

# JAIL DECARCERATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY:

Preliminary Findings from the Safety  
and Justice Challenge

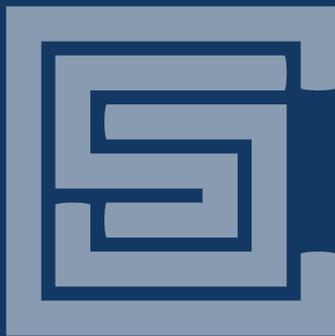
A Report Prepared by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation



CUNY INSTITUTE  
FOR STATE & LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE



# INTRODUCTION

The United States continues to struggle with its excessive incarceration rates, and it all starts with the local jails. Each year, nearly 11 million people are booked into this country's jails, nearly 18 times the number of yearly admissions to state and federal prisons. In many regions, jail populations have reached crisis levels.

The primary purpose of a jail is to detain those who are waiting for court proceedings and are considered a flight risk or public safety threat. Many people admitted to jail cannot afford to post bail and as a result may remain behind bars for weeks, awaiting trial or a case resolution. This overreliance on jails has negative consequences not only for those who are incarcerated, but also for their families and their communities, particularly communities of color. Black Americans, for example, are jailed at five times the rate of White Americans; their numbers in the nation's jail population are three times their representation in the general population.

In response to this crisis, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched the national Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC), a multiyear initiative to safely reduce jail populations and racial and ethnic disparities in jails. To date, SJC has provided \$252 million to help jurisdictions across the country use innovative, collaborative, and evidence-based strategies to create fairer and more effective justice systems. Collectively, SJC sites account for about 16 percent of the total confined jail population in the United States.

The goal is not only to reduce jail populations, but to do so *safely*—and this has been a pillar of the SJC initiative since its inception in 2015. While previous briefs have highlighted the substantial reductions made in jail populations across SJC sites,<sup>1</sup> this report provides an initial look at SJC's decarceration strategies through a safety lens. More specifically, it explores how aggregate crime rates and returns to custody among people released from jail changed after the launch of SJC and the implementation of its decarceration strategies in sites through 2019. In future briefs we will explore the intersection of decarceration strategies and safety before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This analysis should be viewed as a first step toward assessing how the initiative has affected public safety. The metrics employed here do not necessarily align with more inclusive definitions of safety as defined by the communities most impacted by the criminal justice system. Given the reliance on administrative data from criminal justice agencies, the definition of public safety is highly reflective of the justice system's responses and the differing enforcement practices that have arisen as a result of these responses for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other people of color who are often underserved and overpoliced. The intention of this analysis is to provide a general understanding of these trends. Future investigations will explore public safety in a much more nuanced manner.

Overall, the findings suggest that decarceration strategies can indeed be crafted and implemented responsibly, without compromising public safety. In fact, public safety outcomes across SJC sites and in most individual sites remained relatively constant before and after the implementation of decarceration reforms.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Reducing the Misuse and Overuse of Jails in Safety and Justice Challenge Sites*: <https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/islg/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/02/Report-Reducing-the-Misuse-and-Overuse-of-Jails-in-SJC-Sites.pdf>; *Jail Population Trends During COVID-19*: <https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/islg/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/02/Brief-Jail-Population-Trends-in-SJC-Sites-During-COVID-19.pdf>.

## ABOUT THE SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE

In 2015, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC), a multi-year initiative to reduce jail populations and racial and ethnic disparities in jails. To track the progress of reforms in the SJC jurisdictions, the Foundation engaged the Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) at the City University of New York.

## ABOUT THE DATA

SJC sites share jail population data with ISLG every month and most sites submit detailed case-level jail data annually. Crime data are from the FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report. The trends presented in this brief do not constitute an impact evaluation and should not be interpreted as such. Rather, this analysis provides a foundation for further research and evaluation of SJC's impacts on public safety that will be expanded upon at an SJC Research Consortium.

Unless otherwise noted, changes of five percent or more in either direction are referred to as "increases" or "decreases," and changes of less than five percent are noted as "no change."

Most sites began full implementation of SJC strategies to reduce local jail populations after May 2016, but eight sites began SJC implementation after May 2018. To analyze trends in incarceration and crime rates across sites in the SJC initiative, the crime rate analysis (covering trends between 2014 and 2019) includes sites that had only just begun to implement SJC strategies to reduce jail populations.

## FEATURED SJC SITES

- Allegheny County, PA\*
- Buncombe County, NC\*
- Charleston County, SC
- Cook County, IL
- East Baton Rouge Parish, LA\*
- Harris County, TX
- Lake County, IL\*
- Los Angeles County, CA
- Lucas County, OH
- Mecklenburg County, NC
- Milwaukee County, WI
- Minnehaha County, SD\*
- Missoula County, MT\*
- Multnomah County, OR
- New Orleans, LA
- New York, NY
- Palm Beach County, FL
- Pennington County, SD
- Philadelphia, PA
- Pima County, AZ
- St. Louis County, MO
- San Francisco, CA\*
- Spokane County, WA

\*Full SJC implementation began after May 2018.

# KEY FINDINGS

**Local crime trends remained stable or decreased in most sites following the implementation of SJC decarceration strategies.**

- Most SJC sites saw incarceration and crime rates decline.
- Crime rates decreased across SJC sites, mirroring the national trend.
- Violent crime decreased or remained about the same in most SJC sites.

**The rate of being returned to jail custody was about the same before and after the implementation of strategies that led to reduced jail populations in SJC sites.**

- Among individuals released pretrial, being returned to custody for a felony, misdemeanor, property crime, or violent crime remained about the same.
- Being returned to custody on a violent charge was rare before and after SJC implementation and being returned to custody on a homicide charge was extremely rare.
- Most individuals who were returned to custody did not return with a more serious charge.

# I. CRIME AND INCARCERATION RATES

This first section explores whether crime rates changed in SJC sites following the start of decarceration reforms. To see if there is an association between incarceration and crime trends, annual crime and incarceration rates were compared before (2014 to 2016) and after (2017 to 2019) the SJC implementation phase began. Overall, findings suggest SJC decarceration efforts were not linked to increases in crime at an aggregate level. Key takeaways are detailed below.

## OVERALL INDEX CRIME TRENDS

**Crime rates decreased or stayed the same in most SJC sites after local efforts were made to reduce jail populations, which mirrored the national decline in crime.**

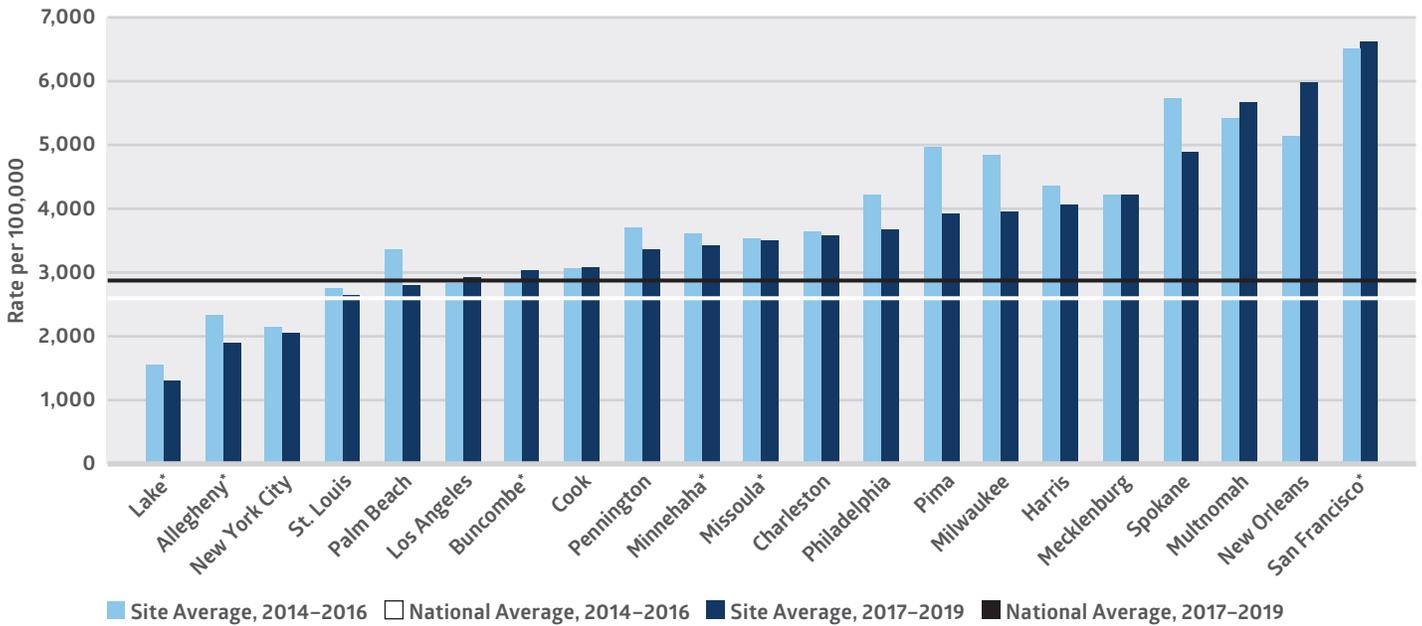
Most SJC sites have higher crime rates than the national average (Figure 1), but trends between 2014 and 2019 were similar to or outpaced by the national decline that occurred during this time frame. Across SJC sites, the crime rate declined by seven percent between 2017 and 2019, which was close to the 10 percent decline at the national level (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Further, during the first few years of SJC implementation, 11 sites experienced a reduction in index crimes that was greater than 10 percent (Figure 3), and the majority (19 sites) either experienced some decrease or remained the same.

## DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

- **Incarceration rate:** The number of adults in jail per 100,000 adults living in the jurisdiction.
  - **Interpretation example:** Across the United States in 2019, there were 287 adults in jail for every 100,000 adults. In New York City, there were 112 adults in jail for every 100,000 adult New Yorkers during that same year.
- **Index crime rate (also referred to as the crime rate):** The number of reported crimes in a jurisdiction per 100,000 people living in the jurisdiction. Crimes include those classified as either an index property crime (i.e., burglary, larceny-theft, or motor-vehicle theft) or an index violent crime (i.e., rape and sexual assault, robbery, assault, and murder), as defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. For more information on how index crime rates were calculated, see part 2 of this brief, "Methods and Appendices."
  - **Interpretation example:** Across the United States in 2019, there were 2,477 reported index crimes for every 100,000 people. In New York City, there were 2,048 reported index crimes for every 100,000 New Yorkers that year.

<sup>2</sup> Additional data, including crime rates by SJC site between 2014 and 2019, are available in Appendix A (Incarceration and Index Crime Rates), Appendix B (Property and Violent Crime Rates), and Appendix C (Homicide Rates).

**FIGURE 1. TOTAL INDEX CRIME RATE: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.**

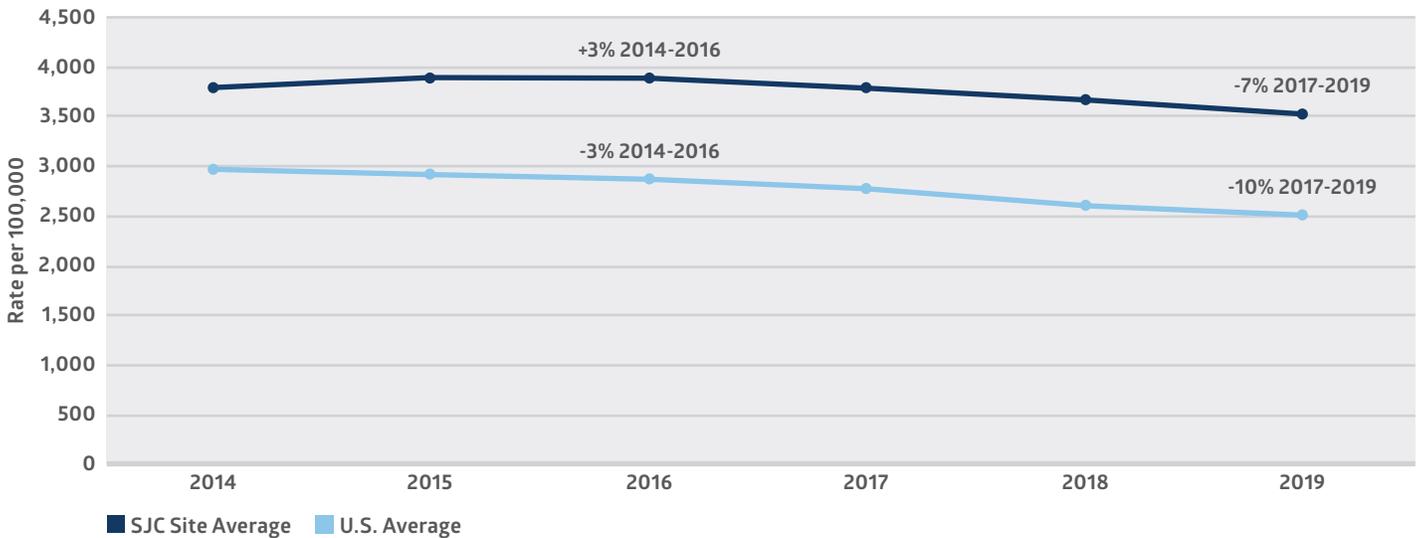


\* SJC implementation began after May 2018.

Note: Sites with incomplete crime rate data were excluded.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

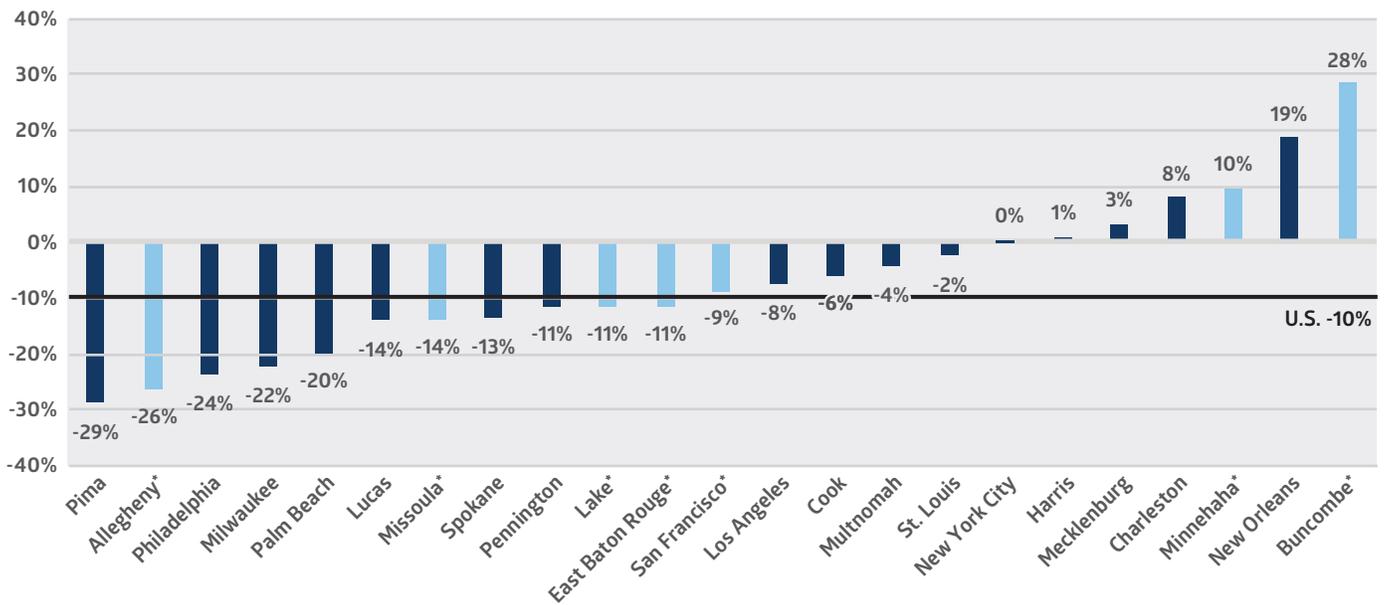
**FIGURE 2. TOTAL INDEX CRIME RATE: ACROSS SJC SITES AND THE U.S.**



Note: East Baton Rouge Parish and Multnomah County were excluded due to incomplete data.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

**FIGURE 3. PERCENT CHANGE IN THE INDEX CRIME RATE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.**



\*Light Blue indicates full SJC implementation began after May 2018.

NOTE: While the New Orleans index crime rate is up 19%, there was a significant reduction in the homicide rate over the same period; see Appendix C.

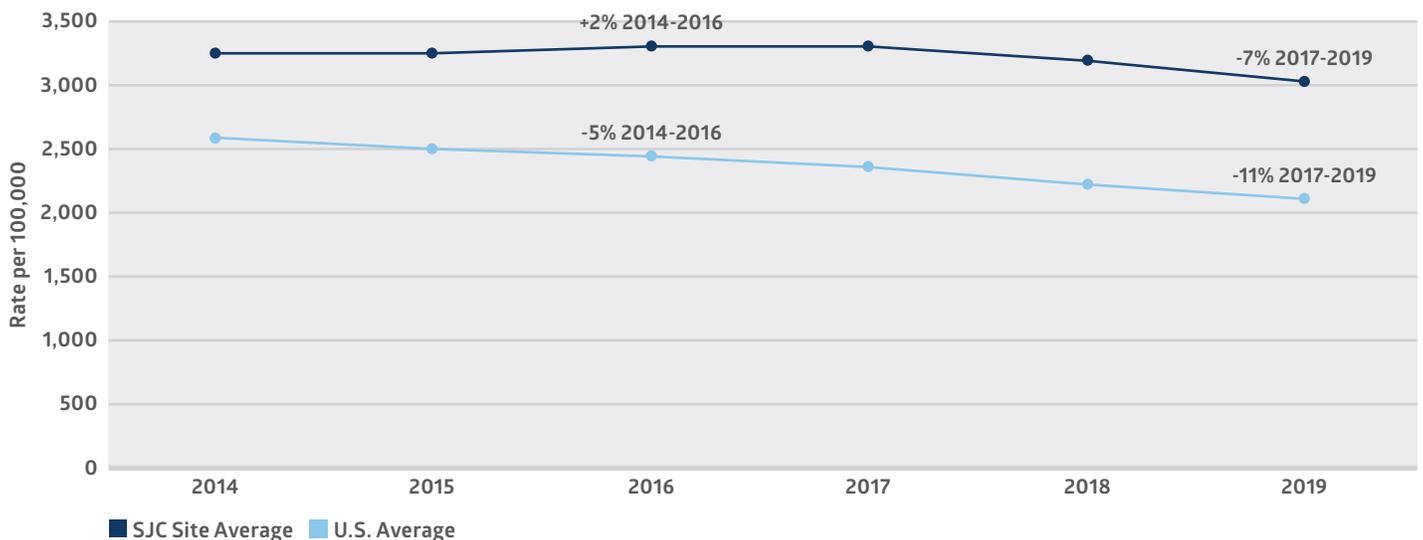
Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

## PROPERTY AND VIOLENT CRIME TRENDS

**Most SJC sites experienced reduced property crime and violent crime after 2016.**

Property crimes represented about 85 percent of the total crime rate (both nationally and across SJC sites). While the average national property crime rate fell five percent between 2014 and 2016, the rate remained flat across SJC sites (Figure 4). This changed between 2017 and 2019 when SJC sites and the nation saw similar declines in the average property crime rate (down 7% and 11%, respectively). As Figure 5 shows, property crime rate reductions between 2017 and 2019 outpaced the national average in nine sites, though four sites experienced increases of five percent or more in the property crime rate after 2017 (two of them, Minnehaha and Buncombe Counties, did not start SJC implementation until after May 2018).

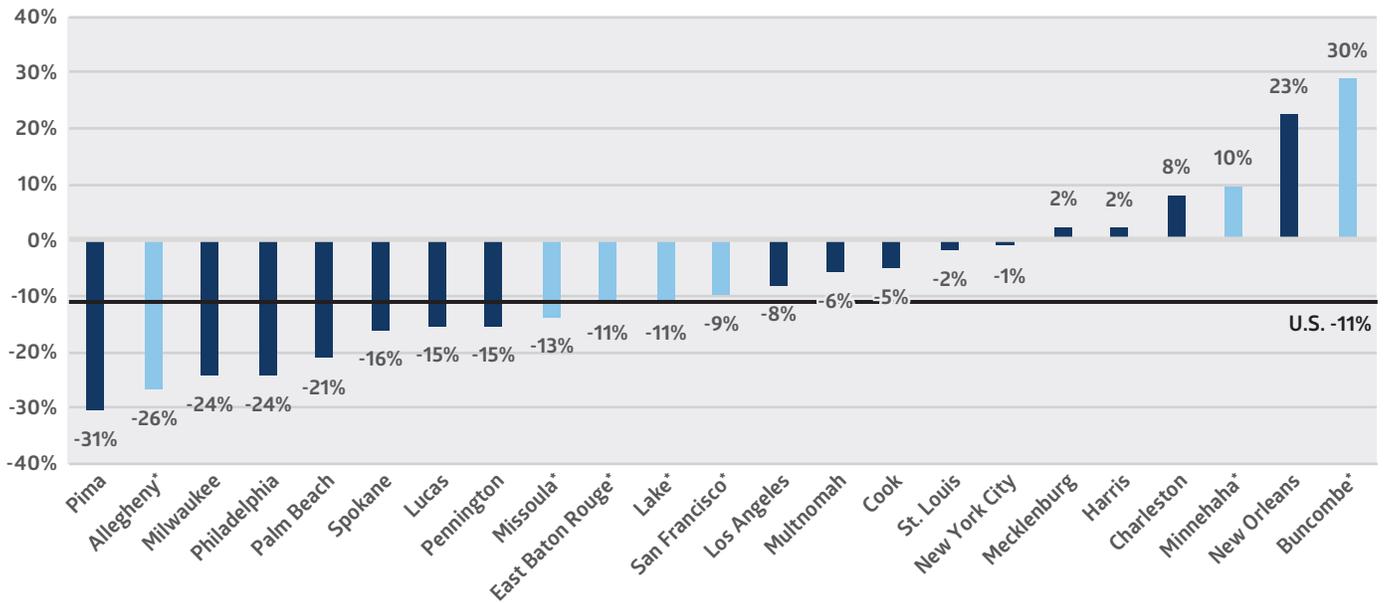
**FIGURE 4. PROPERTY CRIME RATE: ACROSS SJC SITES AND IN THE U.S.**



Note: East Baton Rouge Parish and Multnomah County were excluded due to incomplete data.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

**FIGURE 5. PERCENT CHANGE IN THE PROPERTY CRIME RATE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.**

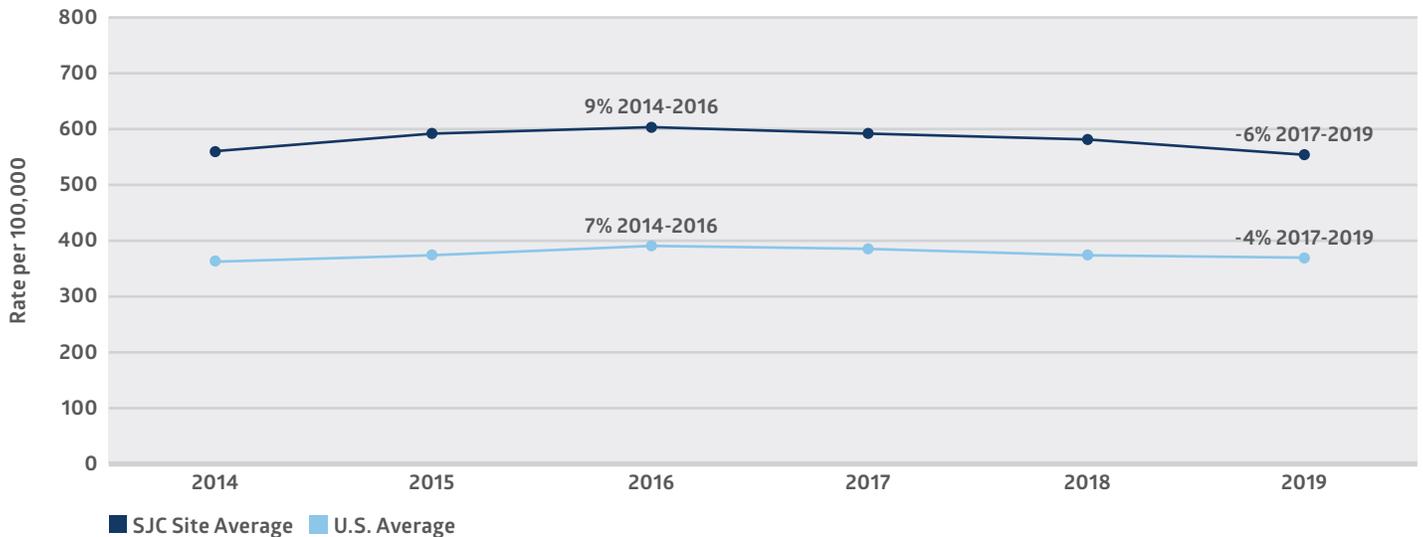


\*Light Blue indicates full SJC implementation began after May 2018.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

The violent crime rate in SJC sites and nationally increased during the pre-implementation period (+9% and +7%, respectively), then fell during the post-implementation years (Figure 6). However, the violent crime rate fell more steeply across SJC sites than nationally after 2016. Between 2017 and 2019, violent crime in SJC sites decreased at a faster pace (-6%) than the national trend (-4%). The majority of SJC sites saw declines in violent crime (Figure 7) and six sites experienced reductions of more than 15 percent between 2017 and 2019; the violent crime rates include homicides, which also declined in many SJC sites in the years following SJC implementation (see Appendix C).

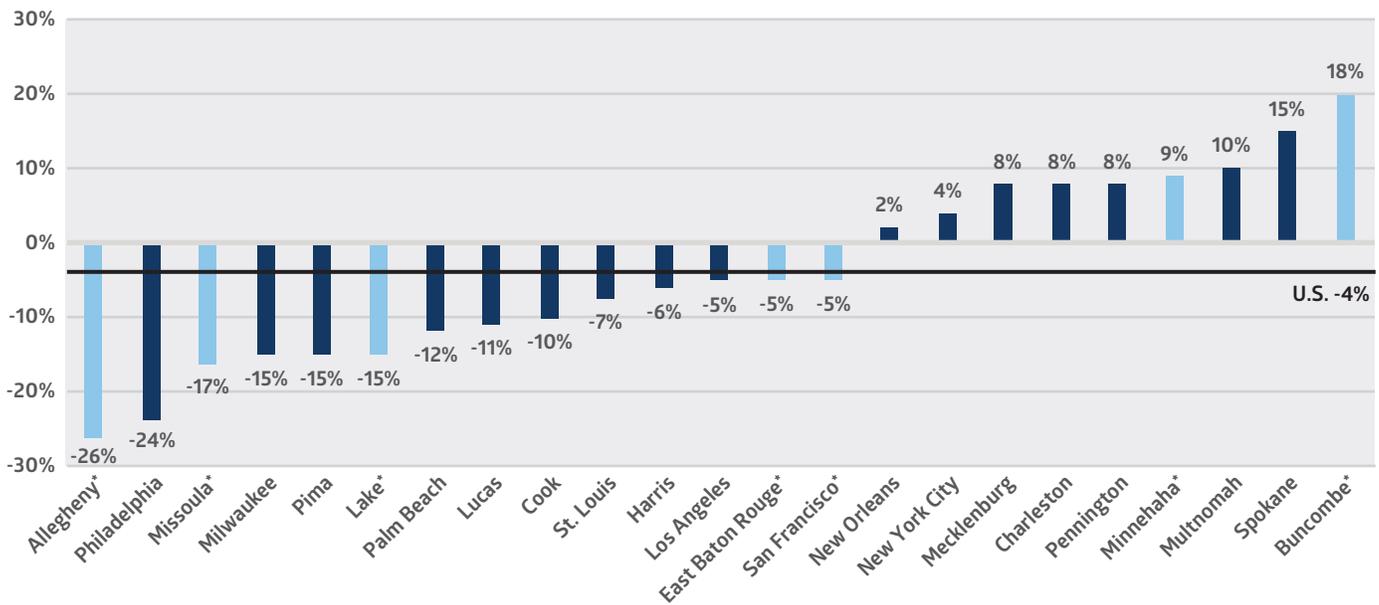
**FIGURE 6. VIOLENT CRIME RATE: ACROSS SJC SITES AND THE U.S.**



Note: East Baton Rouge Parish and Multnomah County were excluded due to incomplete data.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

**FIGURE 7. PERCENT CHANGE IN THE VIOLENT CRIME RATE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.**



\*Light Blue indicates full SJC implementation began after May 2018.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

## INCARCERATION RATE TRENDS

**The majority of SJC sites that reduced their jail incarceration rate also experienced a decrease in crime during the same period.**

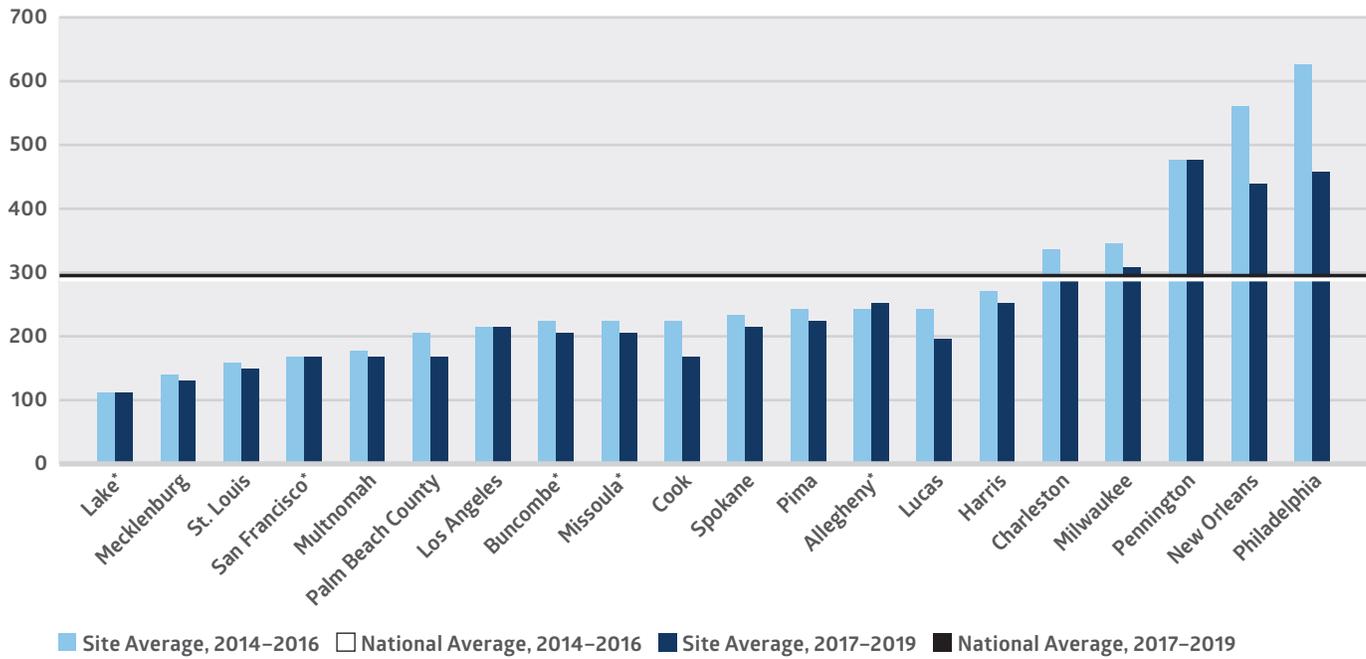
As a first step toward understanding whether decarceration efforts undertaken at SJC sites affected public safety, an analysis was conducted to determine whether crime rates in SJC sites changed following SJC implementation efforts to reduce local jail populations. Part of this analysis included comparing changes in crime rates to changes in incarceration rates. While the overall relationship between incarceration and crime was examined, it is important to recognize that research has often cited a much stronger link between changes in crime and other demographic and socioeconomic factors—such as population, age, education, and unemployment—when compared to changes in incarceration.<sup>3</sup>

Incarceration rates in the majority of SJC sites were below the national average before and after the initiative began (Figure 8). Prior to SJC implementation, the average incarceration rate across SJC sites was 253 per 100,000 adults, compared to 302 per 100,000 nationally. Between 2017 and 2019, the incarceration rate continued to decline across sites (231 per 100,000 adults in 2019), as did the national jail incarceration rate (287 per 100,000 adults in 2019).

As the incarceration rate declined following the implementation of SJC strategies, the crime rate also dropped or remained the same in most sites (Figure 9). The majority of sites that reduced their incarceration rate after SJC implementation also experienced a decrease in crime during the same period (see the bottom-left quartile of Figure 9). Only four of the 23 sites experienced an increase in crime while reducing their incarceration rate; two of these four sites (Buncombe and Minnehaha Counties) began SJC implementation after May 2018. In fact, Buncombe County's incarceration rate did not change substantially (that is, not more than five percent), indicating the relationship between the change in its jail population and the increase in its crime was not significant.

<sup>3</sup> Stemen, D., (2017). *The Prison Paradox: More Incarceration Will Not Make Us Safer*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

**FIGURE 8. INCARCERATION RATE BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.**

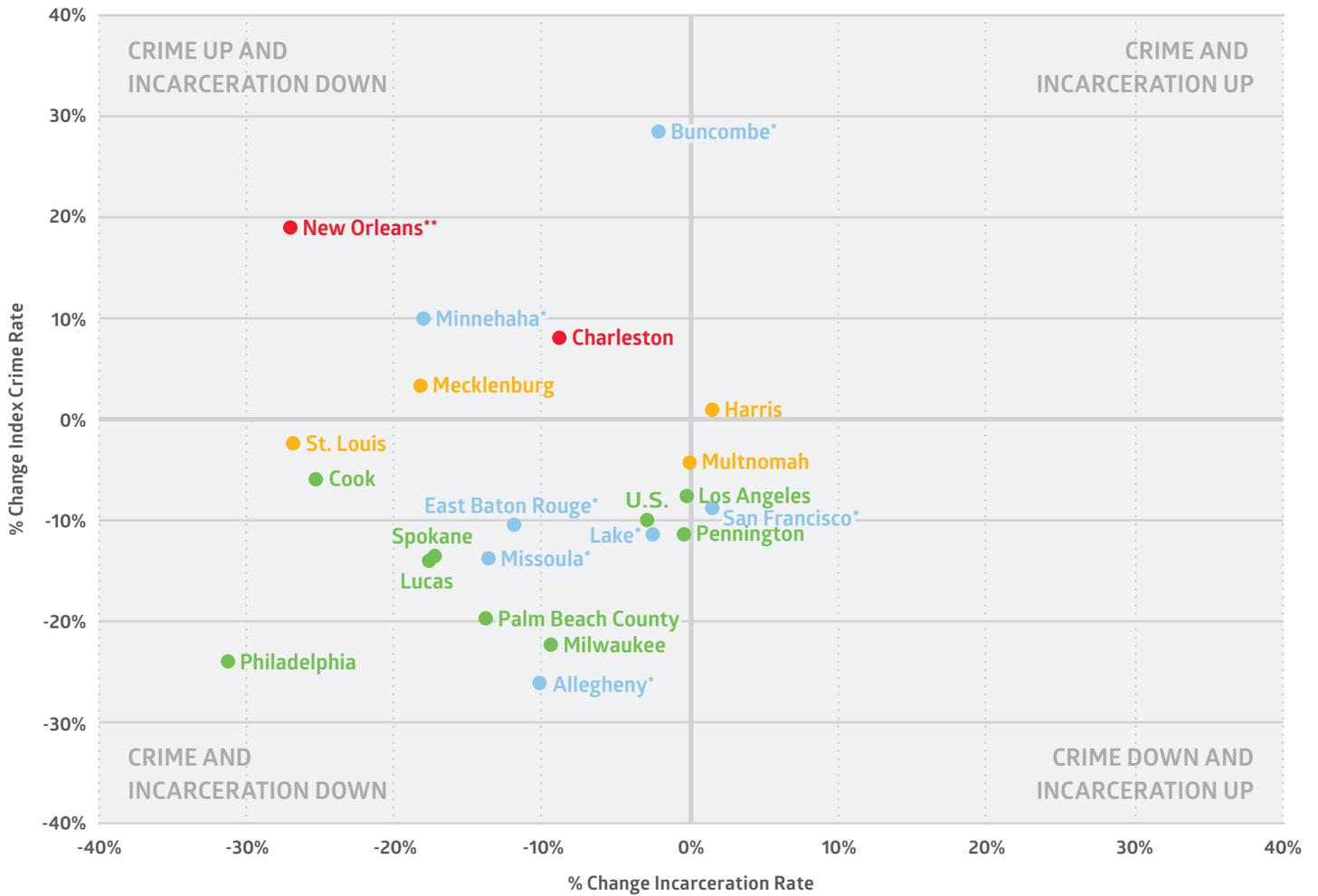


\* SJC implementation began after May 2018.

Note: Sites with incomplete incarceration data were excluded.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics.

**FIGURE 9. PERCENT CHANGE IN THE INCARCERATION RATE AND INDEX CRIME RATE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019**



% Change 2017 to 2019 in Index Crime Rate: ■ 5% or more decrease ■ No Change (+/-5%) ■ 5% or more increase

\* Blue indicates full SJC implementation began after May 2018.

\*\*While the New Orleans index crime rate is up 19%, there was a significant reduction in the homicide rate over the same period; see Appendix C.

Note: Sites with incomplete incarceration or crime rate data were excluded.

Sources: FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report; Jacob Kaplan's *Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Data*; CDC Vital Statistics; Bureau of Justice Statistics; ISLG.

## II. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATES

In addition to exploring site-level crime trends, return-to-custody rates were examined of the individuals released from jail after SJC implementation began. This was achieved by comparing return-to-custody rates—before and after the launch of SJC—for three cohorts of people released from jail pretrial, with a focus on the returns to custody that occurred during the first 12 months after release. The types of charges associated with a return—such as misdemeanor, felony, property, or violent<sup>4</sup>—were analyzed. Given that individuals can be returned to custody for reasons unrelated to new criminal charges, it was critical to focus on these specific subsets of returns.

As noted in the introduction, the return-to-custody rate is an imperfect measure of public safety. Returns to jail are in part reflective of decisions made by the criminal justice system and these decisions and responses may not align with how communities most affected by the criminal justice system define public safety. Returns to custody may even be related to systemic factors, such as a lack of housing. Future analyses will address the impacts of such limitations, but this analysis is a starting point for understanding these issues and providing a broad look at whether SJC decarceration reforms have been associated with any changes in public-safety-related activities.

Similar to the crime-trends analysis, the finding suggests the launch of SJC was not associated with an increased public-safety risk, as defined by returns to custody. Regardless of the specific type of criminal charge, return-to-custody rates among those released pretrial did not change after the implementation of decarceration reforms began. Key takeaways are detailed below.

### DEFINITIONS

- **Release Cohorts:**

- *Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort* – those released prior to the beginning of the SJC initiative (between 2014 and 2015 for most sites)
- *Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort* – those released during the first SJC implementation year (from 2016 to 2017 for most sites)
- *Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort* – those released during the second SJC implementation year (from 2017 to 2018 for most sites)

See part 2 of this brief, “Methods and Appendices,” for more details.

- **Pretrial Releases/Pretrial Individuals:** Individuals released from physical jail custody pending the disposition of one or more of their booking charges.
- **Return-to-Custody Rate (or Rebooking Rate):** The number of individuals in a cohort who were returned to custody within 12 months of their pretrial release, expressed as a percentage of all released individuals in the cohort.

**Note:** Return-to-custody rates are not limited to returns for new law violations; returns could also be due to other reasons associated with previous cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.). Further, this analysis does not take into account any potential changes in law enforcement’s arrest practices that may have occurred over the course of the study period, which would affect return-to-custody rates.

**Examples of rebooking scenarios included in this analysis:** An individual is booked for misdemeanor theft and is released from jail while the case is pending.

- Rebook Scenario 1: This same individual is subsequently arrested two weeks later for a simple assault (that is, arrested for a new crime).
- Rebook Scenario 2: This same individual is subsequently booked a month later after a bench warrant for a failure to appear in court was issued on the misdemeanor-theft case (the arrest was related to the original misdemeanor-theft booking).

<sup>4</sup> See part 2 of this brief, “Methods and Appendices,” for more detail. The demographic and charge composition remained the same across cohorts; see Appendices D and E for details by site.

## RETURN-TO-CUSTODY TRENDS AMONG ALL PRETRIAL RELEASES

**Most people released from jail pretrial were not returned to custody within a year, and returns to custody due to violent crime charges were rare.**

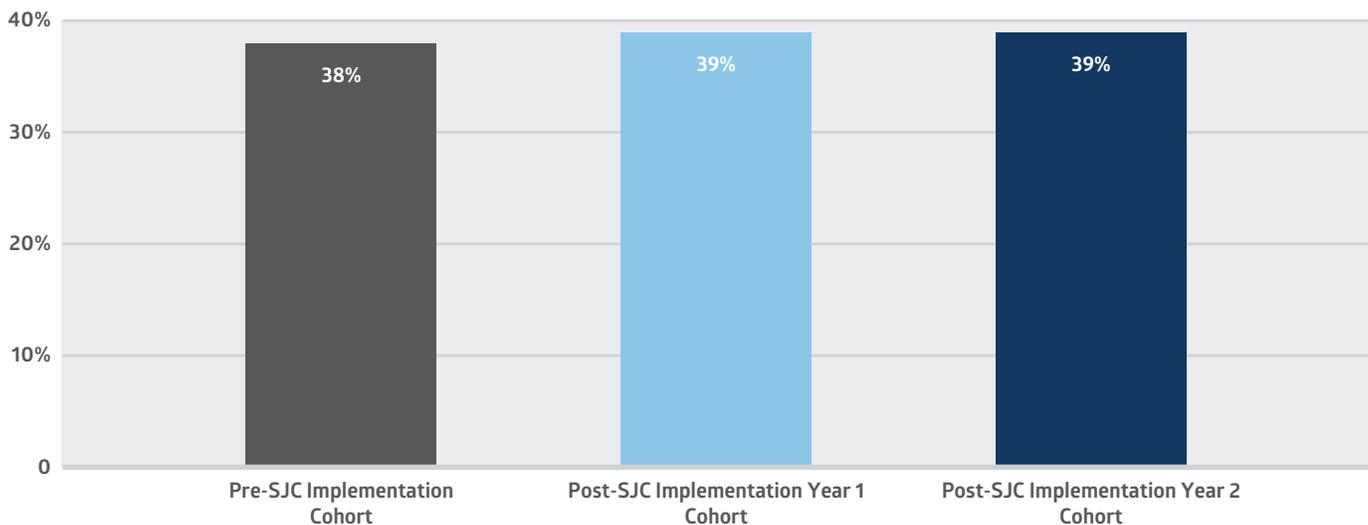
Prior to the implementation of SJC jail population reduction strategies, 38 percent of those released on a pretrial status were returned to custody within 12 months (Figure 10).<sup>5</sup> This remained true in the years following SJC implementation: Of those released pretrial in SJC’s second year of implementation, 39 percent were returned to custody within a year. The vast majority of sites did not experience an increase in the return-to-custody rate after SJC implementation began (Table 1).

Rates of returning to custody on a misdemeanor or felony top charge remained about the same before and after SJC implementation (Figure 11). There was also no change in the percentage of people rebooked on a felony or misdemeanor within a one-year period after SJC was implemented (about 1 in 5 pretrial individuals were returned to custody following their release on a felony or a misdemeanor charge). Notably, implementation of SJC was not associated with an increase in return to custody on more serious charges, as there was no substantial change in the percentage of people released pretrial who were returned to custody on a felony charge.

Note that *any* return to custody in the follow-up period was counted; for example, if a released individual was returned to custody twice in the 12-month follow-up period, once for a misdemeanor and once for a felony, that individual was counted as returning overall and counted as returning in both the misdemeanor and felony categories. Appendix F details the return-to-custody rates by the severity of the charge for each SJC site.

Across all three release cohorts, only three percent of those released pretrial were returned to custody on a violent crime charge. Figure 12 shows the percentage of people who were rebooked on a charge classified as either a property or violent crime, as defined by the Unified Crime Reporting Program. Only a small percentage of people were returned to custody on a property or violent crime charge; furthermore, there was no increase in the percentage of those returned to custody following the implementation of SJC strategies. And fewer than half of one percent of individuals released pretrial were returned to custody on a homicide charge (see Appendix F for site-specific return-to-custody-by-charge rates).

**FIGURE 10. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE AMONG PRETRIAL RELEASES: ACROSS SITES**



Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> See part 2 of this brief, “Methods and Appendices,” for details on identifying comparable national and jurisdictional return rates.

**TABLE 1. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE: BY SITE**

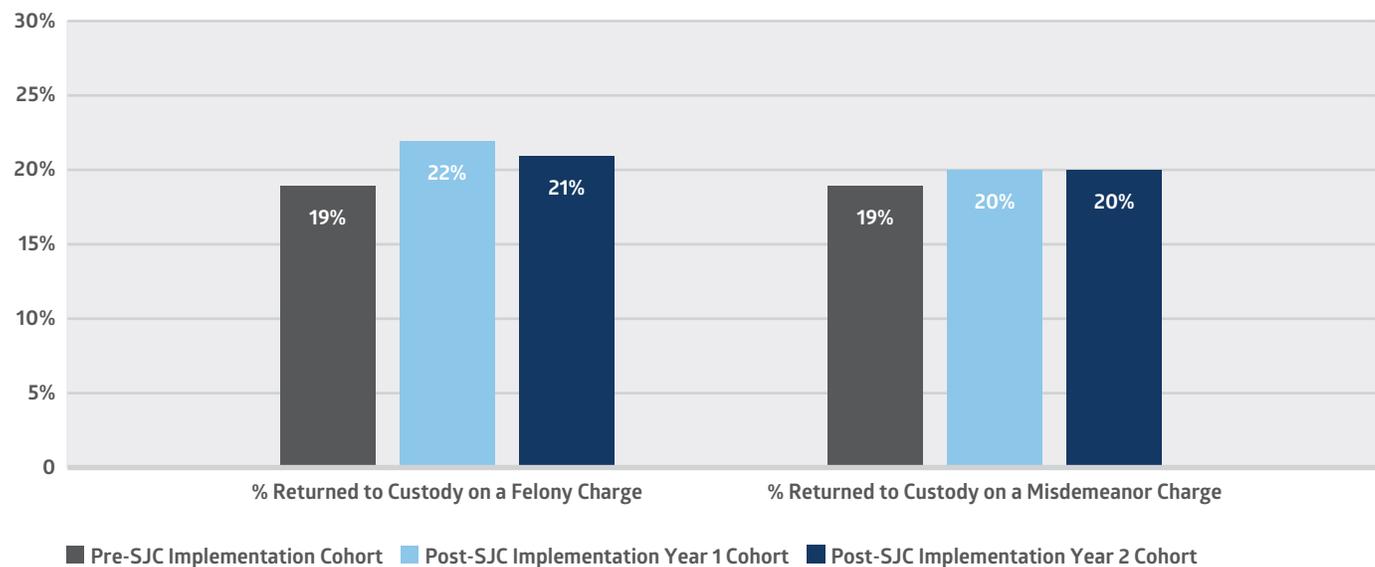
Site	Return to Custody Rate			Percentage point change in return-to-custody rate between earliest and latest cohort
	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort	
<b>ALL RELEASES</b>				
New Orleans	27%	28%	26%	-1%
Philadelphia	36%	33%	34%	-2%
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b>				
Allegheny	40%	40%	*	0%
Buncombe	46%	46%	*	0%
Charleston**	21%**	16%**	19%**	-2%**
Cook	34%	34%	34%	0%
Harris	*	38%	42%	4%
Lucas	38%	37%	39%	1%
Mecklenburg	39%	41%	38%	-1%
Milwaukee	48%	46%	42%	-6%
Multnomah	50%	51%	52%	2%
Palm Beach	35%	33%	31%	-4%
Pennington	*	47%	47%	0%
Pima	*	44%	44%	0%
St. Louis	29%	34%	31%	2%
San Francisco	46%	56%	*	10%
Spokane	47%	47%	49%	2%

\* Data not available or applicable.

\*\* Based on a six-month period.

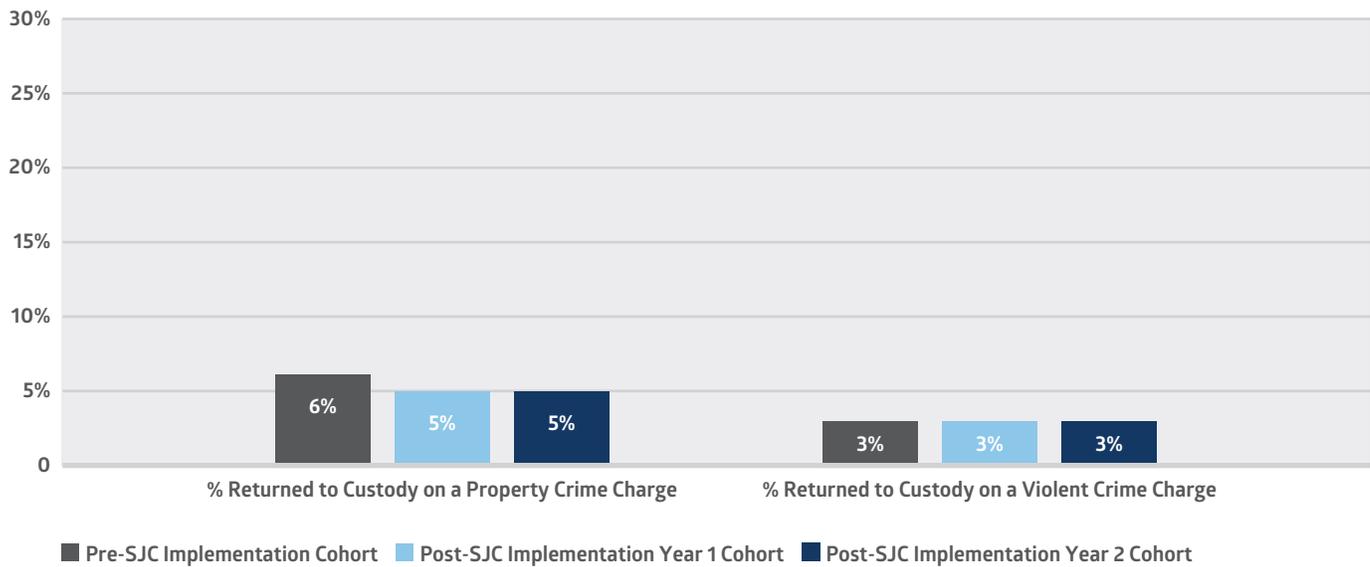
Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.). Percentage point changes are calculated based on nonrounded values.

**FIGURE 11. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE AMONG PRETRIAL RELEASES BY TOP CHARGE IN BOOKING: ACROSS SITES**



Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.). The return rates for misdemeanor and felony charges are not mutually exclusive and may overlap.

**FIGURE 12. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE BY THE UNIFIED CRIME REPORTING PROGRAM'S CRIME TYPE IN BOOKING: ACROSS SITES**



Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

**RETURN-TO-CUSTODY TRENDS BY SEVERITY OF THE INITIAL BOOKING**

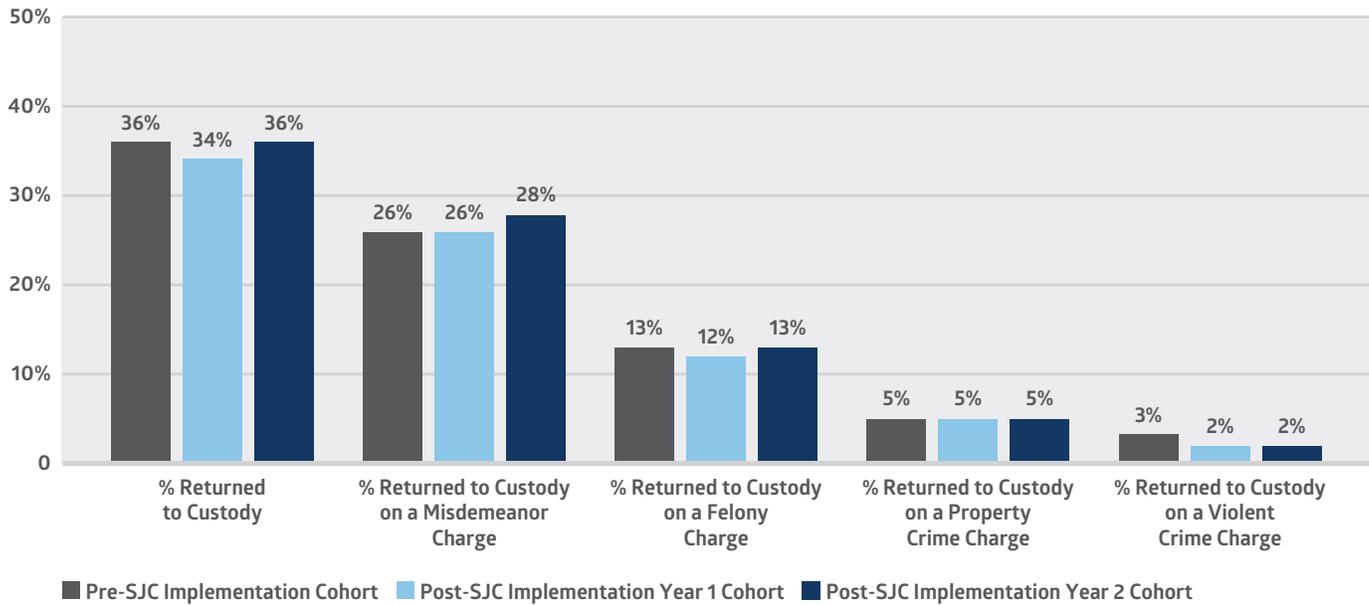
**Among individuals initially booked on a misdemeanor or felony who were released pretrial, return-to-custody rates remained at or near pre-SJC implementation levels, respectively.**

Across all three release cohorts, the return-to-custody rate among those who had an initial misdemeanor booking was the same; the majority of rebookings were for additional or related<sup>6</sup> misdemeanors (as opposed to more serious crimes). As Figure 13 shows, just over a quarter of those individuals originally booked on a misdemeanor were returned to custody on a misdemeanor charge, while about 12 to 13 percent of returns were for felony charges. The return rates for property and violent crime charges were even lower, at five percent and about two percent, respectively.

Similarly, there was no change in the percentage of people released pretrial on a felony charge who were returned to custody within a one-year time frame (Figure 14). Those originally booked on a felony were more likely to be rebooked on a felony than on a misdemeanor charge. Still, across all three release cohorts, fewer than eight percent were returned to custody on a property crime charge and only four percent were returned on a violent crime charge.

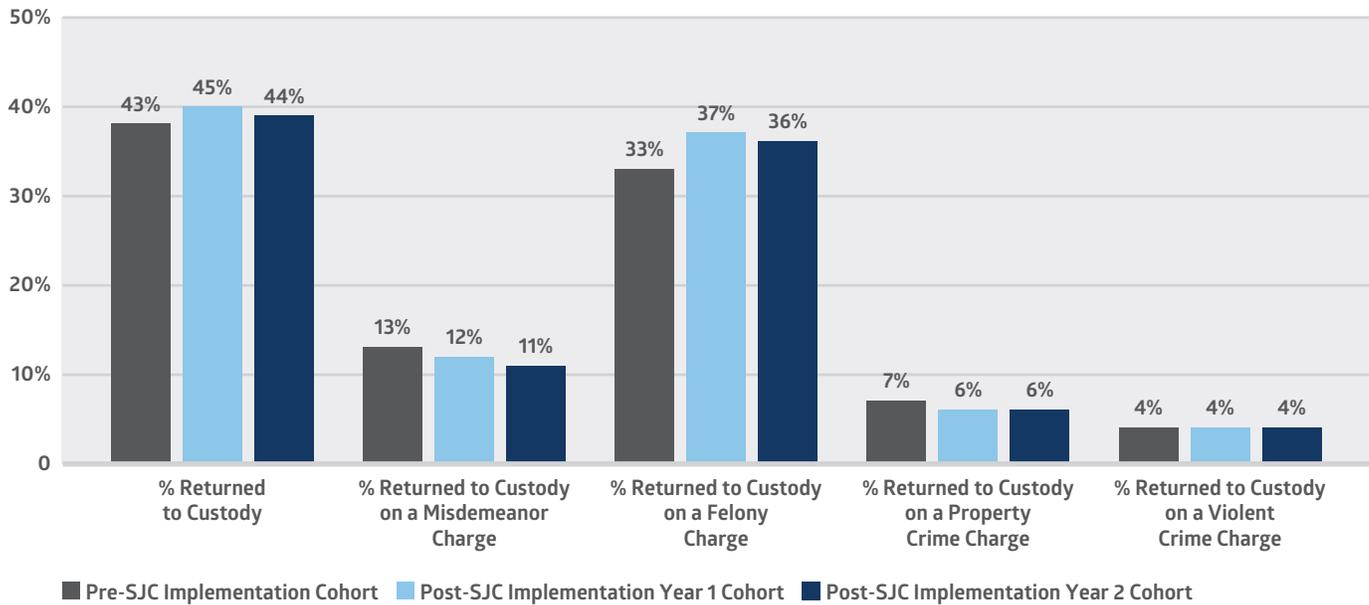
<sup>6</sup> Returns to custody may be for violations of a pretrial release of the original misdemeanor.

**FIGURE 13. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE AMONG PEOPLE WITH AN INITIAL MISDEMEANOR BOOKING WHO WERE RELEASED PRETRIAL: ACROSS SITES**



Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

**FIGURE 14. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATE AMONG PEOPLE WITH AN INITIAL FELONY BOOKING WHO WERE RELEASED PRETRIAL: ACROSS SITES**



Note: Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations; returns could be due to underlying cases (such as a failure to appear in court, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

# CONCLUSION

The findings of this analysis suggest decarceration efforts in SJC sites did not endanger public safety, as defined by changes in crime rates and individuals being returned to custody. As incarceration rates declined during SJC's implementation, crime and violent crime rates also dropped or remained the same at most sites, which mirrored national crime rate trends. When examining individuals who were returned to jail custody within a year of release, the rates of return were about the same before and after SJC strategies were in place, which suggests decarceration efforts, especially among the pretrial cases, do not lead to a higher return-to-custody rate. Equally important, rebookings for violent crime charges and homicide charges were rare before and after SJC was implemented. Further examination of public safety implications—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic—are forthcoming.

**PART 2: METHODS AND APPENDICES**

# **JAIL DECARCERATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY:**

Preliminary Findings from the Safety  
and Justice Challenge

A Report Prepared by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance

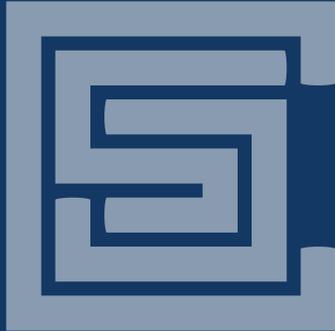


**SAFETY+JUSTICE  
CHALLENGE**

Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation



**CUNY INSTITUTE  
FOR STATE & LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE**



# METHODS

## CRIME AND INCARCERATION RATES

We report annual crime rates by each Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) site using *Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program Data*.<sup>1</sup> National crime rates are from the FBI's 2019 *Crime in the United States* report.

**UCR Part I violent crimes** include murder and non-negligent homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; **Part I property crimes** include burglary, larceny/theft, motor-vehicle theft, and arson. **Total index crime** includes violent and property crimes.

**Incarceration rates** in SJC sites are derived from both aggregate and case-level data submitted to the Institute for State and Local Governance. The incarceration rate is calculated as the Average Daily Population (ADP) divided by the total adult population and reported per 100,000 adults. The U.S. jail incarceration rate is from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Jail Inmates in 2019* report. The Bureau of Justice Statistics' rates are based on the number of confined inmates at mid-year (the last day in June) in local jails per 100,000 U.S. residents.

**Population data** used to calculate population rates are from CDC Vital Statistics. The crime rate is reported per 100,000 population; the incarceration rate is reported per 100,000 adult population (age 18 and older).

**Crime and incarceration rates are not included for all years for all SJC sites due to limited data.** Refer to Appendix A for a list of incarceration and crime rates by SJC sites. Note that eight sites began SJC implementation after May 2018: Allegheny, Buncombe, Clark, East Baton Rouge, Lake, Minnehaha, Missoula, and San Francisco. We include these sites when comparing crime rates before (pre-2016) and after (post-2017) the implementation of SJC.

## RETURN-TO-CUSTODY ANALYSIS

To analyze return-to-jail custody rates before and after SJC's implementation, we identified three release cohorts in each site, where available. The table below outlines the corresponding time periods for each release cohort.

Sites Included in the Analysis	Pre-SJC Implementation Release Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Release Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Release Cohort
<b>SJC implementation in May 2016*:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charleston</li> <li>Cook<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Harris</li> <li>Lucas</li> <li>Mecklenburg</li> <li>Milwaukee</li> <li>Multnomah</li> <li>New Orleans (All Releases Only)</li> <li>Palm Beach County</li> <li>Pennington</li> <li>Philadelphia (All Releases Only)</li> <li>Pima</li> <li>Spokane</li> <li>St. Louis</li> </ul>	Includes individuals released pretrial between <b>May 2014 and April 2015</b> for all sites except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charleston: May 2014 to October 2014</li> <li>Spokane: September 2014 to April 2015</li> <li>No pre-implementation data for Harris, Pennington, and Pima</li> </ul>	Includes individuals released between <b>May 2016 and April 2017</b> for all sites except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charleston: May 2014 to October 2014</li> </ul>	Includes individuals released between <b>May 2017 and April 2018</b> for all sites except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charleston: May 2018 to October 2018</li> </ul>
<b>SJC implementation after May 2018**:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allegheny</li> <li>Buncombe</li> <li>San Francisco</li> </ul>	Includes individuals released pretrial between <b>May 2016 and April 2017</b>	Includes individuals released pretrial between <b>May 2018 and April 2019</b>	N/A

\* Some sites did not become fully implemented until about a year after May 2016, but they received partial-implementation funding for SJC activities beginning in the spring of 2016.

\*\* Some sites did not become fully implemented sites until about a year after May 2018, but they received partial-implementation funding for SJC activities beginning in the spring of 2018.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/100707/version/V15/view>

<sup>2</sup> Cook County's pretrial releases are based on legal custody; this includes people released directly to the community from the jail and those who were moved from the jail to electronic monitoring. In both instances, the at-risk time starts once an individual is released from legal custody.

We identified the earliest qualifying pretrial release for each individual in a cohort (if a person had two releases within the cohort period, we selected the earliest release). Individuals were then tracked for a 365-day follow-up period<sup>3</sup> to capture subsequent returns to custody. We count all returns to custody equally, not just those who were returned for new law violations. Returns to custody do not necessarily imply new law violations but may include returns due to underlying cases (such as Failure to Appear, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

In **New Orleans and Philadelphia**, return-to-custody rates were reported for all releases, not specifically pretrial releases, due to limited data. Unless otherwise noted, these two sites were excluded from the “Across SJC Sites” estimates.

In **Harris, Pennington, and Pima**, data prior to SJC implementation was insufficient for calculating return-to-custody rates.

Three sites, **Allegheny, Buncombe, and San Francisco**, began SJC implementation after May 2018, and thus only have one post-SJC implementation cohort.

We examined the charge characteristics of the initial releases and returns to custody in two ways: by charge severity and by type of crime. For crime types (property or violent), we mapped relevant charges based on our understanding of the UCR crime categories and the charge descriptions provided by the sites. Crime types only include Part 1 crimes but not lower-level charges. In **New Orleans and Philadelphia**, due to limited data we could not report charge characteristics for returns to custody but we expect to report this information in a future analysis.

There are also several sites where the charge composition of the jail may have impacted the results of the return-to-custody analysis. A higher return-to-custody rate in **San Francisco**, for example, may be because there was a higher proportion of individuals who were initially booked on felony charges. In both **St. Louis** and **Palm Beach County**, there was a larger-than-average proportion of bookings that were not accounted for by misdemeanor or felony charges, which may have led to lower-than-average returns to custody for misdemeanor and felony charges than in other SJC sites.

**Identifying comparable national and jurisdictional return-to-custody rates.** Because our definition of return to custody includes more than just new arrests, thus producing a higher rate of return, there is no comparable national rate to cite here; however, there are a couple of local examples worth noting, even though they are not directly comparable:

- A study in Connecticut found that within six months of release from jail, 29% of pretrial detainees had been readmitted to a Connecticut Department of Correction facility; <https://business.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjAbout/SAC-Documents-from-2018-and-2019/2019-Recidivism-Report-2014-pre-trial-Cohort-final.pdf>.
- In Harris County, Texas—one of the SJC sites featured in this report—a recent study by a court-appointed monitor found that about 24% of the initial misdemeanor complaints had resulted in a new complaint filed against the same defendant within one year; <https://www.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.txsd.1360805/gov.uscourts.txsd.1360805.722.1.pdf>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Charleston’s follow-up period is six months, due to limited data. Spokane County jail data were not available prior to September 2014 and, as a result, the pre-SJC implementation initial-release sample was truncated to eight months.

# APPENDIX A. INCARCERATION AND INDEX CRIME RATES: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.

Site	Incarceration Rate (Per 100,000 Adults)					Index Crime Rate (Per 100,000 Population)				
	2014	2017	2019	Percent Change, 2014 to 2016	Percent Change, 2017 to 2019	2014	2017	2019	Percent Change, 2014 to 2016	Percent Change, 2017 to 2019
Allegheny	252	258	232	-9%	-10%	2,383	2,161	1,595	-4%	-26%
Buncombe	220	207	203	5%	-2%	2,851	2,720	3,492	0%	28%
Charleston	360	298	272	-15%	-9%	3,721	3,446	3,725	-4%	8%
Cook	244	190	142	-14%	-25%	3,095	3,162	2,978	2%	-6%
East Baton Rouge	*	576	507	*	-12%	*	5,722	5,116	*	-11%
Harris	266	246	250	2%	2%	4,541	4,104	4,140	-6%	1%
Lake	110	115	115	-3%	0%	1,676	1,392	1,234	-15%	-11%
Los Angeles	*	216	216	*	0%	2,590	3,039	2,810	18%	-8%
Lucas	242	218	179	0%	-18%	3,543***	5,528	4,727	***	-14%
Mecklenburg	161	144	118	-19%	-18%	3,938	4,218	4,352	16%	3%
Milwaukee	344	316	287	-4%	-9%	5,090	4,536	3,527	-6%	-22%
Minnehaha	*	306	251	*	-18%	3,338	3,295	3,617	12%	10%
Missoula	220	226	195	4%	-14%	3,224	3,597	3,100	22%	-14%
Multnomah	*	164	164	*	0%	5,573	5,794	5,538	-6%	-4%
New Orleans	595	508	371	-15%	-27%	5,356	5,533	6,572	-4%	19%
New York City	*	*	112	*	*	2,219	2,039	2,048	-7%	0%
Palm Beach County	210	179	154	-11%	-14%	3,383	3,121	2,508	-1%	-20%
Pennington	*	470	459	*	-2%	3,492	3,707	3,284	10%	-11%
Philadelphia	*	545	375	*	-31%	4,392	4,001	3,050	-6%	-24%
Pima	*	230	*	*	*	4,958	4,432	3,158	-3%	-29%
San Francisco	162	168	171	8%	2%	6,199	7,014	6,396	1%	-9%
Spokane	*	233	193		-17%	6,109	5,118	4,429	-7%	-13%
St. Louis	157	165	121	1%	-27%	2,603	2,688	2,622	8%	-2%
SJC Site Average**	253	272	231			3,748	3,755	3,494	3%	-7%
U.S.	302	296	287	-2%	-3%	2,936	2,747	2,477	-3%	-10%

\* Data not available or applicable.

\*\* East Baton Rouge and Multnomah were excluded due to incomplete data.

\*\*\* Available 2014 index crime data in Lucas County was incomplete because it did not include all agencies represented in later years. Therefore, the percentage change between 2014 and 2016 is not reported.

Note: Red cells indicate an increase of five percent or more; green cells indicate a decrease of five percent or more; yellow cells indicate no change (+/- 5%).

# APPENDIX B. PROPERTY AND VIOLENT CRIME RATES: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.

Site	Property Crime Rate (Per 100,000 Population)					Violent Crime Rate (Per 100,000 Population)				
	2014	2017	2019	Percent Change, 2014 to 2016	Percent Change, 2017 to 2019	2014	2017	2019	Percent Change, 2014 to 2016	Percent Change, 2017 to 2019
Allegheny	1,982	1,796	1,325	-3%	-26%	401	364	270	-8%	-26%
Buncombe	2,605	2,420	3,137	-2%	30%	246	301	355	14%	18%
Charleston	3,260	2,991	3,233	-4%	8%	461	455	492	-4%	8%
Cook	2,547	2,496	2,380	-2%	-5%	548	666	598	21%	-10%
East Baton Rouge	*	5,041	4,471	*	-11%	*	680	644	*	-5%
Harris	3,819	3,321	3,403	-8%	2%	722	783	737	4%	-6%
Lake	1,530	1,246	1,109	-16%	-11%	146	146	124	-1%	-15%
Los Angeles	2,164	2,458	2,260	15%	-8%	425	581	550	31%	-5%
Lucas	2,574***	4,569	3,868	***	-15%	969***	960	859	***	-11%
Mecklenburg	3,416	3,611	3,698	15%	2%	523	607	654	23%	8%
Milwaukee	4,088	3,461	2,617	-9%	-24%	1,002	1,075	910	4%	-15%
Minnehaha	2,903	2,842	3,121	11%	10%	435	453	496	16%	9%
Missoula	2,950	3,197	2,767	19%	-13%	274	400	334	49%	-17%
Multnomah	5,106	5,316	5,012	-6%	-6%	467	479	526	0%	10%
New Orleans	4,372	4,392	5,413	-7%	23%	984	1,140	1,160	10%	2%
New York City	1,619	1,487	1,474	-8%	-1%	600	551	575	-3%	4%
Palm Beach County	2,932	2,696	2,132	-1%	-21%	451	425	376	0%	-12%
Pennington	2,989	3,135	2,665	8%	-15%	503	572	619	25%	8%
Philadelphia	3,374	3,055	2,330	-7%	-24%	1,018	946	720	-3%	-24%
Pima	4,495	3,918	2,722	-5%	-31%	463	514	435	10%	-15%
San Francisco	5,397	6,285	5,705	3%	-9%	802	729	691	-10%	-5%
Spokane	5,763	4,770	4,028	-8%	-16%	346	348	402	4%	15%
St. Louis	2,296	2,310	2,272	6%	-2%	308	378	350	24%	-7%
SJC Site Average**	3,194	3,165	2,936	2%	-7%	554	590	557	9%	-6%
U.S.	2,574	2,363	2,110	-5%	-11%	308	378	367	7%	-4%

\* Data not available or applicable.

\*\* East Baton Rouge and Multnomah were excluded due to incomplete data.

\*\*\* Available 2014 index crime data in Lucas County was incomplete because it did not include all agencies represented in later years. Therefore, the percentage change between 2014 and 2016 is not reported.

Note: Red cells indicate an increase of five percent or more; green cells indicate a decrease of five percent or more; yellow cells indicate no change (+/- 5%).

# APPENDIX C. HOMICIDE RATES: BY SJC SITE AND IN THE U.S.

Site	Homicide Rate (Per 100,000 Population)				Net Change in Rate, 2014 to 2016	Net Change in Rate, 2017 to 2019
	2014	2016	2017	2019		
Allegheny	8.1	7.0	7.9	5.5	-1.1	-2.4
Buncombe	3.2	5.9	4.7	2.3	2.7	-2.4
Charleston	10.8	11.8	11.2	11.4	1.1	0.2
Cook	9.1	16.0	14.1	11.0	6.9	-3.1
East Baton Rouge	*	*	24.3	20.2	*	-4.1
Harris	7.3	8.8	8.1	8.3	1.5	0.3
Lake	2.0	0.6	1.8	0.9	-1.4	-1.0
Los Angeles	5.2	6.1	5.7	5.1	0.9	-0.7
Lucas	7.5***	12.3	11.5	10.3	***	-1.2
Mecklenburg	4.8	6.9	8.4	10.3	2.2	1.9
Milwaukee	9.4	16.1	13.0	11.3	6.7	-1.7
Minnehaha	2.2	5.4	2.1	2.1	3.1	0.0
Missoula	1.8	*	3.4	2.5	-1.8	-0.9
Multnomah	3.6	2.5	4.2	4.3	-1.1	0.1
New Orleans	39.1	44.4	40.1	31.0	5.3	-9.1
New York City	3.9	4.0	3.5	3.8	0.0	0.4
Palm Beach County	5.6	5.2	6.3	5.8	-0.3	-0.4
Pennington	4.7	2.8	5.4	3.5	-1.9	-1.9
Philadelphia	15.8	17.3	20.0	16.7	1.5	-3.3
Pima	5.1	4.8	6.5	5.2	-0.3	-1.4
San Francisco	5.3	6.6	6.4	4.5	1.4	-1.8
Spokane	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.3	0.1	-0.3
St. Louis	3.4	6.5	8.4	8.2	3.1	-0.3
<b>SJC Site Average**</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>-1.4</b>
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>-0.3</b>

\* Data not available or applicable.

\*\* East Baton Rouge and Multnomah were excluded due to incomplete data.

\*\*\* Available 2014 index crime data in Lucas County was incomplete because it did not include all agencies represented in later years. Therefore, the percentage change between 2014 and 2016 is not reported.

# APPENDIX D. INITIAL RELEASE: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>ALL RELEASES</b>			
<b>New Orleans</b>			
Total Initial Releases	19,017	13,899	15,248
% Black	73%	74%	76%
% Latino	1%	1%	1%
% White	26%	25%	23%
% Under 19	6%	6%	6%
% 20 to 24	20%	19%	18%
% 25 to 34	38%	37%	37%
% 35 to 44	20%	20%	21%
% 45 or older	17%	18%	18%
<b>Philadelphia</b>			
Total Initial Releases	26,776	23,344	23,335
% Black	64%	63%	63%
% Latino	17%	17%	17%
% White	17%	18%	18%
% Under 19	2%	3%	3%
% 20 to 24	19%	19%	20%
% 25 to 34	36%	36%	36%
% 35 to 44	21%	22%	21%
% 45 or older	22%	20%	20%
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b>			
<b>Allegheny</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	5,673	4,840	*
% Black	50%	51%	
% Native American	0%	0%	
% White	49%	47%	
% Under 19	6%	4%	
% 20 to 24	18%	14%	
% 25 to 34	36%	35%	
% 35 to 44	20%	24%	
% 45 or older	21%	23%	

\*Data not available or applicable.

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX D. INITIAL RELEASE: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Buncombe</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	5,657	5,247	*
% Black	20%	20%	
% Latino	5%	6%	
% White	74%	73%	
% Under 19	6%	5%	
% 20 to 24	15%	14%	
% 25 to 34	35%	36%	
% 35 to 44	22%	23%	
% 45 or older	21%	22%	
<b>Charleston</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	7,950	5,681	4,854
% Black	53%	53%	54%
% White	47%	46%	45%
% Under 19	6%	7%	6%
% 20 to 24	21%	16%	14%
% 25 to 34	35%	36%	36%
% 35 to 44	17%	19%	21%
% 45 or older	21%	22%	24%
<b>Cook</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	32,490	33,179	32,998
% Black	56%	59%	60%
% Latino	11%	9%	9%
% White	18%	17%	17%
% Under 19	9%	11%	11%
% 20 to 24	20%	21%	19%
% 25 to 34	28%	31%	28%
% 35 to 44	15%	17%	16%
% 45 or older	13%	17%	15%
<b>Harris</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	*	35,721	42,274
% Black		38%	41%
% Latino		35%	25%
% White		24%	32%
% Under 19		11%	9%
% 20 to 24		21%	19%
% 25 to 34		36%	35%
% 35 to 44		18%	21%
% 45 or older		14%	16%

\*Data not available or applicable.

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX D. INITIAL RELEASE: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Lucas</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	13,088	11,599	10,977
% Black	49%	49%	49%
% Latino	3%	3%	3%
% White	48%	48%	47%
% Under 19	6%	5%	5%
% 20 to 24	21%	18%	16%
% 25 to 34	35%	37%	38%
% 35 to 44	21%	21%	22%
% 45 or older	19%	18%	19%
<b>Mecklenburg</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	13,275	11,244	9,950
% Black	68%	70%	71%
% Latino	6%	5%	3%
% White	24%	24%	24%
% Under 19	11%	11%	10%
% 20 to 24	22%	21%	20%
% 25 to 34	33%	35%	36%
% 35 to 44	18%	17%	19%
% 45 or older	16%	15%	15%
<b>Milwaukee</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	8,506	8,124	8,448
% Black	63%	62%	64%
% Latino	8%	8%	8%
% White	27%	27%	25%
% Under 19	9%	8%	8%
% 20 to 24	23%	21%	20%
% 25 to 34	36%	37%	38%
% 35 to 44	17%	18%	19%
% 45 or older	15%	15%	15%
<b>Multnomah</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	10,829	8,875	9,102
% Black	19%	18%	19%
% Latino	10%	10%	11%
% White	67%	67%	65%
% Under 19	4%	4%	4%
% 20 to 24	16%	15%	14%
% 25 to 34	33%	34%	34%
% 35 to 44	23%	23%	24%
% 45 or older	25%	24%	25%

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX D. INITIAL RELEASE: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Palm Beach County</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	16,448	15,422	15,196
% Black	34%	35%	37%
% Latino	9%	14%	14%
% White	56%	51%	49%
% Under 19	6%	6%	6%
% 20 to 24	21%	19%	18%
% 25 to 34	35%	36%	35%
% 35 to 44	18%	18%	20%
% 45 or older	20%	21%	21%
<b>Pennington</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	*	4,476	4,655
% Black		4%	4%
% Latino		4%	4%
% Native American		44%	46%
% White		49%	46%
% Under 19		6%	7%
% 20 to 24		21%	20%
% 25 to 34		35%	35%
% 35 to 44		19%	20%
% 45 or older		19%	19%
<b>Pima</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	*	14,575	14,065
% Black		9%	10%
% Latino		44%	43%
% Native American		6%	5%
% White		40%	41%
% Under 19		7%	6%
% 20 to 24		18%	17%
% 25 to 34		35%	35%
% 35 to 44		20%	22%
% 45 or older		20%	21%

\*Data not available or applicable.

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX D. INITIAL RELEASE: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>San Francisco</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	4,862	3,873	*
% Black	38%	41%	
% Latino	21%	23%	
% White	30%	27%	
% Under 19	5%	3%	
% 20 to 24	18%	16%	
% 25 to 34	33%	33%	
% 35 to 44	21%	23%	
% 45 or older	22%	25%	
<b>Spokane</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	5,064	6,713	6,812
% Black	8%	8%	9%
% Latino	3%	4%	4%
% Native American	5%	4%	5%
% White	83%	82%	81%
% Under 19	5%	4%	4%
% 20 to 24	18%	18%	16%
% 25 to 34	37%	37%	37%
% 35 to 44	20%	22%	23%
% 45 or older	20%	19%	20%
<b>St. Louis</b>			
Total Initial Pretrial Releases	11,806	12,031	11,754
% Black	53%	54%	54%
% White	47%	45%	46%
% Under 19	1%	6%	1%
% 20 to 24	19%	21%	15%
% 25 to 34	38%	39%	42%
% 35 to 44	23%	20%	24%
% 45 or older	19%	15%	19%

\*Data not available or applicable.

# APPENDIX E. INITIAL RELEASE: CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>ALL RELEASES</b>			
<b>New Orleans</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	19,017	13,899	15,248
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	*	24%	28%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	*	43%	43%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	*	6%	8%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	*	3%	5%
<b>Philadelphia</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	26,776	23,344	23,335
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b>			
<b>Allegheny</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	5,673	4,840	*
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	43%	45%	
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	47%	42%	
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	15%	15%	
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	14%	12%	
<b>Buncombe</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	5,657	5,247	*
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	76%	70%	
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	21%	28%	
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	10%	8%	
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	3%	
<b>Charleston</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	7,950	5,681	4,854
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	56%	46%	57%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	24%	32%	24%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	8%	6%	7%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	3%	3%	3%
<b>Cook</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	32,490	33,179	32,998
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	58%	54%	49%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	36%	42%	42%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	3%	3%	3%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	7%	7%	6%

\*Data not available or applicable. See "Methods" at the start of this section for more information on data availability and methodology.

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX E. INITIAL RELEASE: CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Harris</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	*	35,721	42,274
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge		65%	68%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge		35%	32%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		11%	11%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		4%	4%
<b>Lucas</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	13,088	11,599	10,977
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	66%	57%	56%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	32%	40%	41%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	9%	10%	10%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	9%	8%	7%
<b>Mecklenburg</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	13,275	11,244	9,950
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	61%	59%	55%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	29%	35%	38%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	7%	8%	8%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	3%	3%
<b>Milwaukee</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	8,506	8,124	8,448
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	47%	44%	53%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	40%	42%	41%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	7%	7%	6%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	4%	4%	3%
<b>Multnomah</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	10,828	8,875	9,102
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	64%	65%	60%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	28%	27%	27%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	18%	14%	11%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	1%	2%	2%
<b>Palm Beach County</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	16,448	15,422	15,196
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	55%	53%	52%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	40%	42%	41%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	11%	10%	9%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	6%	6%	6%

\*Data not available or applicable. See "Methods" at the start of this section for more information on data availability and methodology.

*continued on next page*

**APPENDIX E. INITIAL RELEASE: CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS BY SITE AND COHORT** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Pennington</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	*	4,476	4,655
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge		68%	69%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge		27%	30%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		7%	6%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		2%	2%
<b>Pima</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	*	14,575	14,065
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge		67%	66%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge		33%	34%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		7%	6%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		3%	3%
<b>San Francisco</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	4,862	3,873	*
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	18%	16%	
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	73%	69%	
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	5%	10%	
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	9%	17%	
<b>Spokane</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	5,064	6,713	6,812
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	72%	70%	68%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	25%	28%	29%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	16%	15%	12%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	4%	4%	4%
<b>St. Louis</b>			
Total Individuals Released Pretrial	11,806	12,031	11,754
% Initially Booked on a Misdemeanor Charge	13%	13%	13%
% Initially Booked on a Felony Charge	44%	47%	48%
% Initially Booked on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	17%	15%	15%
% Initially Booked on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	3%	3%	3%

\*Data not available or applicable. See "Methods" at the start of this section for more information on data availability and methodology.

# APPENDIX F. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATES BY CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS: BY SITE

Returns do not necessarily imply new law violations, but they may include returns due to underlying cases (such as FTAs, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>ALL RELEASES</b>			
<b>New Orleans</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	27%	28%	26%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	*	8%	8%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	*	15%	15%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	*	3%	3%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	*	1%	2%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	*	<1%	<1%
<b>Philadelphia</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	36%	33%	34%
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b>			
<b>Allegheny</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	40%	40%	*
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	16%	17%	
% Returned on a Felony Charge	21%	20%	
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	8%	8%	
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	6%	5%	
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	
<b>Buncombe</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	46%	46%	*
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	31%	30%	
% Returned on a Felony Charge	18%	21%	
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	7%	7%	
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	
<b>Charleston**</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	21%	16%	19%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	13%	7%	11%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	8%	8%	8%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	3%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	1%	1%	1%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%

\* Data not available or applicable.

\*\* Charleston's return-to-custody data is based on a six-month follow-up period, which accounts for a lower return rate than other sites.

*continued on next page*

Returns do not necessarily imply new law violations, but they may include returns due to underlying cases (such as FTAs, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

**APPENDIX F. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATES BY CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS: BY SITE** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Cook</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	34%	34%	34%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	17%	16%	16%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	18%	21%	20%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	2%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	4%	4%	4%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Harris</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	*	38%	42%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge		20%	24%
% Returned on a Felony Charge		21%	22%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		5%	6%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		3%	3%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)		0%	0%
<b>Lucas</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	38%	37%	39%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	25%	22%	22%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	19%	21%	23%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	6%	6%	7%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	5%	4%	5%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Mecklenburg</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	39%	41%	38%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	25%	24%	20%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	20%	24%	24%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	6%	7%	6%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	1%	2%	2%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Milwaukee</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	48%	46%	42%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	20%	20%	21%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	28%	27%	23%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	6%	5%	4%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	2%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%

\* Data not available or applicable.

*continued on next page*

Returns do not necessarily imply new law violations, but they may include returns due to underlying cases (such as FTAs, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

**APPENDIX F. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATES BY CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS: BY SITE** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Multnomah</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	50%	51%	52%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	31%	30%	30%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	24%	24%	24%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	11%	10%	9%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	3%	3%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Palm Beach County</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	35%	33%	31%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	15%	14%	13%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	15%	15%	15%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	4%	4%	4%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	2%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Pennington</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	*	47%	47%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge		31%	30%
% Returned on a Felony Charge		24%	26%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		6%	6%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		3%	2%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)		<1%	<1%
<b>Pima</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	*	44%	44%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge		26%	26%
% Returned on a Felony Charge		26%	27%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)		6%	7%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)		3%	3%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)		<1%	<1%
<b>San Francisco</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	46%	56%	*
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	19%	23%	
% Returned on a Felony Charge	30%	34%	
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	4%	4%	
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	5%	6%	
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	1%	<1%	

\* Data not available or applicable.

*continued on next page*

Returns do not necessarily imply new law violations, but they may include returns due to underlying cases (such as FTAs, to serve a sentence, for a violation, etc.).

**APPENDIX F. RETURN-TO-CUSTODY RATES BY CHARGE CHARACTERISTICS: BY SITE** *continued*

	Pre-SJC Implementation Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 1 Cohort	Post-SJC Implementation Year 2 Cohort
<b>PRETRIAL RELEASES</b> <i>continued</i>			
<b>Spokane</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	47%	47%	49%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	33%	31%	32%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	24%	24%	26%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	14%	12%	12%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	3%	3%	3%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>St. Louis</b>			
% Returned on Any Charge	29%	34%	31%
% Returned on a Misdemeanor Charge	4%	5%	4%
% Returned on a Felony Charge	19%	22%	20%
% Returned on a Property Charge (UCR Defined)	7%	6%	6%
% Returned on a Violent Charge (UCR Defined)	2%	2%	1%
% Returned on a Homicide (UCR Defined)	<1%	<1%	<1%

\* Data not available or applicable.

This report was created with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of the Safety and Justice Challenge, which seeks to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails. Core to the Challenge is a competition designed to support efforts to improve local criminal justice systems across the country that are working to safely reduce over-reliance on jails, with a particular focus on addressing disproportionate impact on low-income individuals and communities of color.

More information is available at [www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org](http://www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org).



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation