



Orleans Parish Jail Population by the numbers

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

**September
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, **1,461 people were detained in the jail daily in September 2024.**
 - A 2.2% increase from the average daily jail population of 1,430 people in August 2024.
 - A 20% increase compared to September 2023, when 1,215 people, on average, were detained in the jail,
- **795 people were admitted to the jail in September**, a 2.9% decrease compared to August, when 819 people were admitted to the jail. Over half – 52.9%, or 421 people – admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking.
- **728 people were released from the jail in September**, a decrease of 11.3% from August, when 821 people were released from jail custody.
- **The average length of stay for the 728 people released from the jail in September was 46 days** (min = less than 1 day; max = 1,195 days; standard dev. = 128.3).
 - The median length of stay for all people released in September was 2 days, a decrease of 1 day from August's median.
 - 371 people (51% 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 93 days (n = 357 people; min = 3 days; standard dev. = 171.1) and a median length of stay of 27 days.
- Racial disparities persist in the jail population. In September 2024, **Black people were detained in the jail at 5 times the rate of white people**, per 100,000 New Orleans residents by race.
 - The September jail detention rate for Black people was 527 Black detainees per 100,000 Black residents, compared with the white rate of 124 white detainees per 100,000 white residents.
 - The September jail detention rate for all New Orleanians was 388 detained people per 100,000 residents.

The average monthly jail population in September 2024 was 1,461 people (standard dev. = 28.1), a 2.2% increase from August, when the average jail population was 1,430 people. The average monthly population has increased by 20% compared to September 2023, when, on average, 1,215 people were detained in the jail.

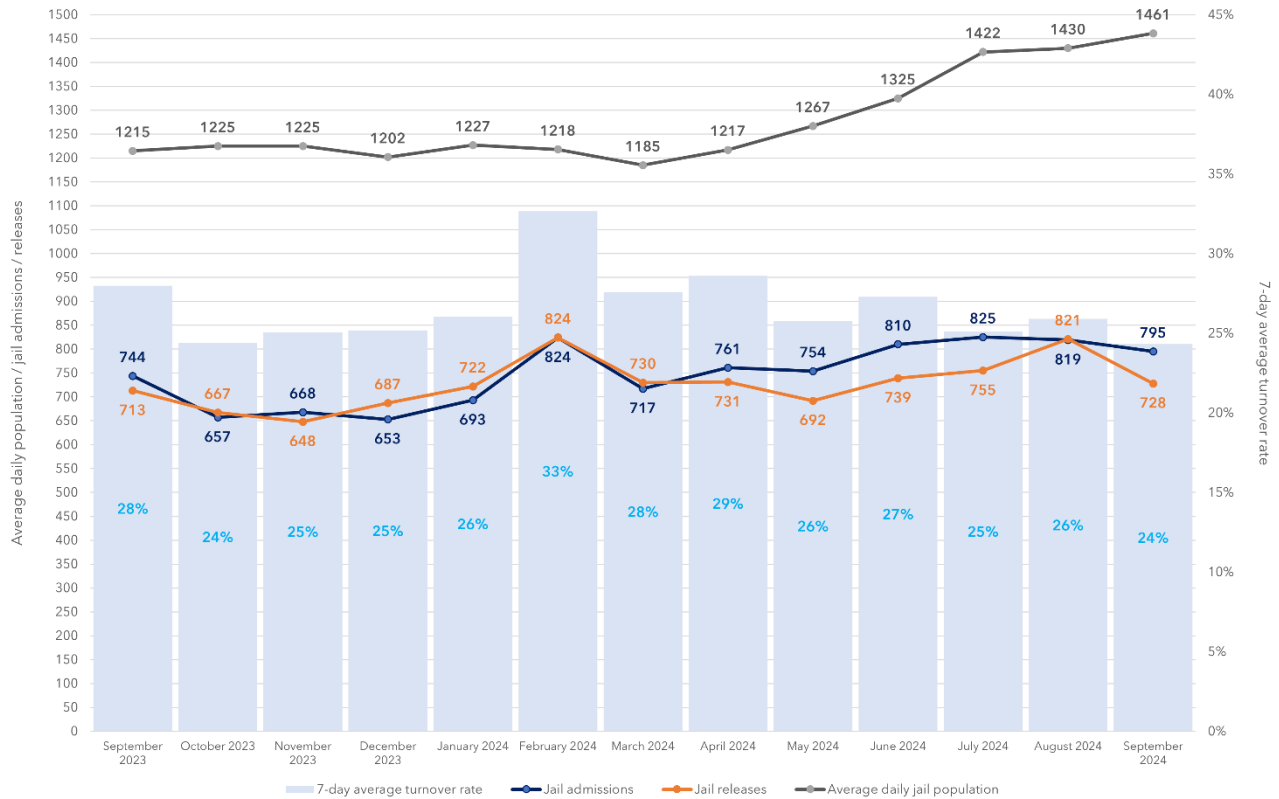


Figure 1. Historical trends in average jail population, monthly admissions, monthly releases, and 7-day average turnover rates, September 2023 - September 2024

The 7-day average jail turnover rate for September 2024 was 24%, 2 percentage points lower than August’s rate. The jail turnover rate is a ratio of jail admissions and release to the average daily population. On average, nearly 1 out of 4 people detained during a week in September 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 September 11th, when 1,422 people were detained in the jail. The daily jail population hit its peak on September 29th, when 1,507 were detained in the jail. 1,502 people were in jail custody on the last day of the month.

Daily jail admissions varied daily in September (daily average = 27 admissions; standard dev. = 8.0) and reached a peak on September 30th, when 41 people were admitted to the jail. In all, 795 people were admitted to the jail last month.

Jail releases fluctuated more widely than jail admissions in September (daily average = 24 releases; standard dev. = 12.3). On September 5th, 61 people were released from the jail, the largest number of releases during the month. 37 people were released from the jail on the last day of the month. In all, 728 people were released from jail in September 2024.

Most people in jail custody in September – 95%, 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 detainees only.

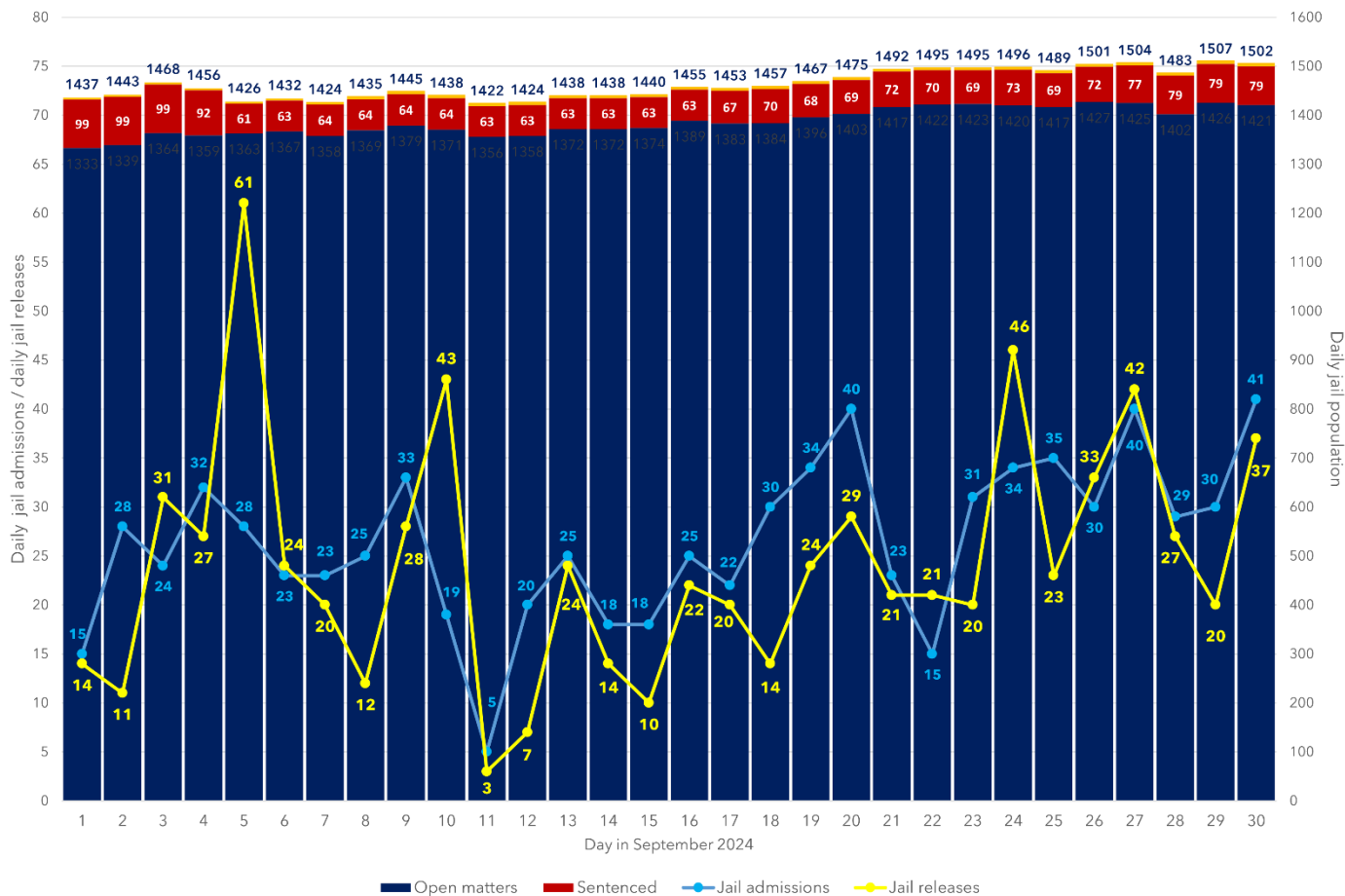


Figure 2. Daily population by legal status; jail admissions; and jail releases, September 2024

5% of the average daily jail population – about 72 people in custody each day in September – 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

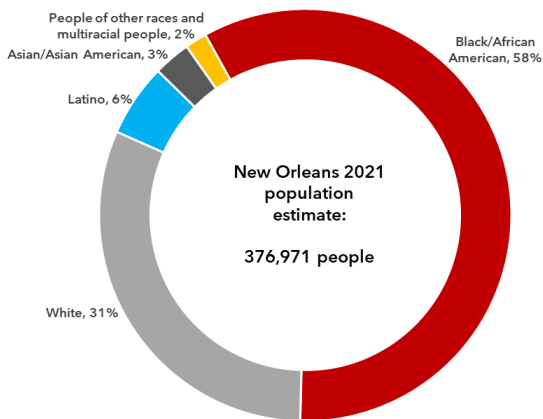


Figure 3. Average daily population by race/ethnicity and sex, September 2024.

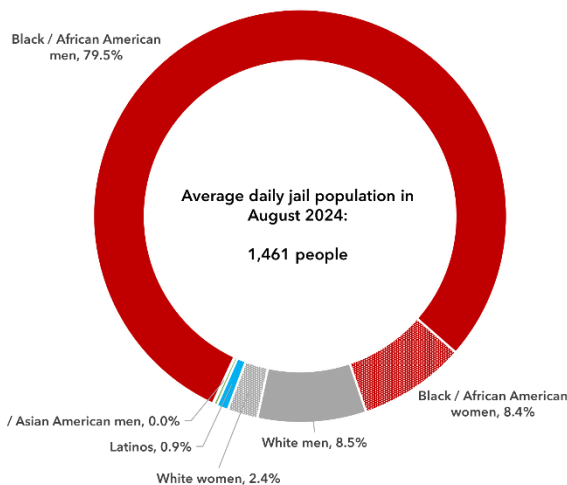


Figure 4. New Orleans population estimate, 2021. Source: Summary Files, 2021 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

New Orleans is a majority-Black city, yet African Americans remain overrepresented in the average jail population. In September, Black/African American people comprised nearly 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 September, 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 = 5.0)**. For every 100,000 Black/African American New Orleanians, 527 Black people were in detained in September 2024; for every 100,000 white New Orleanians, 105 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 per 100,000 Orleans Parish residents by Black and white race categories, September 2024. Population estimates are from the 2021 American Community Survey, Summary File 4, US Census Bureau.

795 Jail admissions in September 2024

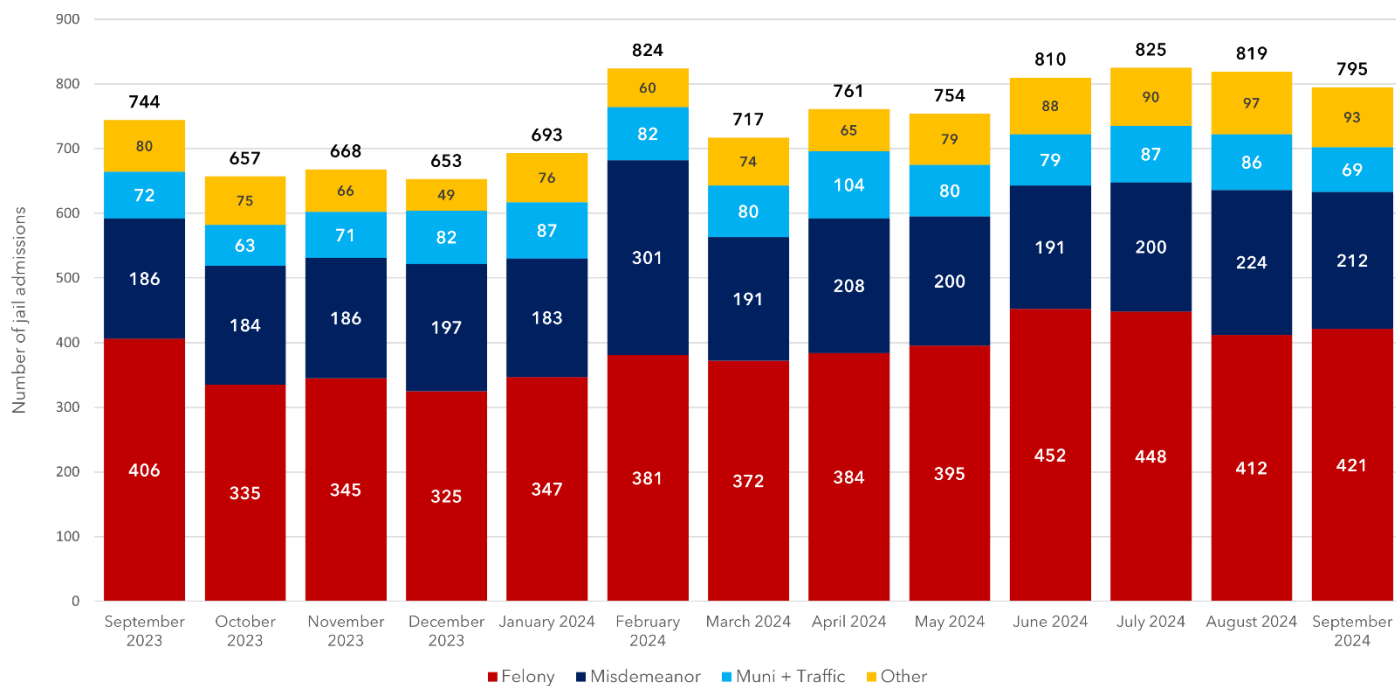


Figure 6. Jail admissions by most serious charge category at booking, September 2023 - September 2024. Note that "Other" admissions include people booked into the jail for warrants or detainers only; people remanded to jail custody by the Court; and people brought to the jail on writs.

795 were people admitted to the jail in September 2024, a 2.9% decrease from August, when 819 people were admitted to the jail. Over half – 52.9%, or 421 people – admitted to the jail last month had a new felony as the most serious charge at booking, and 26.6% – 212 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 September – 82%, or 649 out of the 795 jail admissions – had been arrested by NOPD officers.

Louisiana State Police (LSP), which earlier this year expanded their presence in the city beyond patrolling the French Quarter, arrested 7%, or 53 people, who were admitted to the jail in September -- an increase of nearly 3 times the 14 LSP arrests resulting in jail admissions in August. The proportion of LSP arrests resulting in jail admissions out of all jail admissions increased 5 percentage points in September, compared to August.

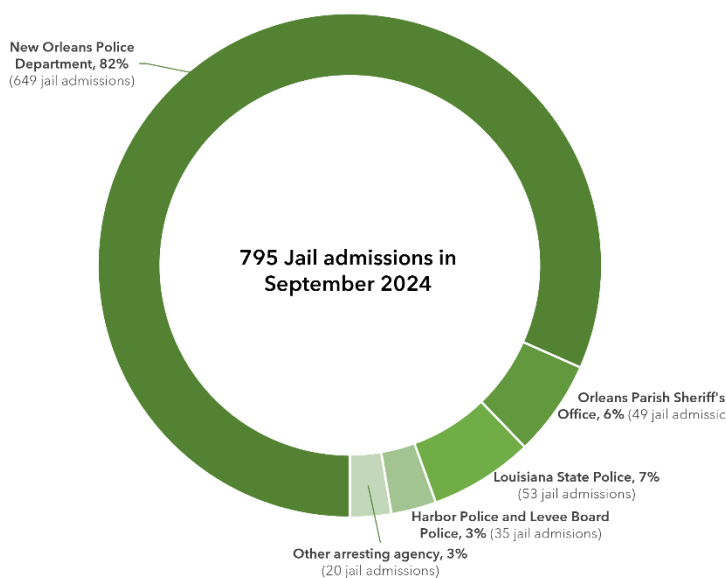


Figure 7. September 2024 jail admissions by arresting officer's agency. Note that "Other arresting agency" September include campus police departments, HANO police, and LA Probation & Parole.

Nearly 8 out of 10 jail admissions in September 2024 – 79.6%, or 633 people out of the 795 people admitted in September – were for felonies or state misdemeanors.

421 people were admitted to the jail with felony charges (53% of all jail admissions in the month), and 212 people were admitted to the jail with state misdemeanor charges (26.7% of all jail admissions).

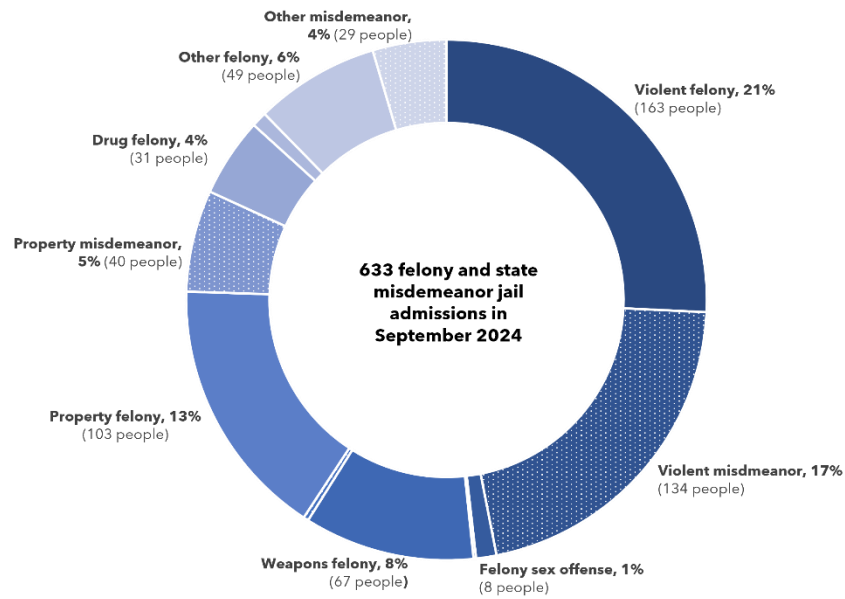


Figure 8. Jail admissions by most serious charge at admission, September 2024. 1 person was admitted with a misdemeanor sex offense; 2 people were admitted with a weapons misdemeanor; and 6 people were admitted with a drug misdemeanor as the most serious charge at admission, and added together, these accounted for 1.1% of admissions in September.

People admitted to the jail with violent felonies and misdemeanors made up the plurality – 47% – of jail admissions in September 2024.

People admitted to the jail with weapons charges as the most serious offense at booking increased numerically by 59.5%, from 42 in August to 67 in September, and increased as a proportion of felony and state misdemeanor admissions by 4 percentage points. New concealed carry laws took effect on 4 July 2024.

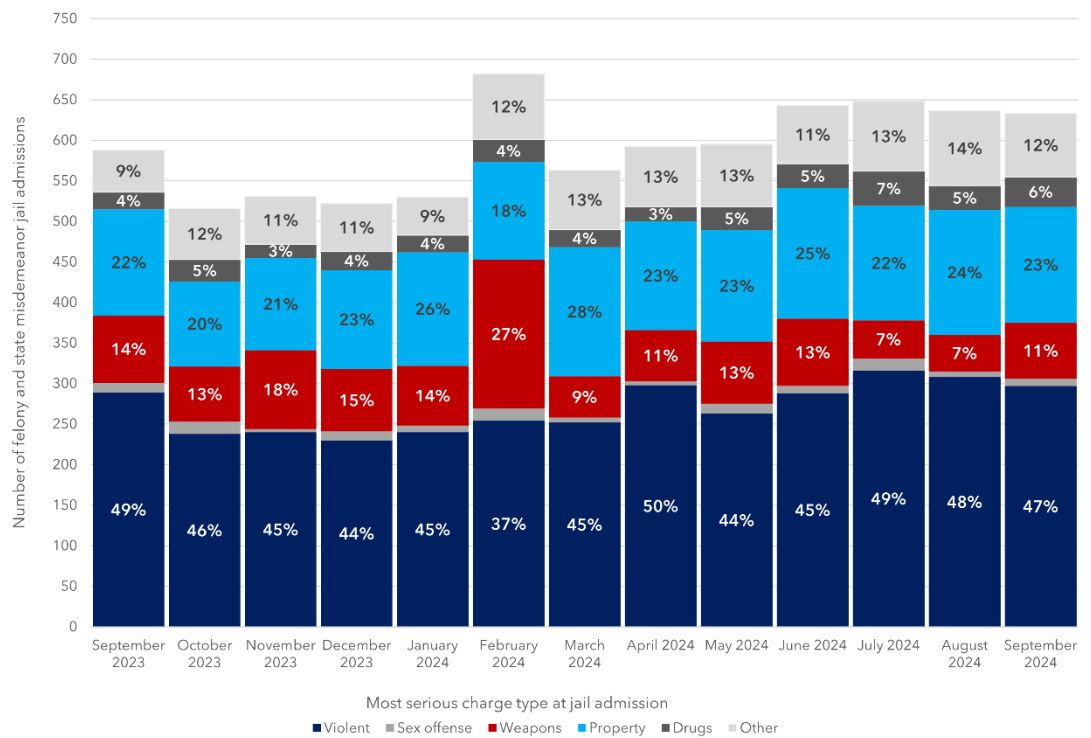


Figure 9. Historical trends in jail admissions with felonies and state misdemeanors by most serious charge type at admission, September 2023 – September 2024.

Focus on racial equity: Disparities in jail admission

Disparities by race in jail admissions persisted in September 2024. **Black people were admitted to the jail at over twice the rate of white people for every 100,000 New Orleans by race** (RRI = 2.2). Overall, New Orleans admitted 211 people into the jail for every 100,000 parish residents in September 2024. When we compare jail admission rates by race, we find that, in September, 287 Black people were booked into the jail for every 100,000 Black New Orleanians, and 129 white people were admitted to the jail for every 100,000 white New Orleanians.

For every 2 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, September 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 fell sharply in September, yet still persist. The RRI for admissions on weapons charge as the most serious offense at booking was 3.9 in September, compared to 8.4 in August. The rate of admissions on weapons charges as the most serious offense at booking was 10.3 per 100 African Americans admitted to the jail, compared to 2.6 white people per 100 white people admitted to the jail.

The decrease in RRI for jail admissions for weapons charges in September comes after a threefold increase observed August, when the RRI rose to 8.4 from 3.4 in July. In all, 65 Black people and 4 white people were admitted to the jail in September with 116 weapons charges as the most serious offense at admission. The most frequent weapons charge types were illegal carrying with drugs (50 charges, or 43% of the 116 total charges) and possession of a firearm by a person with a felony conviction (35 charges, or 30% of the 116 total charges).

For nearly every 4 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, September 2024

Using the relative rate index measure (RRI), where “1” represents racial parity, we observed disparities by race per 100 jail admissions across when violent, weapons, and drug offenses were the most-serious-charge-at-admission. For example, Black people are admitted to the jail with a drug offense as the most serious charge at booking at 1.2 times the rate of white people, and at 0.6 times the rate of white people when warrants or possible probation or parole violations were the most serious charges at admission.

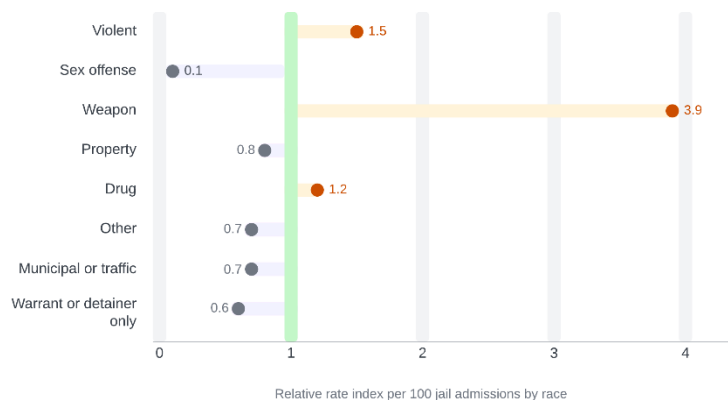


Figure 14. Relative rate indexes for most-serious-charge-at-admission categories per 100 jail admissions by race for Black and white people admitted to the jail, September 2024

728 Jail releases and an average length of stay of 46 days in September 2024

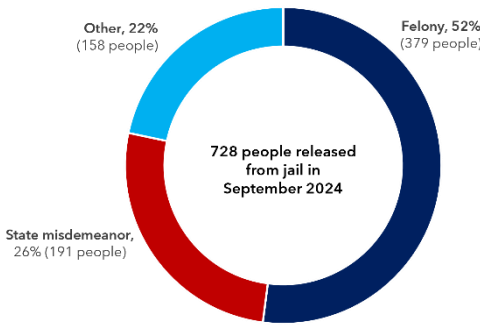


Figure 15. Jail releases by most serious charge type at admission, September 2024, N = 728

The median length of stay for the 728 people released from jail in September was 2 days, 1 day less than August’s median (average = 45.7 days; min = less than one day; max = 1,195 days; standard dev. = 128.3).

51% of the people released in September stayed in jail for 2 days or fewer. The 357 people who stayed in jail for 3 or more days had an average length of stay of 93 days and a median length of stay of 27 days (standard dev. = 171.1).

52% – 379 of the 728 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 79 days (median = 8 days; min = less than 1 day; standard dev. = 164.1).

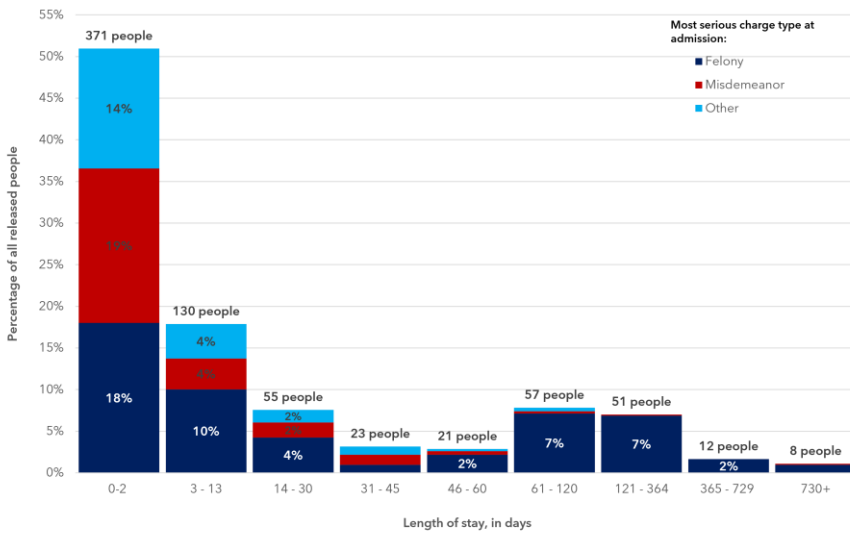


Figure 16. Jail releases by length of stay, in days, and most serious charge type at admission, September 2024, N = 728

191 people (22% of all people released in September) had at least one state misdemeanor as the most serious charge at admission and stayed in jail, on average, for 12 days (median = 1 day; min = less than 1 day; max = 901 days; standard dev. = 66.9).

22% of those who were released in September (158 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 7 days (median = 1 day; max = 106 days; standard dev. = 15.2).

Focus on racial equity: Disparity in lengths of stay

In September 2024, the 591 African American people released from the jail spent an average of 50 days in jail – 17 days longer than the average length of stay of 29 days for the 137 white, Latino, and Asian/Asian American people and people of “unknown” race released from jail last month.

Compared to August 2024, the average length of stay for Black people who were released from jail has decreased by 7 days, 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 8 days in September compared to August.

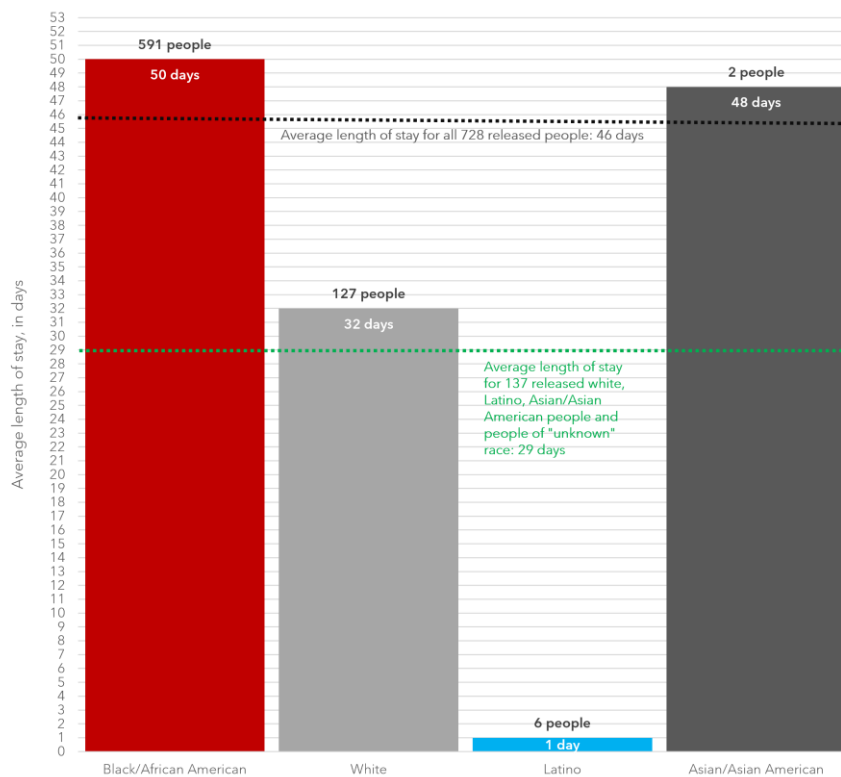


Figure 16. Average length of jail stays by race, September 2024, N = 728 released detainees. Note that 2 people with “unknown” or missing race data were released from jail last month; lengths of jail stay for this group are excluded from the graphic but included in the average length of stay calculation 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*, September 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 September 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.