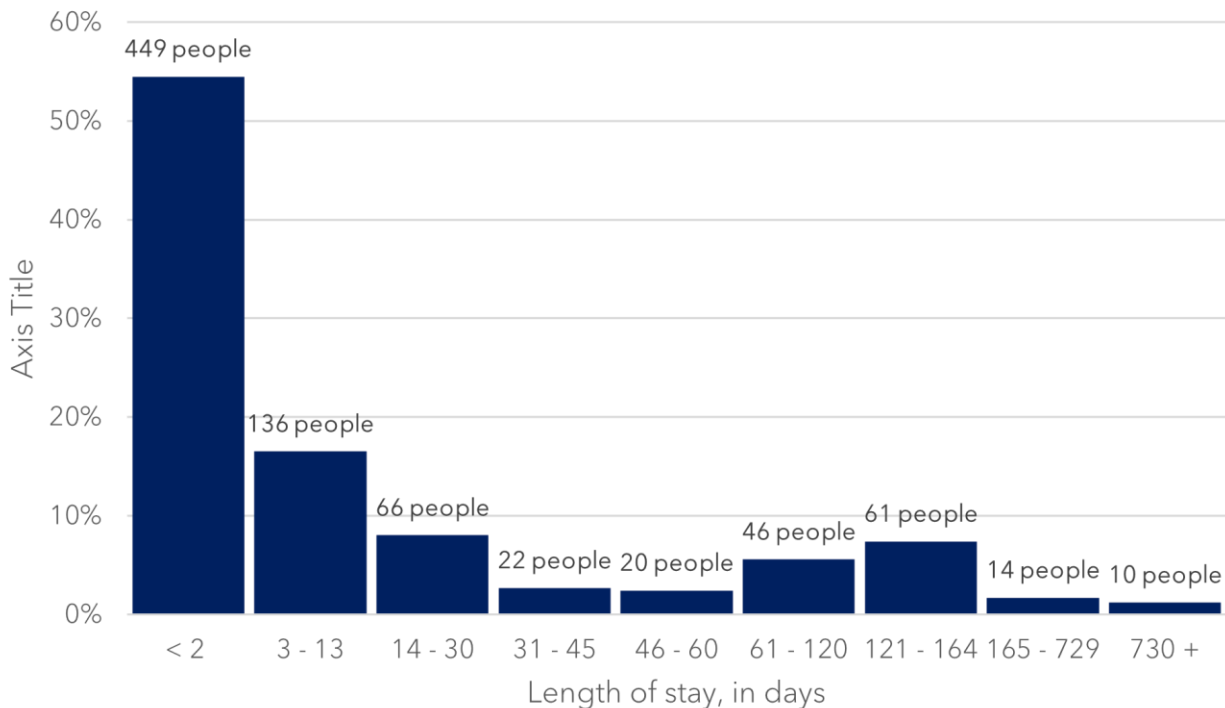


Figure 14. Releases by length of jail stay in February 2024, N= 824 releasees

The average length of stay was 50 days for the 824 people who were released from jail custody in February 2024 (min = less than 1 day; max = 1897 days; standard dev. = 165.7). The median length of stay was 2 days, a decrease of one day from January’s median.

449 people - 54% of all people released from jail in February—left jail custody after staying two days or fewer after admission. 46% of February 2024 jail releases - 375 people - were released from jail 2 or more days after admission and spent an average of 109 days in custody (min = 3 days; standard dev. = 232.4; median = 26 days).

For the 749 people who were released from jail in February before the final disposition of their case, the average length of stay was 23 days (min = less than 1 day; max = 769 days; standard dev. = 71.8; median = 2 days). For the 75 people who were released upon or after the final disposition of their case, the average length of stay was 316 days (max = 1,897 days; standard dev. = 415.2; median = 184 days.)

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in lengths of stay

In February, African American people released from the jail spent an average of 55 days in jail - more than 3 weeks longer than the average length of stay of 30 days for white, Latino, and Asian people released from jail.

Compared to January, the average length of stay for Black people who were released from jail in February has decreased by 9 days, while the length of stay for white releasees has increased by 1 day. The disparity between lengths of stay for Black releasees and white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American released people decreased, from a difference of 30 days in January to a difference of 25 days in February.

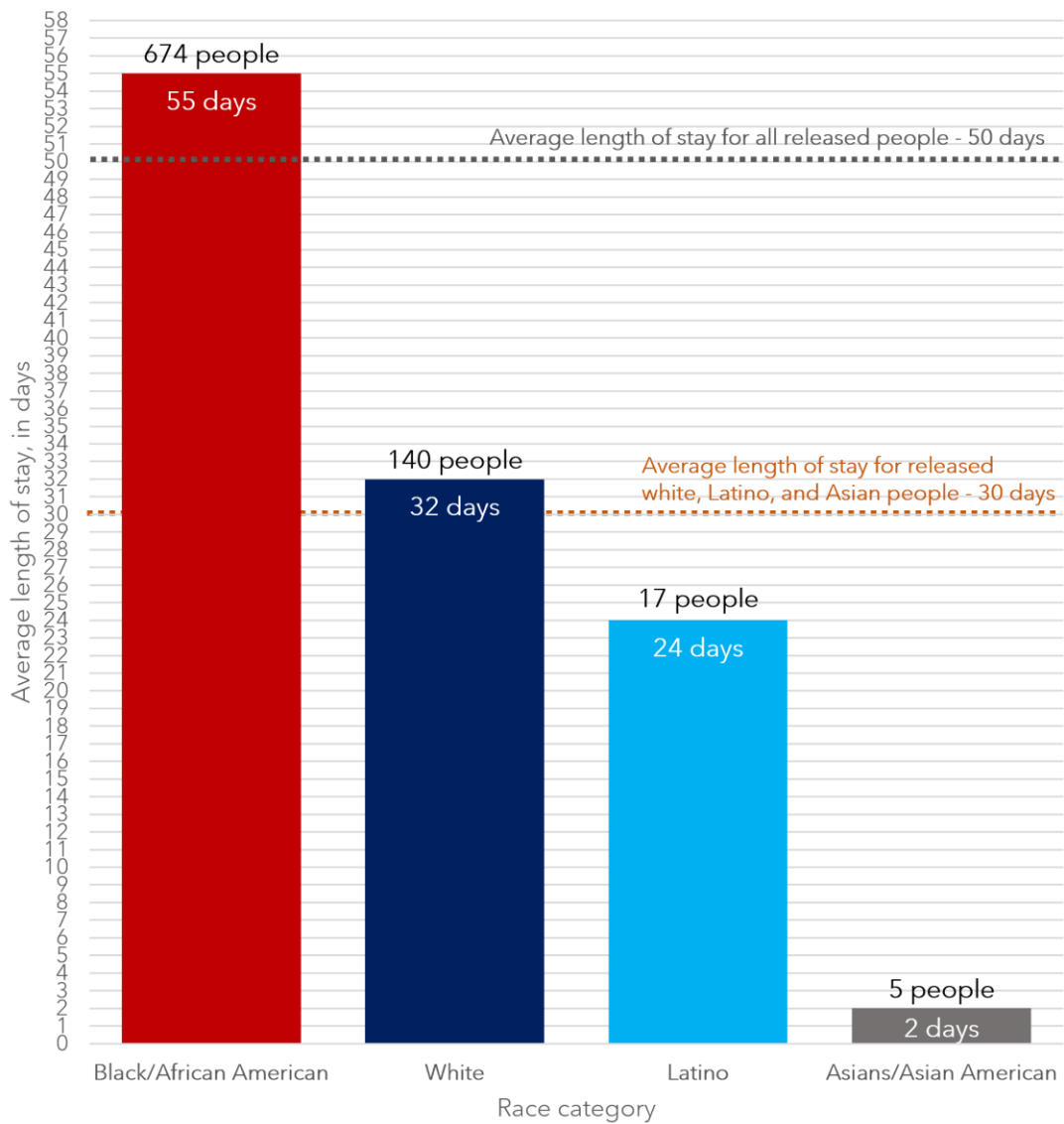


Figure 15. Average length of jail stays by race, February 2024, N = 824 releases. Note that the graphic excludes one person of “unknown” race who was released in last month, and that this person’s length of stay was included in calculating average length of stay for non-Black people.

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*, may 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 upon sentencing.

Final disposition date. The close date for the case associated with the charge(s) that brought a person to be admitted to the jail from the community. Cases are closed upon a final disposition of refusal; a not-guilty verdict; or a sentence imposed on cases in which the person was found guilty. We describe jail releases relative to final disposition dates to sidestep differing definitions of the term, *pretrial*.

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 categories 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 weekly jail turnover rate: A measure "borrowed" from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the weekly 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 by the sum of jail admissions and jail releases in a week.

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**. 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 to further discuss the possibility of exploring your questions.

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