

Jails and Juvenile Detention Centers in Washington State: Population Trends, Survey of Local Facilities, and Availability of CJTC Courses

The 2023 Legislature directed WSIPP to conduct a study of local jails and juvenile detention centers (JDCs) with three objectives: 1) identify changes in population characteristics between 2010 and 2022; 2) learn about staffing shortages, facility conditions, available services, costs, and funding sources through a survey of local facilities; and 3) examine the availability of Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) classes for correctional officers (COs).

Background

- There are 35 jails and 21 JDCs operating 64 facilities across Washington. Most operate under the jurisdiction of a particular county.
- The main purpose of these institutions is to house individuals who have been arrested while they wait for their cases to be processed through the court system (i.e., pretrial detention).

Findings

Confined Population: 2010-2022






- Size: Jail admissions fell by 44%, and JDC admissions decreased by 80%.
- Criminal history: Detention rates for drug offenses fell, and violent offenses increased.
- Mental health: The prevalence of mental health disorders increased. By 2022, 63% (jail) and 76% (JDC) of detained individuals had mental health needs.

Availability of CJTC Courses

- State law requires that new recruits complete training within six months of being hired as a CO.
- Evidence suggests that CJTC courses are not offered frequently enough to keep up with demand.
- New recruits have been waiting 6-12 months after their hiring date to enroll.

Fast Facts:

Survey Results from Jails and JDCs in 2023

	All jails and JDCs in Washington State provided survey data.
	Most facilities were built 20-49 years ago. Two-thirds of respondents indicated their facility was in need of extensive repairs.
	Most respondents reported problems hiring and retaining COs. Two-thirds reported problems with staffing shortages.
	During August 2023, respondents indicated two-thirds of the JDC population and one-half of the jail population had behavioral health needs.
	Most survey respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the availability of CJTC training.

Assignment Details

Assigned in the 2023 Legislative Session
[2023 Operating Budget](#)

[Full report available on WSIPP's website](#)

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