

# Domestic Violence Jail Bookings in Washington

Domestic violence (DV) poses a risk to the safety of Washington residents. This report focuses on DV-related jail bookings reported by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC)'s Jail Booking Reporting System (JBRS) and aims to explore the demographics of those being booked in jail with a DV-related charge.

## Data Parameters

The JBRS is a Washington state component of Justice Intelligence, a nationwide information-sharing solution for criminal justice agencies. WASPC is responsible for the implementation and operation of the Washington State JBRS Program under [RCW 36.28A.040](#). JBRS was intended to be a central repository instant information source for offender information and jail statistical data across Washington counties. However, while two county jails (King County Jail and the Maleng Regional Justice Center in south South King County) provide data to JBRS, this data is not shared with the Office of Financial Management (OFM). In this brief, the following parameters were utilized:

- DV is defined by [RCW 10.99.020](#), and in terms of the present data, involves having "DV" or "Domestic Violence" noted in the booking description, which designates a crime committed against family or a household member. The most common DV-related charges in the present data include assault ([RCW 9A.36](#)), malicious mischief ([RCW 9A.48](#)), or burglary ([RCW 9A.52](#)).
- Jail bookings associated with DV-related violation of protection orders, undefined relation to DV, and interference with reporting were not included in the analyses.
- Only individuals who were 18 years or older at the time of booking were included in analyses.
- Jail bookings between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023, were utilized in this report.
- The JBRS data is jail booking based, not individual based. An individual could be represented as many times as they were booked in jail from 2018 to 2023.

## Demographics

Table 1 depicts the demographics of DV-related jail bookings in the JBRS sample. Between January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2023, there were 80,463 DV-related jail bookings. The average age was 36 years old ( $M = 36.4$ ,  $SD = 11.8$ ). DV-related jail bookings were more likely to be associated with males than females. When evaluating race, DV-related jail bookings were more likely to be associated with white individuals than the rest of race categories provided by JBRS. In terms of age categories, those younger than the average age were more likely to be associated with DV-related jail bookings.

Washington's population is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex, and the majority of the population were white (81.0%), while the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color community) presented slightly less than one-fifth of the Washington population.

## Limitations

All data comes with its limitations. This report identifies a few major limitations, and there are likely more not listed that could impact work that utilize this data. Limitations include:

- Analyses are descriptive and non-generalizable. Any inferences and implications are limited, and results are modest. Further analyses must be completed for causal relationships to be determined.
- Administrative data and the lack of detail or richness significantly limits any conclusions yielded from this work.
- In terms of demographic assessment, these results must be interpreted with caution. Any analysis of race across criminal justice decision points is negatively impacted by true reliability and validity as race data can be misclassified. Only booking information for individuals with clearly defined, unduplicated race, sex, and date of birth were utilized to ensure data quality, so results may be underreported. Additionally, this brief was limited to values collected by JBRS.
- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, trends might be skewed and misreported.
- There are many factors that contribute to the reluctance of a victim reporting abuse, and the data might not accurately represent the true picture of DV-related jail bookings.

**Table 1. DV-related arrests demographics**

	N	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	21,529	26.8
Male	58,934	73.2
<b>Race</b>		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,906	2.4
Asian or Pacific Islander	3,228	4.0
Black	11,466	14.3
White	63,863	79.4
<b>Age Category</b>		
18 to 25	16,472	20.5
26 to 35	27,850	34.6
36 to 45	20,105	26.0
> = 46	16,036	19.9

**Notes:** Percentages are based on column totals. Due to rounding totals may not equal 100%.

For more information contact:

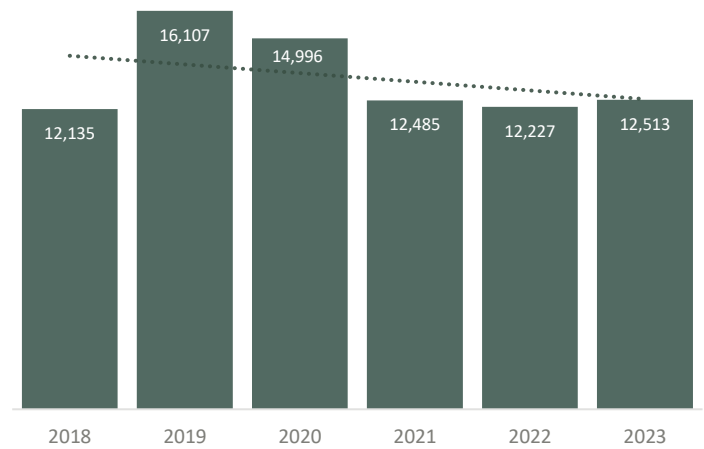
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## Outcomes

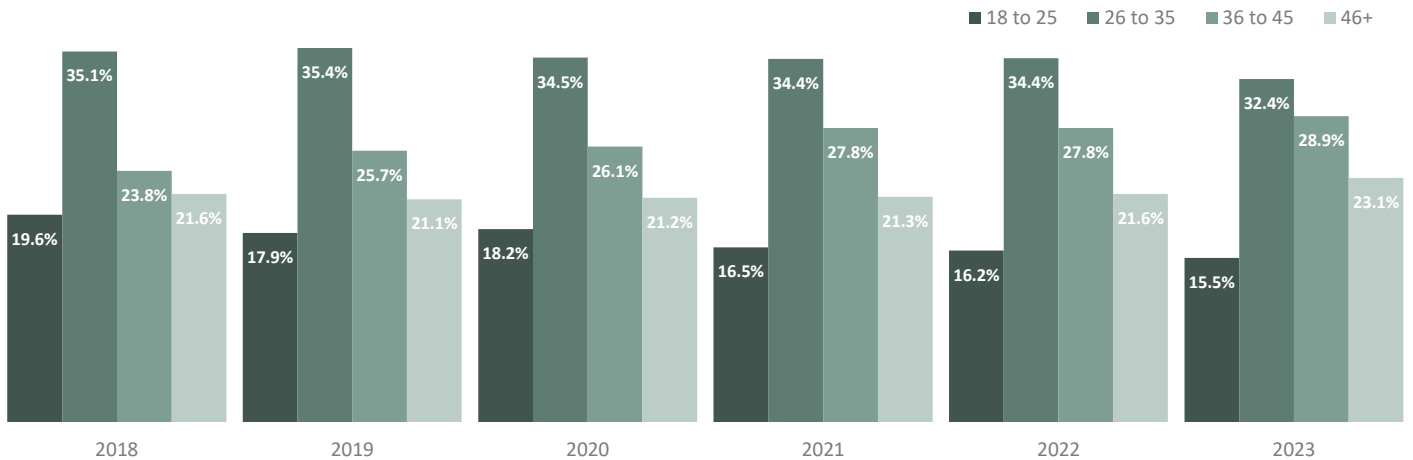
Figure 1 shows the number of DV-related jail bookings from 2018 to 2023. There was a 3.1% increase in DV-related jail bookings from 2018 to 2023. Additionally, on average, there were about 13,411 DV-related jail bookings from 2018 to 2023, with 2019 and 2020 being above average. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and policy changes in DV-related offenses, these trends may be skewed. 2018 showed the lowest number of DV-related jail bookings, while 2019 was the highest. 2020 was still above the six-year average, and 2021 through 2023 were all below average.

Similarly, Figure 2 breaks down the DV-related jail bookings by age categories. Those aged 26 to 35 were consistently the most frequent category among DV-related jail bookings. However, beginning in 2019, those aged 36 to 45 and 46 and older increased in presence of DV-related jail bookings, suggesting individuals are committing more DV offenses as they age. Since this report is jail booking based, individuals could be booked in jail multiple times for DV-related jail bookings. While there were 80,463 DV-related jail bookings between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023, there were only 63,705 individuals, indicating some were booked in jail multiple times in the evaluated six-year span for DV-related charges.

**Figure 1. Frequency of DV-related jail bookings by year**

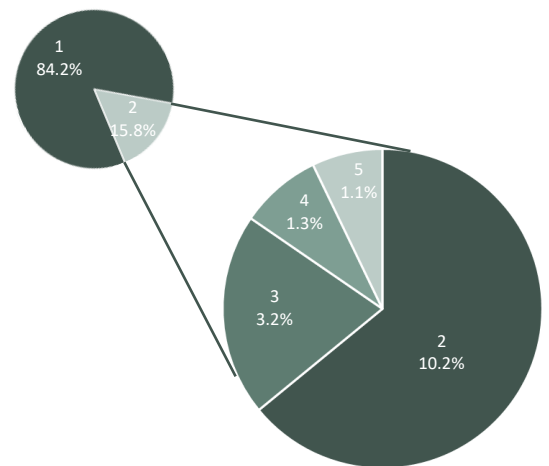


**Figure 2. Frequency of DV-related jail bookings by year and age category**



Specifically, individuals booked in jail once on DV-related charges made up 84.2% of the individuals (n = 53,609), or 66.6% of the DV-related jail bookings. Figure 3 represents the percentage of individuals with multiple DV-related jail bookings (15.8%). Of those booked multiple different times, the majority were only booked twice (10.2%), three times (3.2%), or four times (1.3%), while the remaining 1.1% were made up of individuals who were book six times or more on DV-related charges. The highest frequency of DV-related jail bookings by one individual was 13 times in the evaluated six-year time span. It is important to note these are individuals being booked in jail on DV-related charges and does not mean an individual was ever convicted of a crime. Future research should explore the trajectory of jail bookings (i.e., resulting in charges, plea deals, etc.) to better understand our criminal justice system outcomes.

**Figure 3. Percentage of individuals with multiple DV-related jail bookings**



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