

MARCH 2022

EARLY COUNTY, GA JAIL TRENDS

**RURAL JAILS
RESEARCH HUB**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The University of Georgia, in partnership with the Early County Sheriff's Office, examined data on jail bookings between January 2019 and June 2020 to understand the jail trends in Early County, including why numbers have grown in recent years. The results from this partnership are below. This fact sheet presents information related to the charges for people entering jail in Early County and the length of their stays. It can be used to learn more about local jail incarceration and talk about potential options for changes in policy and the community.

TOP FINDINGS



Almost one-third of people booked into the Early County Jail between January 2019 and June 2020 were charged with traffic or motor vehicle-related charges. Many of these bookings were not for dangerous driving, but rather for license suspensions that stemmed from unpaid fines.



Overall, most booking charges fell into three broad categories: traffic or motor vehicle-related (28%), drug-related (11%), and charges related to parents' failure to enroll or ensure attendance of children in school (10%). Most of these charges were nonviolent.

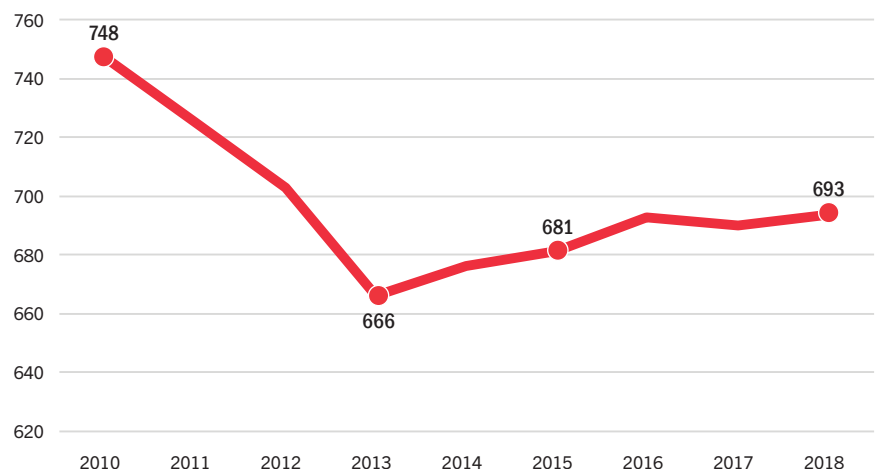


Nearly half (47%) of all people booked into the jail were denied bond or their initial bond was revoked.

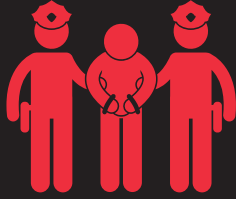
JAIL INCARCERATION RATE PER 100,000: 2010-2018

THE INCARCERATION RATE IN EARLY COUNTY HAS INCREASED SINCE 2013.

From 1970 to 2010, the jail incarceration rate in Early County increased by 210%, from 241 per 100,000 people to 748 per 100,000 people (not shown). After a drop between 2010 and 2013, the incarceration rate has increased. The 2018 rate was 693 per 100,000 people, which is 1.6 times higher than the Georgia jail incarceration rate of 422.



BOOKING TRENDS



JANUARY 2019–JUNE 2020

NUMBER OF CHARGES PER BOOKING

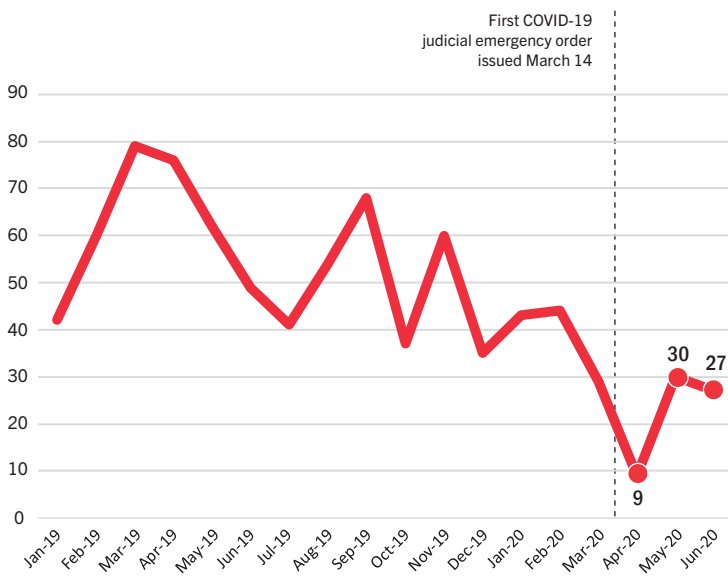
One Charge
57%

Two Charges
21%

Three Charges
12%

Four or More Charges
16%

MONTHLY BOOKINGS



JAIL BOOKINGS DECREASED BY 45% DURING THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BUT INCREASED IN MID-2020.

In an average month in 2019, 55 people were booked into the Early County Jail. During the first six months of 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, bookings dropped by 45%, to 30 bookings on average per month.

In April 2020, there were only nine total bookings, of which six were for misdemeanors and three were for felonies. Only three bookings were for probation or parole violations in April 2020. Bookings increased again in May (30) and June (27) of 2020.

MOST JAIL BOOKINGS WERE FOR NONVIOLENT CHARGES.

The most common charge categories were traffic or motor vehicle-related (28%)*, drug-related (11%)** and education (10%). The education charge is levied against parents or caregivers who do not have their children ages 6 to 16 enrolled in or attending school, which violates Georgia’s mandatory education statute (O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1). The first two charges are in line with the most frequent charge categories across all seven counties included in the Rural Jails Research Hub.

* Note that the category for traffic or motor vehicle-related charges is very broad and includes everything from seat belt violations to vehicular homicide.

** Many of these charges are for possession, and some are for trafficking.

TOP 5 BOOKING CHARGES



#1
Traffic or Motor Vehicle-Related



#2
Drug-Related



#3
Education

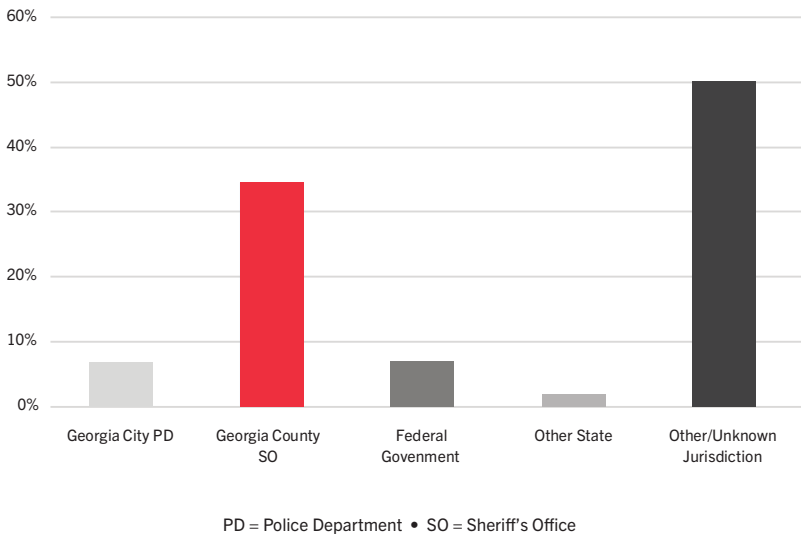


#4
Probation or Parole Violations



#5
Assault/Battery

HOLDS FOR OTHER AGENCIES



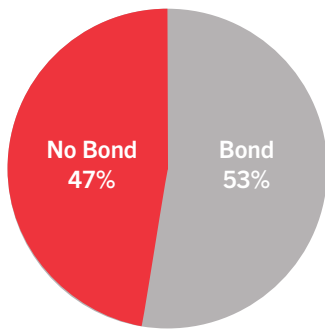
7% OF JAIL BOOKINGS WERE HOLDS FOR OTHER AGENCIES.

Out of 845 bookings, 58 were people arrested by or on behalf of other agencies. Of these holds, 34% were for sheriffs or jails in other Georgia counties, 7% were for Georgia cities, and 7% were for federal agencies.

Of those housed for other counties, the highest percentage (9%) was for Houston County, which has its own jail.

“Hold” refers to a person detained in a local county jail under the jurisdiction of another agency, such as another county, state corrections, or a federal agency.

EARLY COUNTY BOND STATUS



Bond amounts imposed ranged from \$100 to \$50,000, with a median bond of \$2,400.

47% OF ALL PEOPLE BOOKED WERE DENIED BOND OR HAD BOND REVOKED.

Out of all bookings, nearly half (47%) were held without bond, either because they were initially denied bond or had bond revoked (for example, for failure to comply with pretrial release conditions). Aside from probation or parole violations, people in jail without bond were most commonly held for traffic or motor vehicle-related charges (23%), drug-related charges (23%), or assault/battery charges (6%). Among the most common top charges, the median bond amount was \$2,400 for traffic or motor vehicle-related charges, \$5,000 for drug-related charges, and \$1,300 for education charges.

JAIL BOOKINGS FOR MINOR INFRACTIONS SAW LONGER AVERAGE LENGTHS OF STAY.

About one-third of people booked stayed less than one day and 72% of all those booked stayed seven days or fewer in jail. Median length of stay for a traffic or motor vehicle-related charge was less than one day, while median length of stay for a drug-related charge was one day. For education charges, people stayed on average less than one day.* People held for other agencies stayed in the county jail for 12 days on average. Average length of stay for probation or parole violations was 47 days.**



* In Georgia, parents or caregivers who do not have their children ages 6 to 16 enrolled in or attending school can be charged for not complying with Georgia's mandatory education statute (O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1).

** In Georgia, jail stays due to probation or parole violations are influenced by set periods of time as a consequence for violations and by barriers to complying with conditions of probation or parole, such as fees imposed on people on probation.



Data: This fact sheet uses data provided by the Early County Sheriff's Office for January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 and is supplemented by historical data from the Vera Institute of Justice Incarceration Trends Dataset, available on GitHub at <https://github.com/vera-institute/incarceration-trends>, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics Census of Jails, 2005-2019 Statistical Tables available at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/census-jails-2005-2019-statistical-tables>. The UGA research team requested data from each county sheriff using a list of desired variables (including demographics, length of stay, and charges) and accepted the data that were provided.

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For questions, contact Sarah Shannon at sshannon@uga.edu.