

# **Jail Information System's Data Fields Useful for Jail Population Analyses**

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The list below includes many of the fields that may be useful in a jail population analysis to help policy-makers determine the average daily population, number of bookings, and/or average length of stay of various inmate subpopulations, as these policy-makers participate in the analysis phase of a policy planning process.

## **Data Fields**

Person's name

Person's unique ID number

Person's booking number

DOB

Juvenile (Yes/No)

Sex

Race

Ethnicity

Employment status (No, Part-time, Full-time)

Street of Residence

City of Residence

State of Residence

Zip code

Date booked in

Time booked in

Date of release

Time of release

Total # of hours in the facility (calculated as date of release minus date of book in)

Arresting agency

Total number of charges

All charges English description

All charges offense code (e.g., statutory)

All charges offense class (Felony, Misdemeanor, Municipal, Traffic, etc...)

Flag for top charge

Court of jurisdiction for each charge

Docket number for each charge

Disposition for each charge (Dismissed, Completed sentence, Posted bail, Court ordered release)

Legal Status for each charge (Pretrial, Convicted, Sentenced, Contract, Hold, Probation violation, etc...)

Reason for Release (Bonded out, Served sentence, Transfer, etc...)

Bond type (Cash only, Cash or surety, Recognizance)

Bond amount set (measured in dollars, if any)

Bond amount posted (measured in dollars, if any)

Flag for bondable on a charge (Yes/No)

Jail's initial or most recent (whichever is available) risk classification (High, Medium, Low risk)

Jail's initial or most recent (whichever is available) housing security level ((High, Medium, Low security)

Facility/Building, Module, and Cell number

Flag for Sentenced status (Yes/No)

Sentence start date

Flag for domestic violence (Yes/No)

Flag for mental health (Yes/No)

Flag for noncompliance holds (Yes/No)  
 Flag for homeless (Yes/No)  
 Any disciplinary problems during stay (Yes/No)  
 Any special needs (Yes/No)

**Recommendations**

**Data Integrity**

Data extracted from a jail’s information system will only be useful for analytic purposes if the data have been entered and are accurate. To help assure data integrity, it is recommended that the information system:

- (1) Require as many fields of data entry as possible. If the fields are not required, then jail staff will likely, for a variety of reasons, not enter the data or will enter it inconsistently.
- (2) Use as many drop down boxes as possible instead of free text data entry. If free text data entry is permissible, there will be too much variation, incompleteness, and inaccuracy in data entry.

**Data Output**

Most often, the best configuration for data output consists of a spreadsheet (e.g., Excel) with data fields in the columns and inmates listed in the rows, with each inmate listed separately for each charge. For example, an inmate with one charge will be listed once and have data in one row, and an inmate with three charges will be listed three times and have data in three rows. For the inmates with more than one charge, some of the data in the columns will be the same from row to row (e.g., name, age, race, arresting agency) and some data will be different from row to row (charge description, legal status, bond type). See example below.

<b>Booking #</b>	<b>Inmate ID</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>DOB</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>Charge Description</b>	<b>Court</b>	<b>Release Date</b>
0703861	44578	Smith J	2-12-1963	F	9-2-2007	Theft	B City Court	10-10-2007
0802108	36121	Brown W	8-1-1981	M	5-23-2008	Assault 2	X Circuit Court	.
0802108	36121	Brown W	8-1-1981	M	5-23-2008	Trespass	X Circuit Court	.
0802108	36121	Brown W	8-1-1981	M	5-23-2008	FTA No License	Z Circuit Court	.

A database (e.g., Access) download may be more desirable if the jail data administrator is short on time, and the analyst is familiar with the database program and is able to run queries and create the preferred output.

**Data Interpretation**

It is necessary for the data analyst to know which fields refer to the inmate and which fields refer to the charge. For example, Release Reason may refer to the inmate, whereas Legal Status For Each Charge may be associated with the charge listed in that row. Moreover, to categorize inmates into new groups for analytic purposes (e.g., pretrial inmates with a top charge of a misdemeanor and a cash/surety bond), the analyst may need simultaneously to use data in multiple fields (some of the data may refer to the person and some of the data may refer to an individual charge).