

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/wayne-county-jail-report-and-recommendations>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

For years, Wayne County has been working to resolve longstanding problems of overcrowding and poor conditions in the Wayne County Jail. Vera was engaged by the Hudson-Webber Foundation to conduct a study of Wayne Countys jail population in partnership with a working group of local justice-system stakeholders. The study involved analyzing quantitative data from the jail as well as gathering information and perspectives from the working group, community advocates, and people directly impacted by jail incarceration to identify what drives the jail population in Wayne County. The analysis included the most common charges people in jail face, and how long people stay in the jail and why. This report presents Veras findings and recommendations for jail decarceration.

As jails are vectors for the transmission of COVID-19 nationwide, there is heightened urgency to reduce jail populations. While the Wayne County Jail population has reached historic lows as a result of a strong COVID-19 response, this report highlights that many opportunities still exist to prevent the unnecessary use of the jail and support the countys interest in increasing equity and safety.

The Wayne County criminal justice system needs a formal structure for collaboration and coordination and should make more information available to the public.

The County should adopt strategies to reduce custodial arrests, increase nonmonetary pretrial release, and prevent incarceration for failures to appear and low-level offenses.

The County should adopt a framework for action on racial equity to reduce the disproportionate representation of Black people in the jail.

SPECIAL REPORT (CHAPTERED)

PUBLICATION

PUBLICATION

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