

Defining the Population of People with Frequent Jail Contact

People with multiple jail bookings in a relatively short period represent a unique group within the larger population of people who have contact with jails and the criminal legal system. **People in this group are more likely to be people of color and more likely to experience homelessness and behavioral health needs** (Zottola et al., 2023).

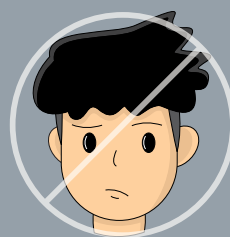
ESTABLISH FORMAL, JURISDICTION-SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS OF FREQUENT CONTACT

Consider:

- What are the objectives for identifying this population?
- What data are available?
- Which partners are at the table?



Jurisdictions should NOT rely solely on face or name recognition



CRITERIA USED TO IDENTIFY PEOPLE WITH FREQUENT CONTACT CAN INCLUDE:

Type

The specific jail contacts being measured (e.g., jail bookings, days in jail)



Number

Can be measured in two ways:

- A set threshold
- A proportion of the total population booked into jail



Time Period

The set period of time over which contacts are counted



JURISDICTIONS MAY ALSO CONSIDER THESE TOUCHPOINTS:



Fire, EMS, and ER contact



Repeated drug overdoses



Repeated police contact



Repeated competency evaluations



Homeless system and shelter use



Repeated court contact



Inpatient behavioral health stays



Repeated technical violations

Sample Criteria



- 3 or more jail bookings in past 12 months
- Top 5% of people with most arrests/most ER visits in past 5 years
- 3 or more jail bookings & 3 or more shelter stays in past 3 years

WHERE TO START: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a local definition.

- Collaborate with partners across relevant systems & agencies, including people with lived experience.
- Consider developing individual definitions for each system or agency OR
- Consider developing one city- or jurisdiction-wide definition.

2. Consider the label.

- "Person with frequent contact" emphasizes the contact rather than labeling the person.

3. Document and communicate the definition widely.

- Transparency is key.

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Content for this infographic is based on: Zottola, S.A., Morrissey, B., Desmarais, S.L., Hope, E.C., Callahan, L., Massey, I.A., Fortuna, A.J., & Van Dorn, R.A. (2023). Understanding and preventing frequent jail contact. In D.S. Rudes, G. Armstrong, K. Kras, & T. Carter (Eds.), *Handbook on prisons and jails*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003374893-27>