

Yavapai County Jail

Yavapai County operates two adult detention facilities, also called jails. The main jail is located in Camp Verde and is a 644-bed facility. A second, much smaller, and older jail, is located in downtown Prescott. This facility does not house inmates and serves only as a partial booking and holding facility for the Prescott courthouse. By law, the county sheriff manages the jail.

The primary function of a county jail is to hold pretrial detainees (persons who have not yet been convicted) who are considered dangerous or a flight risk. The second function of the county jail is to house defendants who are sentenced to less than one year in jail for misdemeanor offenses, such as domestic violence or DUI offenders (Driving While Impaired). By law, county jails are managed and funded by county government. Prisons are managed and funded by the state. Defendants who have been tried and convicted of felony crimes will serve their time at the state prison, not in county jail.

The Yavapai County jail receives approximately 8,500 bookings per year. Approximately 94% of those new bookings are jail inmates facing felony charges; 6% are facing misdemeanor charges only. The overall average length of stay in the county jail is typically 21 days. The average length of stay for a misdemeanor offender is 5 days. Approximately 80% of the inmates are pretrial detainees and 20% have been sentenced after a conviction to serve time in the jail. County officials have worked hard over the years to bring down the jail population through innovative programs such as Reach Out and Post-Arrest Diversion. Over the last two years, the inmate population has declined by 10% or 52 inmates daily. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the average daily population was about 520 inmates.

The New Co-Located Facility with Jail, Courts and Mental Health Services

In 2003, the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors (“BOS”) began discussing the need for a new jail. In 2016, the Chinn Study recommended construction of a new jail facility to the west of the Yavapai County Juvenile Detention Center on the Prescott Lakes Parkway property. This property had been identified by the county and the city of Prescott as an ideal location over 20 years prior. In December of 2018, Yavapai County hired a firm to assist with project management.

On August 7, 2019, after many years of studies and public meetings, the BOS approved the construction of the new Criminal Justice Center. It is 93,868 gross square feet with 152 beds, two courtrooms, and supporting services including administration, mission supporting stakeholder areas, medical, food service, laundry and building services. The new center includes a co-located non-custodial Mental Health Facility. The approximate cost to build this center is \$68 million.

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Site construction is slated to begin in July 2020; building construction will begin in September 2020; and occupancy of the new Prescott Criminal Justice Center will occur in February of 2022.

Why is a New Criminal Justice Facility Needed?

The Current Jail is at Maximum Capacity

- Yavapai County's Camp Verde jail facility is at maximum capacity. Although the facility has 644 beds for inmates, the true capacity, as explained below, is 512 inmates (644 beds minus 20%).
- Jails must maintain a vacancy rate between 15-20% for peaking (high populations at certain times of the year) and classification. Jail inmate classification protects the health and safety of the inmates by separating certain inmates who are dangerous, suffering from mental or physical illnesses, or other civil rights concerns.
- During peak season, the county jail population is routinely 600-640 inmates. The result is that up to 85 inmates are crowded into dorms and/or sleeping on the floor. Overcrowding presents serious safety concerns for inmates and staff. It also creates liability health concerns and potential civil rights violations.

Daily Jail Transports from Camp Verde to Prescott Courthouse Are Costly and Present a Threat to Public Safety

- The current county jail is located on Highway 260 between the towns of Cottonwood and Camp Verde. This is where all inmates are housed whether they are pre-trial detainees or serving a sentence of less than one year.
- Venue for criminal trials is a matter of law and is determined by where the crime occurred. Approximately 65% of criminal trials and judicial proceedings are held in the Yavapai County Superior Courthouse located in downtown Prescott. Only 35% of criminal trials and judicial proceedings are held in the Superior Court located in the Verde Valley.
- Consequently, each day, inmates are loaded onto large busses and transported from the Camp Verde jail to the Prescott courthouse for their court proceedings. Approximately 200 jail inmates are transported *each week* to the Prescott courthouse and back to the Camp Verde jail.
- The 2016 Chinn Study concluded that these weekly transports cost Yavapai County more than \$2 million every year.
- The Chinn Study further concluded that these weekly transports pose a major safety and security risk for the public, detention personnel, court personnel and the inmates themselves.
- Not only are inmates being transported daily on public highways, but they are also escorted into and out of the downtown Prescott courthouse in public view. The entrance/exit to the courthouse on Cortez street is adjacent to the public entrance/exit.

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- The inmates are moved between floors inside the courthouse using the same elevator used by the public. This poses numerous security risks.
- The county population is expected to surpass 250,000 this year, thereby increasing the number of superior court judges by one more division. It is likely this expansion will create even more daily inmate transports.

County Mental Health Needs

- Title 36 Court ordered Evaluation is an involuntary process for evaluation, care and treatment of persons with a serious mental health disorder who are not willing or are not able to get the help they need. There is a legal process in which the court can order a mental health evaluation and treatment. Arizona law provides a means to obtain an involuntary mental health evaluation, involuntary treatment as well as emergency hospitalization for a psychiatric evaluation. County governments are required to ensure this is available. Many people are involved in the process including the petitioner, medical professionals, legal professionals, family and community members. Providing this space, separate from the jail yet connected to the Reach Out and re-entry facility, will provide the efficient and quality care coordination for individuals within this system.
- Individuals who have disclosed moderate to high behavioral health risk factors make up approximately 25% of Yavapai Detention's inmate population. Yet, this subgroup of individuals returns to the Detention facility at a higher rate than the general population. Yavapai's Reach Out program screens inmates upon booking and connects them to needed services upon their release. With the current jail location in Camp Verde, connection to services are often difficult due to the vast geographical distance to cities and lack of transportation. Providing a Reach Out and re-entry facility next to the Criminal Justice Center will enhance service connections for at risk individuals, thus reducing recidivism.

How Is the Jail Funded?

The Yavapai County jail is funded by a "jail district" under the authority of the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors ("BOS"). The jail district is countywide and includes all cities and towns within the county. Funding for the jail district is funded by .25 cent sales tax and general fund revenues. The municipalities can use the jail for free (no per inmate per-diem as is common in other places) in exchange for sales tax collection in the municipalities. The statute permits the sales tax up to .5% with voter approval.

On August 7, 2019, BOS unanimously approved the new Prescott Criminal Justice Center. At that time, they also approved a property tax increase, a portion of which will pay for the construction and operation of the new criminal justice center. Beginning in September 2019, Yavapai County property owners began paying an additional \$30 for each \$100,000 of "assessed limited value" on their properties.

What Has the County Done to Reduce the Jail Population?

Yavapai County is the most progressive county in the state in taking measures to decriminalize mental illness, divert drug offenders to services, and reduce the jail population. These measures have also had a dramatic impact on increasing public safety. In 2016, the County Sheriff and County Attorney began a diversion program, called Reach Out, a national model and diversion strategy built under the guidance of the Sequential Intercept Model. This evidence-based model builds strategies to connect offenders at every step of the way (community, pre-arrest, post-arrest, jails, courts, reentry) to treatment and other resources associated with the prevention of reoffending or committing new crimes.

Creating diversions at all intercepts requires partnerships and collaboration. In 2018, in order to connect the criminal justice system with community service providers, build strong partnerships, and share information, the Yavapai County Sheriff and Yavapai County Attorney established the Yavapai Justice and Mental Health Coalition (www.justicementalhealth.com). The overall result has been a 10-12% jail population reduction and a recidivism rate (re-offense rate) of 16.4%.

In the last three years deflection of people with mental health and substance abuse needs has significantly grown with the opening of the Crisis Stabilization Unit in Prescott Valley in 2017, the countywide Mobile Crisis Teams in 2016, the Crisis Intervention Team training, and the creation of REACH OUT:

- ✓ 1,541 arrests have been deflected from the jail
- ✓ 3,289 emergency room visits have been averted
- ✓ More than \$3.7 million in incarceration costs have been avoided.

Additional programs implemented throughout Yavapai County's Criminal Justice system have played an integral part in supporting our community, lowering the jail population, and implementing a new alternative system to public safety. Some of these programs include:

- **Yavapai County Attorney Drug Diversion Program (2020).** Offered to low level offenders struggling with drug use and addiction, this program offers wrap-around services designed to help the offender achieve sobriety and a productive life. Those who succeed in the program will have their criminal charges dismissed.

- **Yavapai Reentry Project (2019).** YRP is a project of MATFORCE, first started in 2011, that matches individuals leaving prisons and returning to Yavapai County with a coach to help them navigate the challenges of reentry into society and avoid reoffending or committing new crimes. A very successful program, MATFORCE extended its services to individuals leaving the county jail in 2019.

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- **Yavapai Justice and Mental Health Coalition (2018).** A national model and a first of its kind, the Coalition was formed to bring partners together from each sector of the sequential intercept model to build a collaborative system of diversion. The partners in this Coalition include law enforcement, AHCCCS, mental health, physical health, housing, transportation, social services, faith-based, treatment, community, and all three branches of local and state government. The goal is to improve cross-system collaborations to reduce involvement in the justice system of people with mental health and substance abuse disorders.
- **Reach Out Coordinated Release & Reentry Program (2016).** This program links jail inmates with mental health treatment providers as part of a comprehensive jail release plan. REACH OUT includes a team of stakeholders that cross over multiple systems, including mental health, substance abuse, law enforcement, pretrial services, courts, jails, community corrections, housing, health, social services, family members and many others. The goal is to improve cross-system collaborations to reduce involvement in the justice system by people with mental and substance abuse disorders.
- **Pre-Arrest Mental Health Diversion Strategies (2016).** Designed to keep patient out of jail, these strategies divert individuals to inpatient and outpatient programs managed by behavioral health providers.
 - **Mobile Crisis Response Teams (2015).** Mobile Crisis Response Teams assist mental health patients on-site. Law enforcement officers who encounter an individual in the public have the option of calling the Mobile Crisis Team instead of arresting the individual and booking him/her into the county jail. Approximately 75% of all such encounters are stabilized in the community, averting arrests and bookings into the jail.
 - **Mental Health First Aid (2016).** This is an 8-hour course to teach law enforcement, first responders, teachers and citizens to identify a developing mental health crisis and how to respond. This program helps prevent a mental health crisis from becoming a criminal justice issue.
 - **Crisis Intervention Team Training (2016).** County law enforcement officers undergo 40 hours of intense training about the causes, effects and treatment of mental illness, and de-escalation skills to keep patients out of jail and in treatment
 - **Crisis Stabilization Unit (“CSU”) (2017).** The CSU opened its doors in Prescott Valley in 2017. The CSU gives a police officer who encounters a person experiencing a mental health crisis an alternative to taking the person to jail. At the CSU, patients are stabilized, treated, and connected to more permanent treatment.
- **Specialty Courts**
 - **Yavapai County Mental Health Court** utilizes a team approach to address the needs of clients with mental health disorders. The team regularly collaborates to connect participants with available services in the community.

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- **Yavapai County Therapeutic Drug and DUI Courts.** Participants are placed in the program voluntarily through post-conviction if they meet qualifications. The goal of Yavapai County Therapeutic Courts (YCTC) is to apply a non-traditional approach for probationers who struggle with alcohol and drug dependency. The focus is on accountability and recovery.
- **Veterans Court.** America's Veterans can face unique challenges related to their service in the military, including homelessness, substance abuse and mental health crisis. Veterans Court is designed to recognize the unique challenges and needs of Veterans and reduce incarceration and recidivism by addressing their needs through treatment and support.