

July 31 & August 1, 2019

Spokane Community Town Hall

Spokane, Washington

*Alex Boldin, Kaitlin Kall, Chris Mai & Liz Swavola
Vera Institute of Justice*

Agenda

- Introductions & ground rules
- Vera's process & updates
- Jail data 101: Who is in jail in Spokane?
- Hearing from community: break-out listening sessions

Introductions & ground rules

Vera Institute of Justice

- Vera is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.
 - Study problems in justice systems
 - Pilot solutions
 - Engage diverse communities
 - Use evidence to drive effective policies & practices
- Vera's Center on Sentencing and Corrections partners with state & local systems to advance justice policies that promote fairness & protect public safety.
- Vera's Center on Victimization and Safety works to improve access to healing services for all victims of crime.

Ground rules

- Approach meeting with creativity & collaboration to solve problems
- Assume best intentions of all who are present
- Everyone shares ownership & responsibility in this process
- Give everyone an opportunity to weigh in
- Engage in thoughtful, honest, & respectful dialog
- Hold each other accountable to these rules & commitments made throughout the process
- Others?

Process & updates

Process

- Three phases
 - Qualitative & quantitative data gathering
 - Task force meetings
 - Town halls
 - Meetings with jail staff
 - Focus groups with incarcerated people
 - Data sharing, collective analysis, & forecasting
 - Recommendations

Vision

- 2-3 core values or principles central to your community
- 2-3 core values or principles that should be central to Spokane's justice system
- If Spokane's criminal justice system were working ideally, what would it look like?

Ideal criminal justice system

- Less incarceration, especially pretrial
- Focus on treatment and rehabilitation
- Greater access to services
- Mental health and addiction treatment
- Less crime/crime prevention
- Safety in jails and courts
- Victims' rights and safety 
- Data driven and evidence based reform
- Bail/fines and fees reform

Current jail challenges

- Overcrowding
- Dangerous for incarcerated people and staff
- Indirect supervision - 46:1 ratio
- Large population in jail with mental health struggles
- Lack of important mental health and substance use services
- Lack of transparency and accountability
- Not cost-effective

Jail staff interviews

What, if anything, is working well with the current facilities?

- “Can’t think of anything ‘working well.’ We just do the best we can with what we have.”
- “Can’t say anything because it’s overcrowded and tense for staff and incarcerated people.”

Most significant challenges with the current facilities?

- “Outdated, falling apart, overcrowded, dangerous”
- “Difficult on staff’s mental health and morale”
- “All services are downtown – have to shuttle, which is time consuming, costly”
- “We make people worse, create more problems. Staff don’t know people because we never deal with them.”

Opportunities for immediate fixes?

- “We have done everything we can, don’t know what else we could do.”
 - “Not sure taxpayers would be okay with \$40m to fix up old, broken stuff.”
-

Jail staff interviews

What longer term fixes are needed?

- “More support staff and return to direct supervision design.”
- “We need a Community Resource Center: one stop shop with resources.”
- “More programs for reform, used to have lots but laid off.”
- “40% mental health population shouldn’t be in jail. Something for them that is not incarceration.”

If system in Spokane were working ideally, what would it look like?

- “Treat people humanely, but we can’t because size of staff”
- “Fewer frequent fliers on low-level charges”
- “Programs for substance use, mental health, violence”

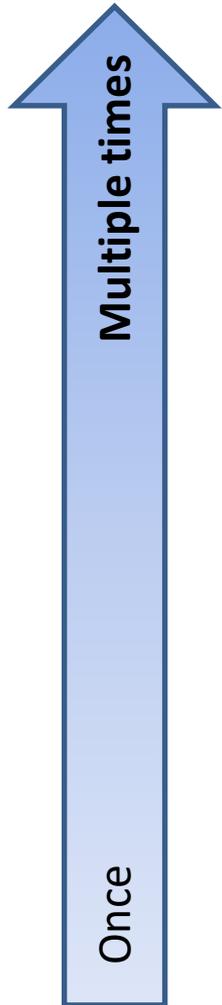
Solutions & opportunities: town hall

- Reduce incarceration, especially pretrial detention
- Diversion – mental health and substance use
- Expand crisis stabilization facility
- Follow Blueprint for Reform recommendations 
- Additional training for law enforcement/COs
- Bail reform/fines and fees reform

Solutions & opportunities: task force

- Pretrial and post-trial community supervision
- 24/7 court to reduce weekend incarceration
- Community Corrections Center
- Community Resource Center
- Data driven design and reform
- Decrease federal holds and immigration beds
- Day reporting

Future of jail facilities



- No new jail: update facilities, reduce incarceration, and continue reforms
- Community Resource Center
- Expansion of mental health crisis facility
- Direct supervision design
- Look at models for modern jails around country
- Increase space for attorneys to meet clients
- More pretrial services
- Make it easier for families and friends to visit
- More programming in jail
- Build a bigger jail

Healthy community

- Healthy childhood for all
- Affordable housing, living wage
- Mental health and addiction treatment
- Sense of safety in entire county
- Restorative justice
- Good economy
- Lower number of crime victims
- Law enforcement working with community

Justice system support

- 24/7 courts
- Fund alternatives to incarceration
- Diversion programs
- Community Resource Center
- Make reentry services available and easily accessible
- Work release and workforce development programs
- Improve pretrial services and booking procedures
- Training for law enforcement, address burnout

Community resources

Necessary resources already exist – need to:

- Increase awareness of resources and how to access them
- Increase collaboration between resource providers

Resources exist but:

- Some are low quality, retraumatize rather than help people

There are gaps in available resources – need:

- Affordable and low income housing
- Affordable childcare services, resources for parents
- Treatment beds for substance use and mental health
- Workforce development programs

Victims advocate for rehabilitation, not increased incarceration

- **60%** of victims prefer shorter sentences & increased spending on prevention/rehabilitation
- **83%** of victims prefer more investment in mental health treatment instead of prisons & jails; **73%** preferred investment in drug treatment
- By a margin of **15:1**, victims support investing in education & schools over incarceration

BY A MARGIN OF NEARLY

== **3 TO 1** ==

victims believe that prison is more likely to make people commit crimes than to rehabilitate them. Victims are also more likely to believe that the U.S. sends too many people to prison (38%) than too few (29%).

Unpacking these findings

Victims of violence who received assistance from a victim service agency (2010-2015):

- Reported crime to police: **13%**
- Did not report: **5%**

People from marginalized communities are more likely to be victims of crimes:

- Low income people (annual household income <\$25,000)
- LGBTQ people
- People with disabilities & Deaf people
- Immigrants
- People of color
- Formerly incarcerated people

Barriers to victim services

National needs assessment:

- **118** informational interviews with service providers and victims
- **50** listening sessions with stakeholder groups
- Surveyed over **1,500** victim service providers

Findings:

- Mistrust of mainstream services and criminal justice system
 - Victim service providers lack relationships with local culturally-specific organizations
 - Lack of awareness of available services
 - Cultural barriers
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Blueprint for Reform Update

- Three Member Criminal Justice Commission
- Published 2013
- 43 recommendations across 9 general areas/departments across the criminal justice system

Jail data 101: who is in jail?

Jails

- **Jails are locally operated facilities:**
 - Pretrial
 - People with a sentence of 1 year or less for a misdemeanor conviction
 - People on holds for probation and other violations
 - Holds for other jurisdictions (U.S. Marshals, DOC)

Spokane County Jail Population

May 2018-April 2019

The average daily population of Spokane county jails is **933** people

In a single year, Spokane county admitted **20,678** people to jail

The average length of stay in jail was **17 days**

The jail population is driven by people held pretrial

71 %

of the jail population on a given day is held pretrial

Federal holds make up a large portion of the jail population

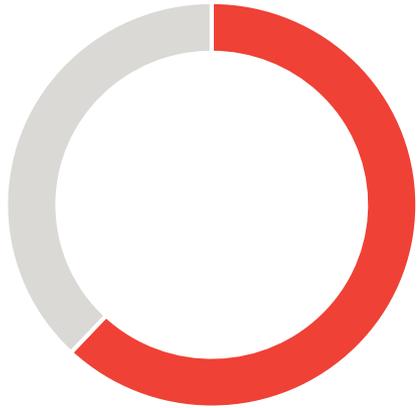


10 %

of the daily jail population is made up of people with federal holds

They are held in Spokane jails for an average of **68 days**

A significant portion of jail admissions are for low-level offenses

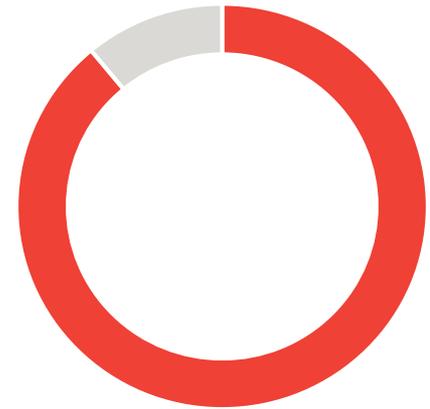


62 %

of people who left the jail were admitted on misdemeanor charges or holds

89 %

were admitted for misdemeanors, holds, and non-violent felonies



Even the lowest bail amounts keep people in jail

18 % of people who left the jail were assessed bond under \$1,000

They stayed in jail for nearly **one week** on average

Some people cycle through the jail many times in one year

15 % of people who left the jail were released **3 or more times**

Charges associated with **poverty and substance use**, such as possession, theft, and trespassing, were among their most common charges

Behavioral health concerns affect over half of people admitted to jail

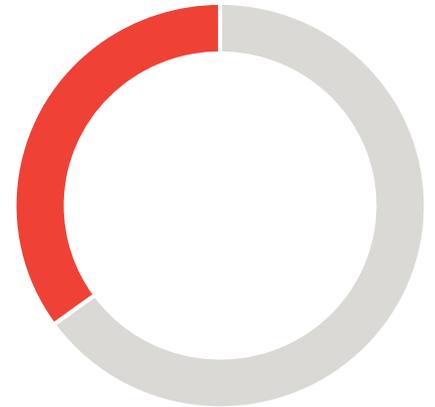


59 %

of people admitted to jail in 2018 had received mental or behavioral health treatment at any time

35 %

received treatment within the last year



People of color are incarcerated at rates much higher than white people

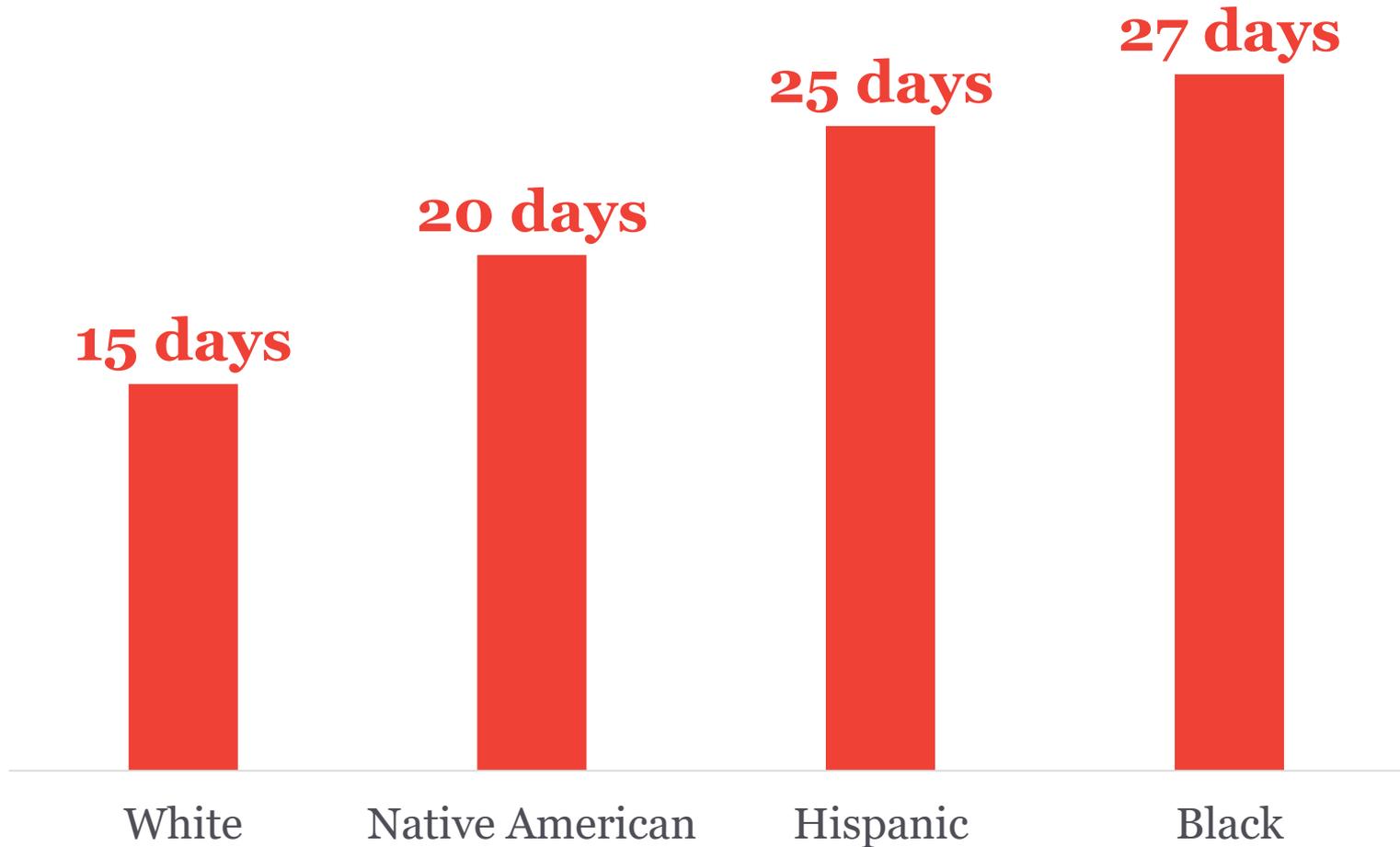
White people are jailed at a rate of 165 per 100,000

Hispanic people are jailed at a rate **1.5 times** higher

Native American people are jailed at a rate **6.5 times** higher

Black people are jailed at a rate **13 times** higher

Average length of stay is greater for people of color than for white people



Hearing from community

Break-out listening sessions

Ice-breaker: How did you first become aware of the justice system?

Discussion questions:

1. What are the takeaways for you?
2. What do you want to know more about?
3. What do you think the purpose of a jail is?
4. How is Spokane using its jails?
5. What, if anything, should Spokane do differently when it comes to incarceration?

Thank you!
