

MARCH 2022

SUMTER COUNTY, GA JAIL TRENDS

**RURAL JAILS
RESEARCH HUB**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The University of Georgia, in partnership with the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, examined data on jail bookings between January 2019 and June 2020 to understand the jail trends in Sumter 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 Sumter 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.

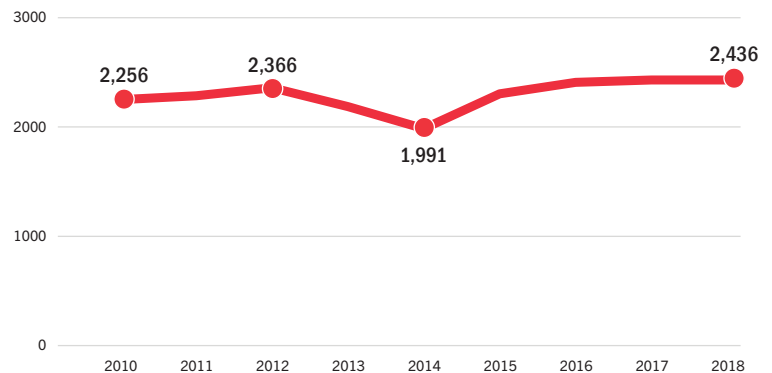
TOP FINDINGS

- ✓ One-fifth of people booked into the Sumter 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.
- ✓ More than half (51%) of people booked were held without bond or had bond revoked. When bond was granted, median bond amounts were \$5,500 for assault/battery, \$7,300 for theft, and \$1,000 for not complying with court-imposed conditions (e.g., failure to appear).
- ✓ African Americans were over-represented in the Sumter County Jail bookings at nearly 1.5 times their percentage in the county population.

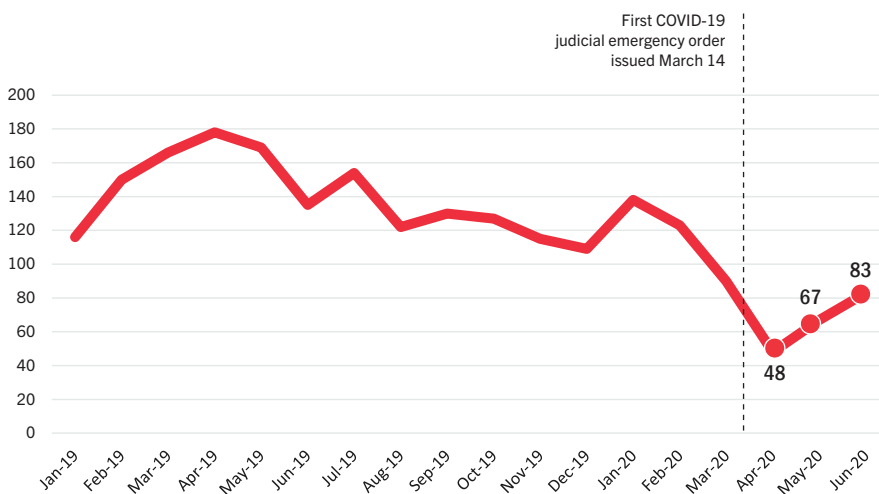
THE INCARCERATION RATE HAS INCREASED SINCE 2014.

From 1970 to 2010, the jail incarceration rate in Sumter County increased by 378%, from 472 per 100,000 people to 2,256 per 100,000 people (not shown). After a drop between 2012 and 2014, the jail incarceration rate increased again through 2018. The 2018 rate was 2,436 per 100,000 people, which is 5.8 times higher than the Georgia rate of 422.

JAIL INCARCERATION RATE PER 100,000: 2010-2018



MONTHLY BOOKINGS



JAIL BOOKINGS DECREASED BY 34% AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BUT INCREASED IN MID-2020.

In an average month in 2019, 139 people were booked into the Sumter County Jail. During the first six months of 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, bookings dropped by 34%, to 92 bookings on average per month.

In April 2020, there were only 48 total bookings, of which 21 were for misdemeanors and 21 were for felonies. There were four bookings for probation or parole violations in April 2020. Bookings increased again in May (67) and June (83) of 2020.

BOOKING TRENDS



JANUARY 2019–JUNE 2020

NUMBER OF CHARGES PER BOOKING

One Charge

59%

Two Charges

21%

Three Charges

10%

Four or More Charges

11%

BOOKINGS FOR HOLDS AND PROBATION OR PAROLE VIOLATIONS SAW LONGER AVERAGE LENGTHS OF STAY.

About 27% of people booked stayed less than one day, and 60% of all those booked stayed seven or fewer days in jail. On average, people charged with a misdemeanor stayed 38 days, though the median length of stay was one day. People held for other agencies stayed for 40 days on average. The average length of stay for probation or parole violations was 59 days.*

** 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.*



TOP 5 BOOKING CHARGES



#1

**Traffic or Motor
Vehicle-Related**



#2

**Probation or
Parole Violations**



#3

**Assault/
Battery**



#4

Theft



#5

Drug-Related

WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, THE MOST FREQUENT CHARGES IN SUMTER COUNTY WERE NONVIOLENT.

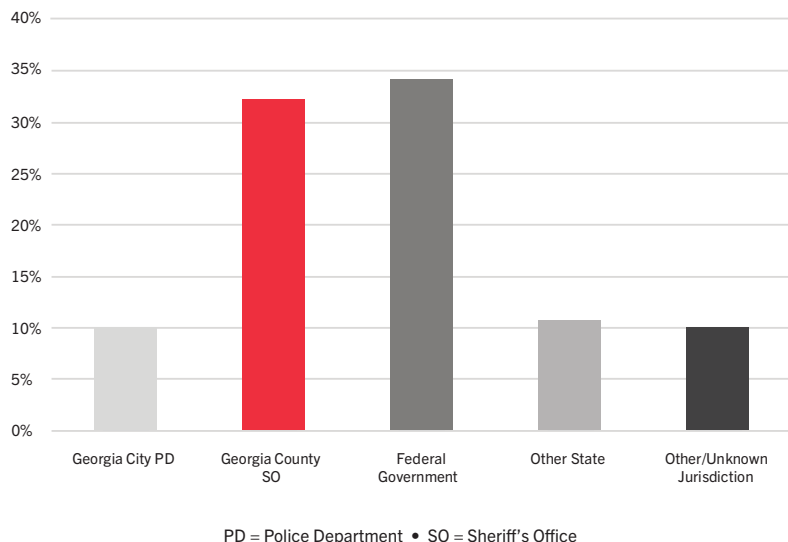
The most common charge categories were traffic or motor vehicle-related (20%)*, probation or parole violations (17%), and assault/battery (9%).

The first two charge categories are in line with the top five most frequent charges across all seven counties included in the Rural Jails Research Hub. Assault/battery ranks higher in Sumter County than in other RJRH counties.

** 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 the drug-related charges are for possession, and some are for trafficking.

HOLDS FOR OTHER AGENCIES



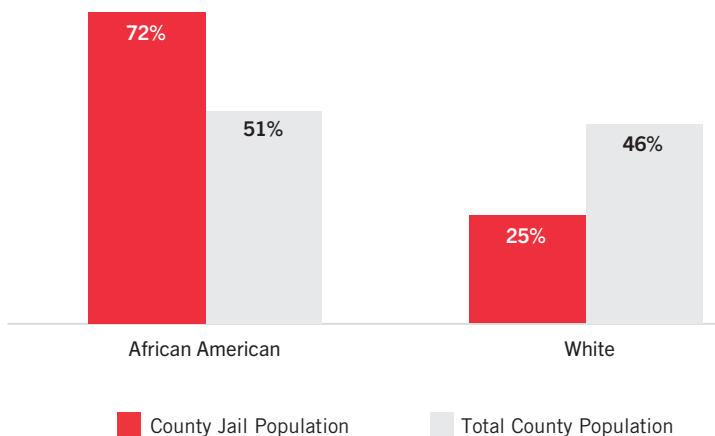
13% OF JAIL BOOKINGS WERE HOLDS FOR OTHER AGENCIES.

Out of 2,220 bookings, 284 were people arrested by or on behalf of other agencies. Of these holds, 33% were for sheriffs or jails in other Georgia counties, 10% were for Georgia cities, 12% were for other states, and 34% were for federal agencies, such as the US Marshals Service.

Of those housed for other counties, the highest percentage (8%) was for Webster County, which does not have its own jail.

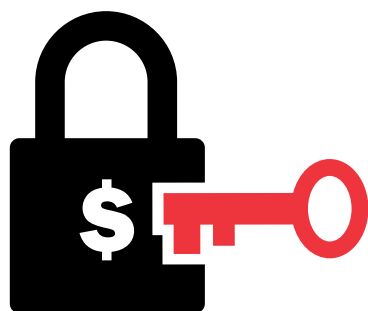
“Hold” refers to a person detained in a local county jail under the jurisdiction of another agency, such as another county, state corrections, or a federal agency.

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF SUMTER COUNTY JAIL COMPARED TO THE TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION



NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF PEOPLE BOOKED IN THE SUMTER COUNTY JAIL WERE AFRICAN AMERICAN. THIS IS NEARLY 1.5 TIMES THE PROPORTION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE GENERAL COUNTY POPULATION.

African Americans were over-represented in jail bookings (72%) compared to the percentage of African Americans residing in Sumter County (51%).



Bond amounts imposed ranged from **\$20 to \$480,000**, with a median bond of **\$3,000**.

51% OF ALL PEOPLE BOOKED WERE DENIED BOND OR HAD BOND REVOKED.

More than half (51%) of all those booked in Sumter County were held without bond, either because they were initially denied bond or had bond revoked (e.g., for failure to comply with pretrial release conditions).

Aside from probation or parole violations, people in jail without bond were commonly held for traffic or motor vehicle-related charges (13%), assault/battery (7%), and theft (7%). Among the top charges for those granted bond, the median bond amount was \$5,500 for assault/battery, \$7,300 for theft, and \$1,000 for criminal procedure (e.g., failure to appear).

WOMEN MADE UP ONE-QUARTER OF JAIL BOOKINGS.

One-quarter (25%) of bookings were women.

Overall, the number of women in jail in Georgia increased 23-fold from 1980 to 2015. As of 2019, 15% of people in Georgia jails were women.

SUMTER COUNTY JAIL BOOKINGS BY SEX

	Female	Male
Number	548	1,672
Percent	25%	75%



THE AVERAGE AGE OF PEOPLE BOOKED WAS 34 YEARS OLD. AGES RANGED FROM 12 TO 81 YEARS OLD.

One-quarter of all bookings were young adults between the ages of 15 and 24.* The most common charges for this age group were assault/battery (17%), probation or parole violations (12%), and traffic or motor vehicle-related (11%).



* In Georgia, youth between the ages of 13 and 16 can be booked in jail for “seven deadly sins” charges, such as aggravated assault or aggravated robbery.



Data: This fact sheet uses data provided by the Sumter 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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