

## Data Brief

### Oregon Jails Slashed Population during COVID-19

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## Summary

Jails across Oregon have drastically reduced their populations. On average, jails have nearly 50% fewer people in custody as compared to their pre-pandemic population. This is true in both urban and rural settings. For example, three jails have reduced a pre-pandemic population:

from 120 to a current population of 29;

from 45 to a current population of 13; and

from 466 to a current population of 152.

Reducing the jail population has made jail conditions safer for those left in custody and the employees who work at jails, allowing for improved social distancing in a high-density setting that is ripe for an outbreak. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the inmate population in Oregon county jails.

## Local Approaches

- » The dramatic drop in jail populations in response to the pandemic was achieved through a variety of locally-driven solutions.
- » Most jails worked with courts and law enforcement to significantly curtail their admissions criteria, turning away arrestees who are charged with minor and/or non-person crimes, or who show signs of illness.
- » Jails also worked collaboratively with the courts and attorneys to release people with a short time left to serve or who could be safely supervised in the community.
- » Twenty-four jails reported that they involved medical staff in identifying inmates at risk of serious illness due to age or preexisting medical condition, and worked with the courts and attorneys to release these vulnerable individuals, where feasible.



## Basic Needs of Inmates

Thirteen jails reported that they need additional soap and/or hand sanitizer. Those jails are:

- » Jackson
- » Polk
- » Umatilla
- » Lake
- » Yamhill
- » Linn
- » Benton
- » Crook
- » Grant
- » Klamath
- » Washington
- » Malheur
- » Tillamook

## Change in Jail Population by County

County	Pre-COVID-19 Jail Population	Current Jail Population	Reduction
Baker	30	13	56.7%
Benton	32	19	40.6%
Clackamas	466	152	67.4%
Clatsop	60	39	35.0%
Crook	56	25	55.4%
Curry	26	8	69.2%
Deschutes	290	150	48.3%
Douglas	194	73	62.4%
Grant	20	11	45.0%
Harney	9	3	66.7%
Jackson	315	210	33.3%
Klamath	129	76	41.1%
Lake	18	13	27.8%
Lane	400	225	43.8%
Lincoln	161	84	47.8%
Linn	207	115	44.4%
Malheur	82	34	58.5%
Marion	415	281	32.3%
Multnomah	1112	775	30.3%
Polk	120	29	75.8%
Springfield	45	13	71.1%
Tillamook	56	32	42.9%
Umatilla	210	163	22.4%
Union	32	16	50.0%



County	Pre-COVID-19 Jail Population	Current Jail Population	Reduction
Washington	572	272	52.4%
Yamhill	143	57	60.1%

## Method

Disability Rights Oregon coordinated with the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association to distribute an online survey. The survey was sent to all jail commanders. The survey was designed to gauge whether jails are adhering to COVID-19 public health recommendations and to solicit input from jails about what support is needed in order to protect the health of inmates and staff during this pandemic. The survey was also sent separately to Springfield Municipal Jail, which, with a capacity of 100 inmates, is comparable in size to many County jails. Twenty-six of the 39 jails responded to the survey.

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