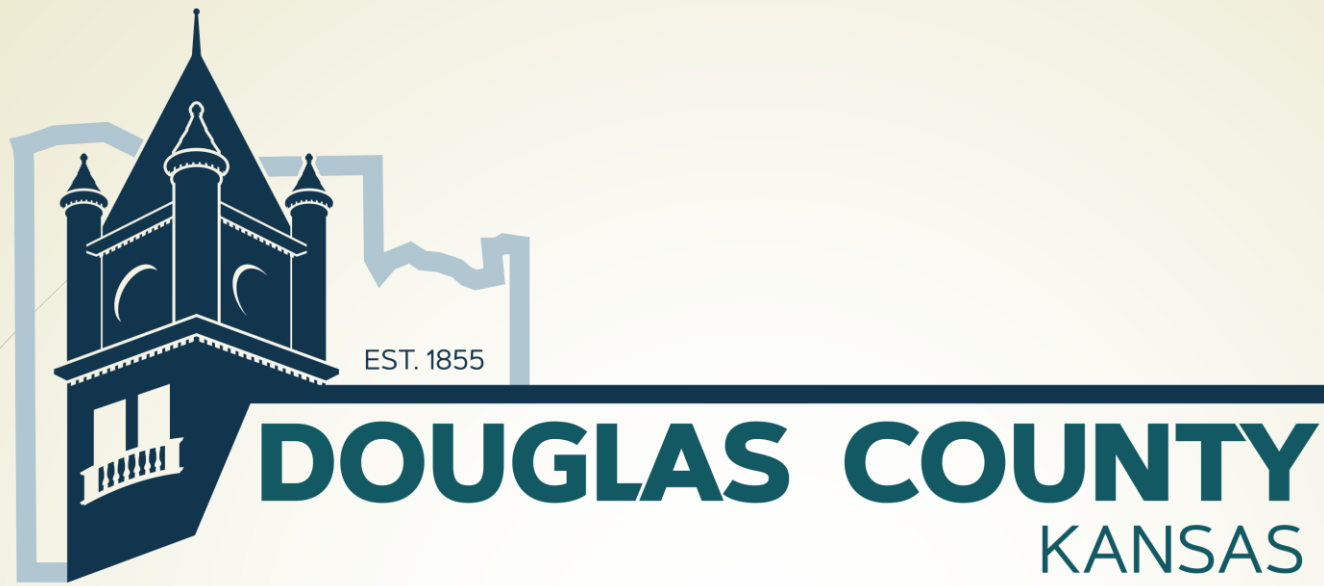




Reducing Failure to Appear Rates in Douglas County, Kansas

Presented by Incarceration Alternatives Research/Implementation Work
Group

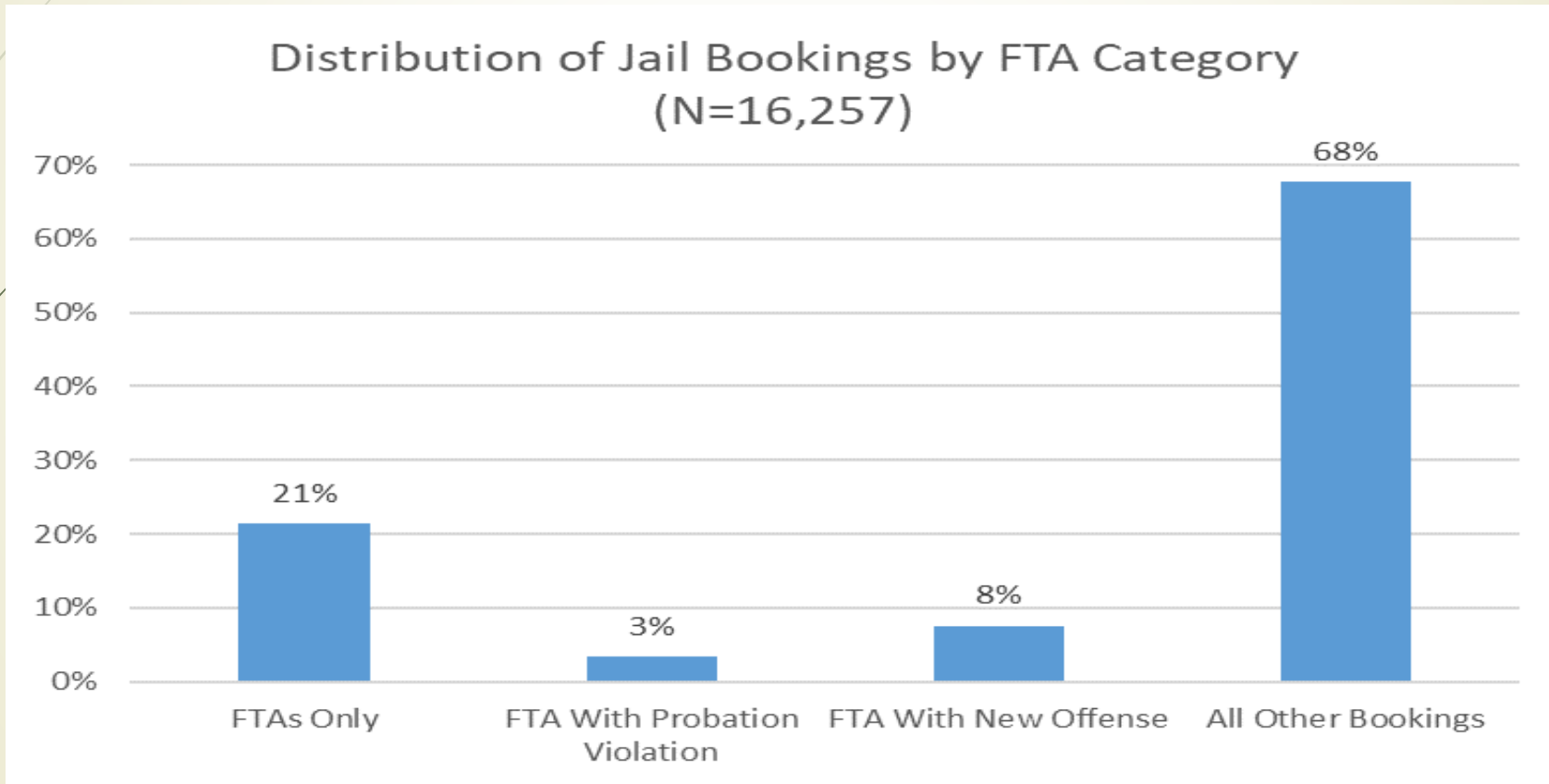
Claudia Fisher, Adult Services Officer II



Who we are...

- ▶ The Incarceration Alternatives Research/Implementation Work Group consists of the following members:
 - ▶ Claudia Fisher, Adult Services Officer II – Douglas County Community Corrections
 - ▶ Matthew Cravens, Data Analyst – Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
 - ▶ Pam Weigand, Director of Criminal Justice Services – Douglas County Criminal Justice Services
 - ▶ James McCabria, District Court Chief Judge – Douglas County District Court
 - ▶ Matthew Faulk, Director of Housing – Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center
 - ▶ Scott Miller, Municipal Court Judge – Lawrence Municipal Court
 - ▶ Stacy Simmons, Undersheriff – Douglas County Sheriff's Office
 - ▶ LeRonda Roome, Captain – Douglas County Sheriff's Office
 - ▶ Michael Clarke, Defense Attorney – Clarke Law Office
 - ▶ Jill deVries Jolicoeur, Assistant County Administrator – Douglas County, Kansas
 - ▶ Erin Grant, Associate Professor – Washburn University
 - ▶ Mike Brouwer, Criminal Justice Coordinator – Douglas County, Kansas
 - ▶ Linda Koester-Vogelsang, Court Administrator – Douglas County District Court

Addressing Failures to Appear in Douglas County, Kansas



Source: Data on 1/1/2017 - 7/15/2020 DCCF bookings; Spillman Jail Management System.



Trends in Failures to Appear in Douglas County, Kansas

- 2017: 2,665 FTAs at booking
 - 2018: 2,595 FTAs at booking
 - 2019: 2,226 FTAs at booking
 - 2020: 1,247 FTAs at booking
 - 2021: 1,027 FTAs at booking as of 9/3/2021
- 



Qualitative Interviews at the DCCF

- ▶ Undersheriff Simmons and Captain Roome interviewed defendants in custody for failure to appear
- ▶ Barriers Identified
 - ▶ Lack of child-care
 - ▶ Homelessness
 - ▶ "...because I don't have an address, I'll go to jail."
 - ▶ No phone, it's hard to keep a phone when you are homeless
 - ▶ Court isn't always a priority
 - ▶ Addiction
 - ▶ Anxiety about what hearings mean, feeling like nothing gets accomplished
- ▶ Solutions
 - ▶ Everyone has someone they are in regular contact with, can they get notified?
 - ▶ Get a free ride to court on the bus if you show your court paperwork



Populations That Fail to Appear



Population 1

-  Persons who need assistance with reminders, guidance, have a somewhat adequate financial situation, and have basic shelter.



Population 2

-  Persons who need extensive assistance, guidance, have dual diagnoses, imperfect financial situation, and do not have basic shelter.



Population 1 – Happening Now

- ▶ District Court utilizes phone call reminders through Criminal Justice Services
 - ▶ District Court is transitioning to a new database Odyssey. We are hopeful this database will allow us to expand phone call reminders
 - ▶ City of Lawrence Municipal utilizes phone and text reminders for court hearings
 - ▶ Both courts offer opportunity to be returned to the docket without a warrant
- 



Population 1 - Recommendations

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- Modify bond signature form to give individuals the option to be reminded via telephone, text or friend
 - Add probation revocations to the reminder notification list
 - Improve accuracy of phone numbers in court databases
 - Create a Court Navigator position for District & Lawrence Municipal Courts
 - Continue utilizing Zoom access for court hearings
 - Provide a docket kiosk at the library or health department
 - Provide appointment cards in each courtroom



Population 2 – Happening Now

- ▶ Phone call reminders are sent
 - ▶ Does the defendant have a phone?
 - ▶ Does the phone have service or voicemail?
- ▶ Both courts offer opportunity to be returned to the docket without a warrant



Population 2 - Recommendations

- ▶ Utilize the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) to help with court reminders and transportation
 - ▶ Provide HOT with docket schedules
 - ▶ Increase staffing for HOT from 4 to 12
 - ▶ Create a Court Navigator position for District & Lawrence Municipal Courts
 - ▶ Continue utilizing Zoom access for court hearings
 - ▶ Provide a docket kiosk at the library or health department
 - ▶ Provide appointment cards in each courtroom



Completed Goals

- ▶ Provided the Homeless Outreach Team with docket schedules (completed May 2021).
 - ▶ Added reminder cards in each court division for attorneys to fill out and give to their clients (completed August 2021).
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Questions?

Thank you for your time and listening about failures to appear in Douglas County, Kansas.

