

Caddo Parish Criminal Justice Task Force Takeaways

Reducing Overcrowding & Increasing Public Safety

Background

Throughout 2023, a Task Force of local justice partners in Caddo Parish convened to examine the factors driving the persistent overcrowding of the Caddo Correctional Center (CCC). The Parish received technical assistance through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, to identify short-term and long-term solutions to overcrowding, minimize costs associated with the criminal justice system, and explore reinvestment opportunities that promote public safety. This brief summarizes the findings and recommendations from the final report of the Task Force, anticipated for public release in November 2023.

Key Findings

Admissions to jail decreased

CCC's admissions dropped 40% from 2012-2021

The proportion of people admitted to the CCC pretrial grew

In 2022, 72% of jail admissions were for pretrial admissions (compared to 56% in 2021)

People held pretrial spent more time at the CCC in 2022 compared to 2012

The average amount of time spent in jail nearly doubled for people held pretrial

Fewer people have posted bail in recent years

The proportion of bail-eligible individuals who posted bond decreased by 15% from 2012 to 2022

People who did not post bail stayed at the CCC longer

Individuals who did not post bail in 2022 stayed 8 times longer than those who did post bail in 2022

Bail amounts have increased

The median total amount that bail was set at in 2022 is 259% higher than it was in 2012

Court processing time has increased for people held at the CCC

The median number of days from a court case's opening date to the disposition date increased 144% from 2014 to 2022



Despite admissions to jail decreasing, the CCC's population grew 12% from 2012 to 2022



A growing share of CCC admissions were pretrial, and drug offenses have consistently driven those admissions



People detained pretrial spent nearly twice as long in jail in 2022 compared to 2012

Opportunities to Relieve Pressure on Justice System



Improve Cross-agency Collaboration

- Host monthly Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CCJJ) meetings to discuss ongoing legal system challenges in Caddo Parish.
- Strengthen data collection, storage, and reporting practices across all parish criminal justice agencies to improve interoperability between systems.



Improve Information Collection and Sharing

- Streamline arrest, booking, assessment, and record-keeping processes across Parish law enforcement agencies.



Reduce Jail Time Through Enhanced Case Processing

- Create, implement, and validate a Pretrial Risk Assessment Tool to assist judicial decision-making regarding pretrial detention and release.
- Streamline discovery sharing process to help reduce court backlogs.
- Reestablish criminal court section meetings to encourage swift case disposition.
- Establish a domestic violence section of criminal court to address the high influx of domestic violence cases.



Reduce Returns to Jail and Increase Public Safety

- Establish a clear process for individuals experiencing mental health crises to be diverted from justice involvement and into treatment.
- Allocate existing space for crisis stabilization, treatment support, and behavioral health resources that cannot be provided at the CCC.
- Strengthen existing reentry preparation efforts and highlight successes in programming.



Reserve Jail Resources for Top Public Safety Concerns

- Create an alternative to detention program for individuals struggling with substance use disorders.
- In lieu of bail for certain low-risk cases, institute a pretrial release mechanism with specific conditions determined by judges.
- Schedule “Reset Weeks” allowing people to voluntarily appear to clear a warrant.
- Establish a mental health problem solving court to help address underlying circumstances that contribute to crime recurrence.



Ensure Sustainability of Evidence-based Practices

- Improve employee recruitment and retention for criminal justice partners by establishing incentive programs.
- Explore feasibility and potential funding sources for establishing pretrial services to support the judiciary in making informed release decisions that promote court appearances and enhance public safety.

Looking Forward

Jail overcrowding cannot be addressed by any one agency or system actor – it will require a comprehensive, multivalent response. By following the data and committing to validated, evidence-based reforms, Caddo Parish can and will meet the challenge of overcrowding at the CCC and emerge with a stronger, more responsive, and more equitable criminal justice system.