Buncombe County Sheriff's Office Detention Bureau

21st Century and Beyond

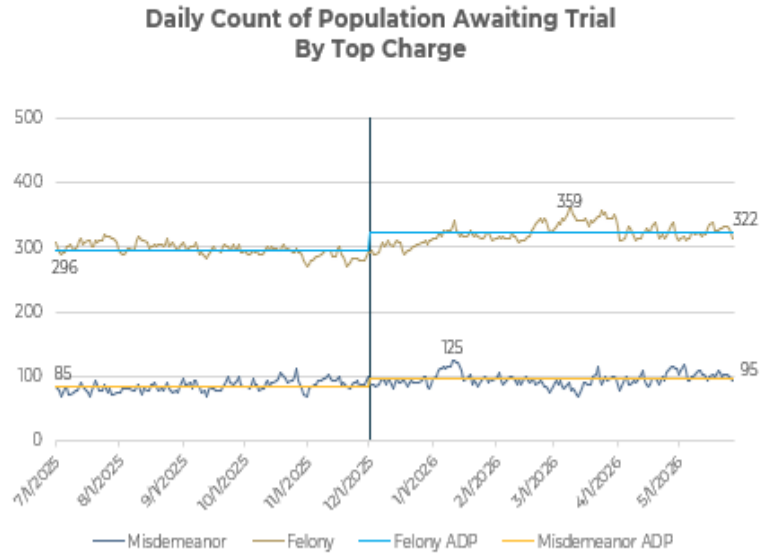
Detention Population

- Currently, the number of detainees housed =539
  - We have 56 detainees on 1cw,2cw,3cw, only 10 of these cells are designed to be double-bunked. Because we are so overcrowded, we had to start double-bunking on the 5th floor. Both units are housing 56 detainees, and they're only designed to house 46 detainees
- Average number in custody over the last 6 months = 527
- Operational Capacity = 470, Design Capacity = 524
- Inmates currently on backlog = 36
- The jail is currently operating beyond its operational design and capacity
- The high population numbers have been the result of several factors, including
  - Implementation of House Bill 307/Sessions Law 2025-93, also known as Iryna's Law
  - Increasing bookings into the facility
  - Increasing lengths of stay

21st Century and Beyond

21st Century and Beyond

Daily Population

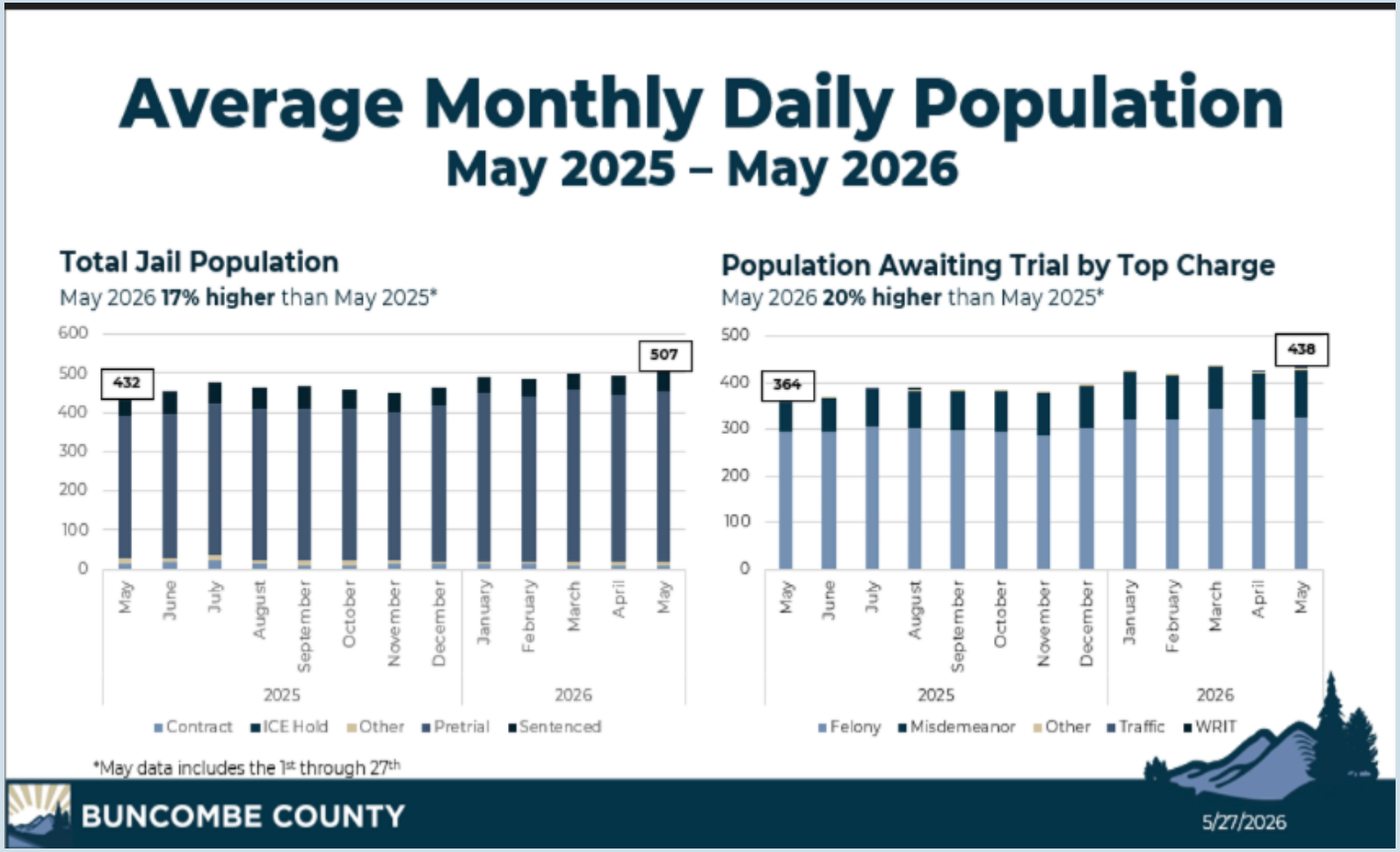


- December 1, 2025: Iryna's Law went into effect
- Average daily population (ADP) of felony and misdemeanor state pretrial populations have experienced increases
- Misdemeanor: 85 to 95 (+12%)
- Felony: 297 to 322 (+8%)

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

5/27/2026

21st Century and Beyond



21st Century and Beyond

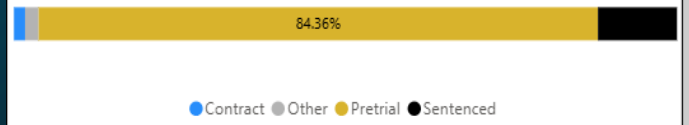
BuncombeCOUNTY Sheriff's Office

Detention Facility Active Population as of 05/28/2026 12:12 PM

537	Number of Clients
0	Number of Clients in Hospital
2	Number of Clients at Broughton
223	Number of Clients with Known MH Involvement
134	Number of Clients with Known SA Involvement
41.5%	Percent of Clients with Known MH Involvement
25.0%	Percent of Clients with Known SA Involvement

Female | Male

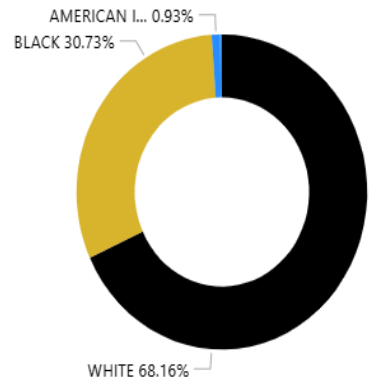
Active Bookings by Population Type



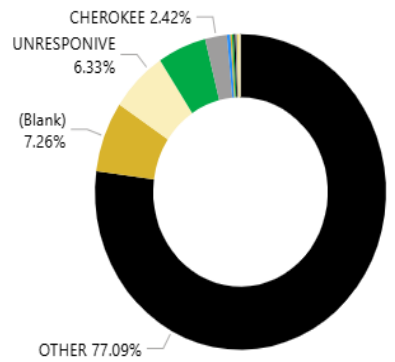
39.1	37.8	18.5	70.2
Average Client Age	Median Client Age	Youngest Client	Oldest Client

Incarceration Reason	Female	Male
Federal Inmates		4
Fugitive Warrant	2	4
Housing for Other County/Jurisdiction	1	2
Non-Support		3
Sentenced BCDF 90 Days or Less	3	25
Sentenced to DOC	1	35
SMCP	1	1
State Pretrial	63	390
WRIT		2
Total	**71**	**466**

Active Bookings by Race



Active Bookings by Ethnicity



Population Snapshot | Facility Snapshot | Aging Report

Staffing Issues

- Staffing Analysis completed in 2021 showed detention was understaffed
- Detention officers have had to work overtime conditions since 2020 due to the inability to fill vacancies
- In July 2025, the County put a hiring freeze in place for the Sheriff's Office. Due to the freeze, we were unable to hire many of the applicants for detention officer positions.
- Currently, we are operating with as few as 14 officers per shift. To be adequately staffed to run the facility safely, the detention facility requires 25 detention officers per shift.
- We need two officers on every housing unit to maintain control and order on the units

21st Century and Beyond

21st Century and Beyond

Staffing Issues

- Basic functions (security, maintenance, sanitation, programs, recreation, etc.) begin to break down when they are stretched to their limit for extended periods of time Increases in the jail's liability exposure jeopardize the safety and well-being of both inmates and staff.
- Increases in violence, tension, and the availability of contraband. (1,174 number of incidents YTD, 17.2% increase from last year)
- The Detention Center is out of compliance with State rules for double-bunking in single cell occupancy

Staffing Issues

- Detention staff is overwhelmed due to an increase in the number of detainees with mental health issues and substance abuse issues.
- Currently, there are 223 in custody with mental health issues
  - The waitlist for Broughton is between 6 and 18 months long
- Currently, there are 134 in custody with substance abuse issues
- Detention officers are not trained mental health providers; however, they must care for them.

21st Century and Beyond

21st Century and Beyond

Impacts on Staffing

- **Physical and Mental Health**
  - Long shifts lead to severe sleep deprivation
  - Increased stress has direct impacts on physical health
- **Work-life Balance and Morale**
  - Unpredictable mandates and canceled days off make it incredibly difficult to maintain a healthy social and family life
- **Turnover**
  - Burnout and people leaving the profession due to these life impacts create a continuous turnover cycle as remaining staff are asked to take on more, thereby creating more stress and burnout

21st Century and Beyond

Impact on Staffing

➢Safety

- Tired and stressed-out staff have less patience, which can increase volatility and conflict with incarcerated individuals and staff
- Increases in violence, tension, Basic functions (security, maintenance, sanitation, programs, recreation, etc.) begin to break down when they are stretched to their limit for extended periods of time due to crowding
- Increases in the jail's liability
- Greater exposure to likelihood of incidents that jeopardize the safety and well-being of both inmates and staff.
- Understaffed and exhausted teams are slower to respond to emergencies or violence within the facility
- Reduces staff morale
- Assaults on staff are at an all-time high
- Violent crime rose from 25 to 45 cases, which in turn causes detention staff to have to deal with those being charged with violent crimes

LOCAL IMPACT: HURRICANE HELENE & BUNCOMBE COURTS

Sept 2024	**Hurricane Helene**	Major flooding in Buncombe County caused significant damage to county infrastructure, roads, and public buildings.
Oct–Dec 2024	**Court Disruptions**	Buncombe County Courthouse reduced operations. Many hearings postponed, rescheduled, or moved to alternative venues.
Early 2025	**Recovery Operations**	Courts resumed partial operations with priority given to emergency matters, custody, and cases involving detained individuals.
Mid-2025	**Ongoing Backlog**	Hundreds of cases rescheduled. Buncombe courts are actively working through the backlog with additional court sessions.
Now	**Current Status**	Courts operating but still catching up. State-appointed special superior court judges have been assigned to assist.



21st Century and Beyond

Strategies Focused on Addressing Problems_

- Detention staff contacts the North Carolina Department of Corrections (NCDAC) daily to facilitate the removal of adjudicated detainees who are awaiting transportation to prison.
- Working with court officials to expedite court dispositions for those detainees awaiting trial
- Have a special misdemeanor court monthly (should be weekly) to assist with getting people out of custody

Alternatives

- We house some of our detainees in other county detention facilities (This is at a cost of $75.00 a day per detainee)
- Arranging to transfer detainees to other detention facilities that have vacant off-site jails (Mecklenburg County Detention Facility)
  - Need to provide staffing when we are already short on personnel (it's like running a separate detention facility)
  - Travel, meal, and lodging for our personnel while working off-site
  - Disrupts family lifestyle for our officers
- Building of a new detention facility

21st Century and Beyond



21st Century and Beyond

–

Questions?