

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

RURAL JAILS



RESEARCH HUB

Carl Vinson Institute of Government
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Sociology Department
School of Social Work

Our Team



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Anthony Potts – Economics & Master of Public Administration (Double Dawg)



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Project Partners

The logo for Vera Institute of Justice, featuring the word "Vera" in a large, white, serif font, followed by "INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, all on a red rectangular background.

Vera INSTITUTE
OF JUSTICE

Vera Institute of Justice is a justice reform change agent. Their mission statement is to drive change while urgently building and improving justice systems that ensure fairness, promote safety, and strengthen communities. Vera works in partnership with national, state, and local government officials and focus on creating change from within. Their offices are in Brooklyn, NY; Washington, DC; New Orleans, LA; and Los Angeles, CA.

The logo for Arnold Ventures, featuring a blue circle with white "AV" initials to the left of the words "Arnold Ventures" in a white, serif font, all on a black rectangular background.

AV Arnold
Ventures

Arnold Ventures is a philanthropy that is dedicated to investing in sustainable change and tackling some of the most pressing problems in the country. Their core mission is to invest in evidence-based solutions that maximize opportunities and minimize injustice. Their headquarters are in Houston and they have offices in New York and Washington. Their focus areas are criminal justice, education, health, and public finance.



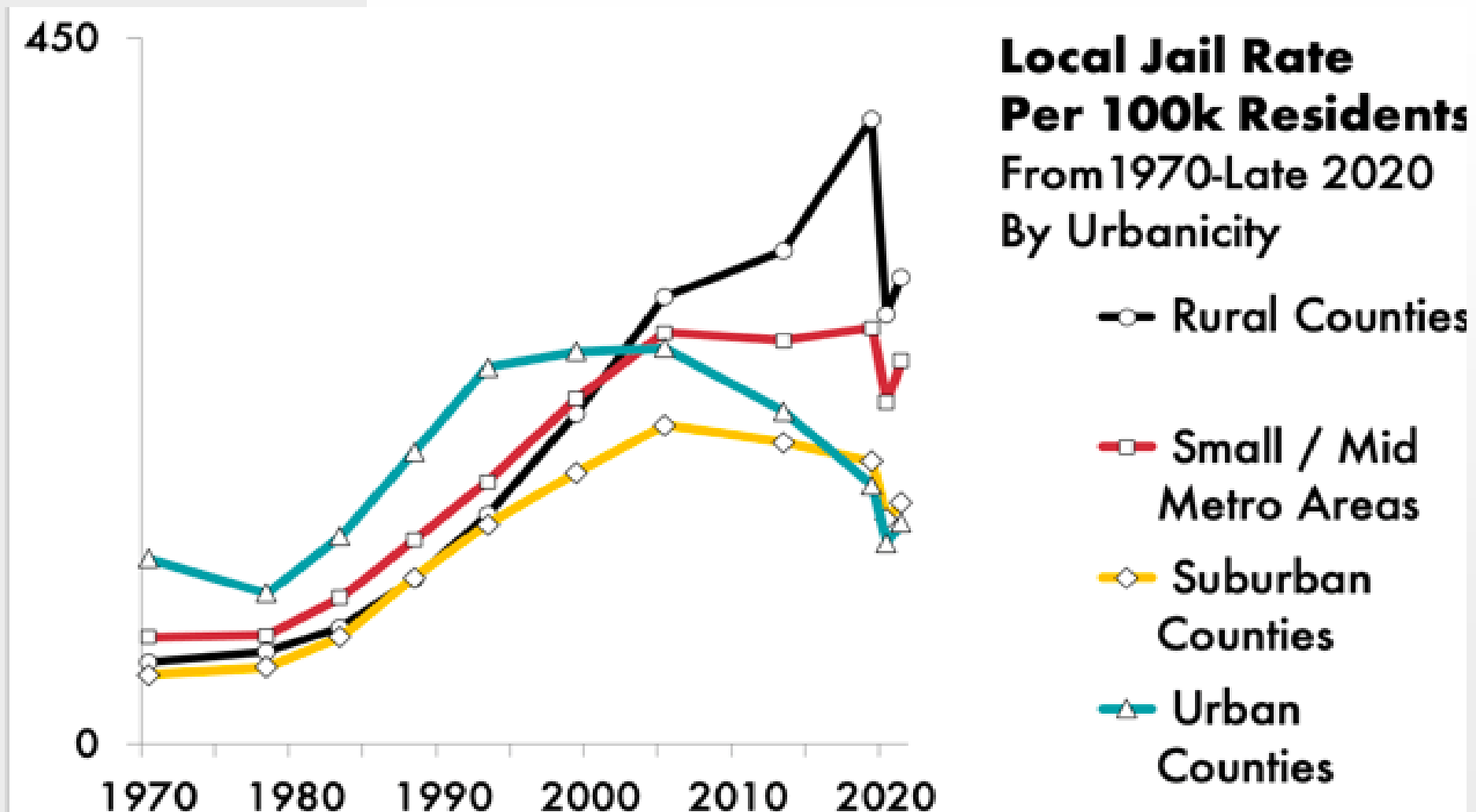
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The logo for the Rural Jails Research Hub, featuring a grey outline of the state of Georgia to the left of the text "RURAL JAILS RESEARCH HUB" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "RURAL JAILS" in black and "RESEARCH HUB" in red.

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Jail Incarceration Trends - National



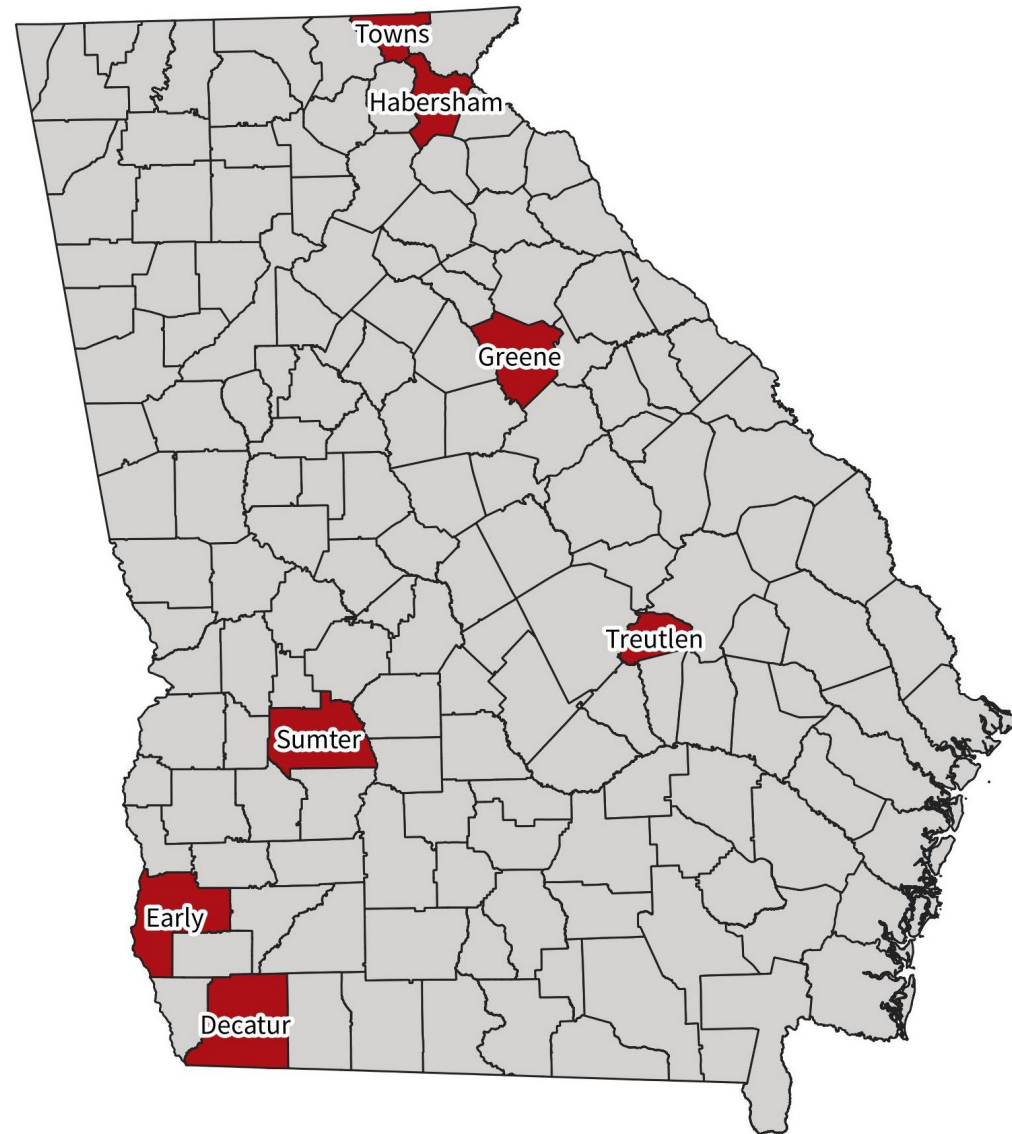
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Our County Collaborators

Decatur
Early
Greene
Habersham
Sumter
Towns
Trentlen



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Our County Collaborators

| | 2019 Pop. | % Black/ African American (2019) | % Hispanic / Latinx (2019) | % in Poverty (2017) | Jail Capacity |
|-----------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Decatur | 26,404 | 42.7% | 6.5% | 21.9% | 175 |
| Early | 10,190 | 51.7% | 2.3% | 26.7% | 66 |
| Greene | 18,324 | 32.9% | 6.4% | 17.0% | 125 |
| Habersham | 45,328 | 3.9% | 15.5% | 13.3% | 160 |
| Sumter | 29,524 | 52.9% | 6.2% | 25.5% | 262 |
| Towns | 12,037 | 1.2% | 3.2% | 13.8% | 50 |
| Treutlen | 6,901 | 31.9% | 3.0% | 27.4% | 42 |



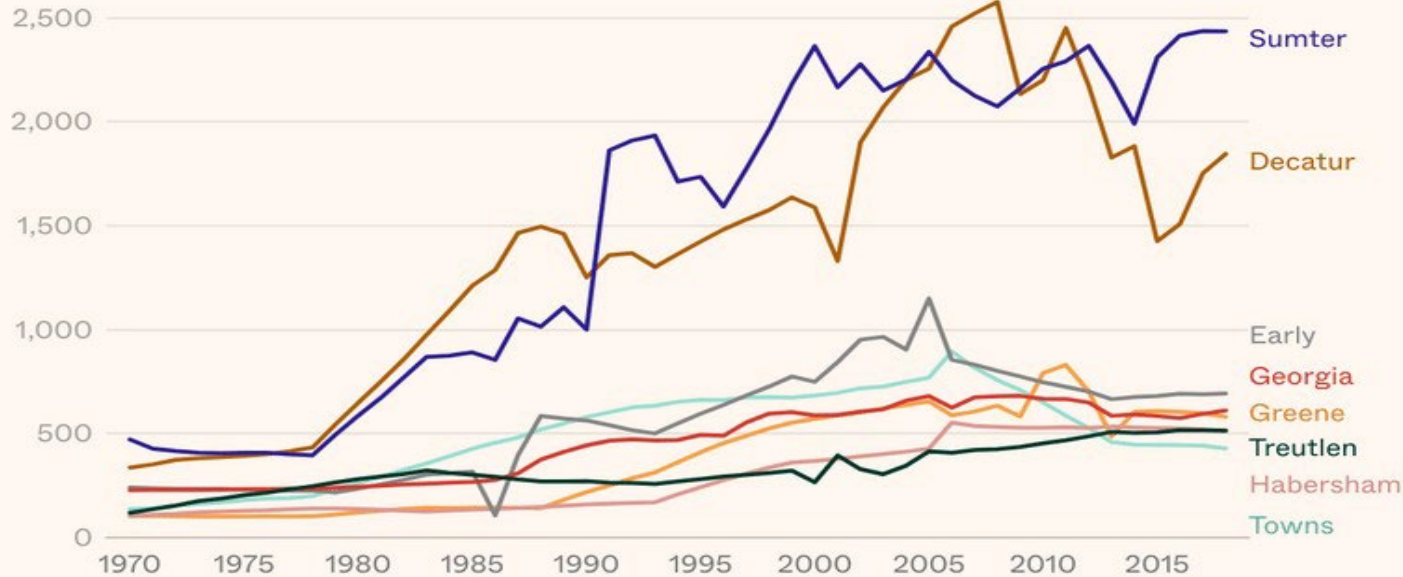
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Jail Incarceration Trends – GA RJRH Counties

Jail Population Rate per 100,000 residents (ages 15-64) in seven Georgia counties, 1970-2018



Source: Vera Incarceration Trends (2021 version)

Of the 20 GA counties with the highest jail incarceration rates, **18 are rural or small metro counties**.
All have incarceration rates **twice as high** as the Georgia average.



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Project goals

- Gather and analyze administrative jail data
- Build knowledge of specific local factors affecting jail population trends in rural counties through data analysis and conversations with local stakeholders
- Share lessons from research and data analysis with local representatives and stakeholders



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Jail Log Methodology

Overview

- 18 months of jail logs received from our partner counties for all bookings between January 2019 and June 2020.
- Each log slightly different in format, with different information
 - Each log between 200-400 pages
- After review, logs were converted to spreadsheets for data analysis
- Data we analyzed were bookings (not the same as unique individuals)



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Jail Log Methodology

Challenges

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(ongoing)



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Bookings

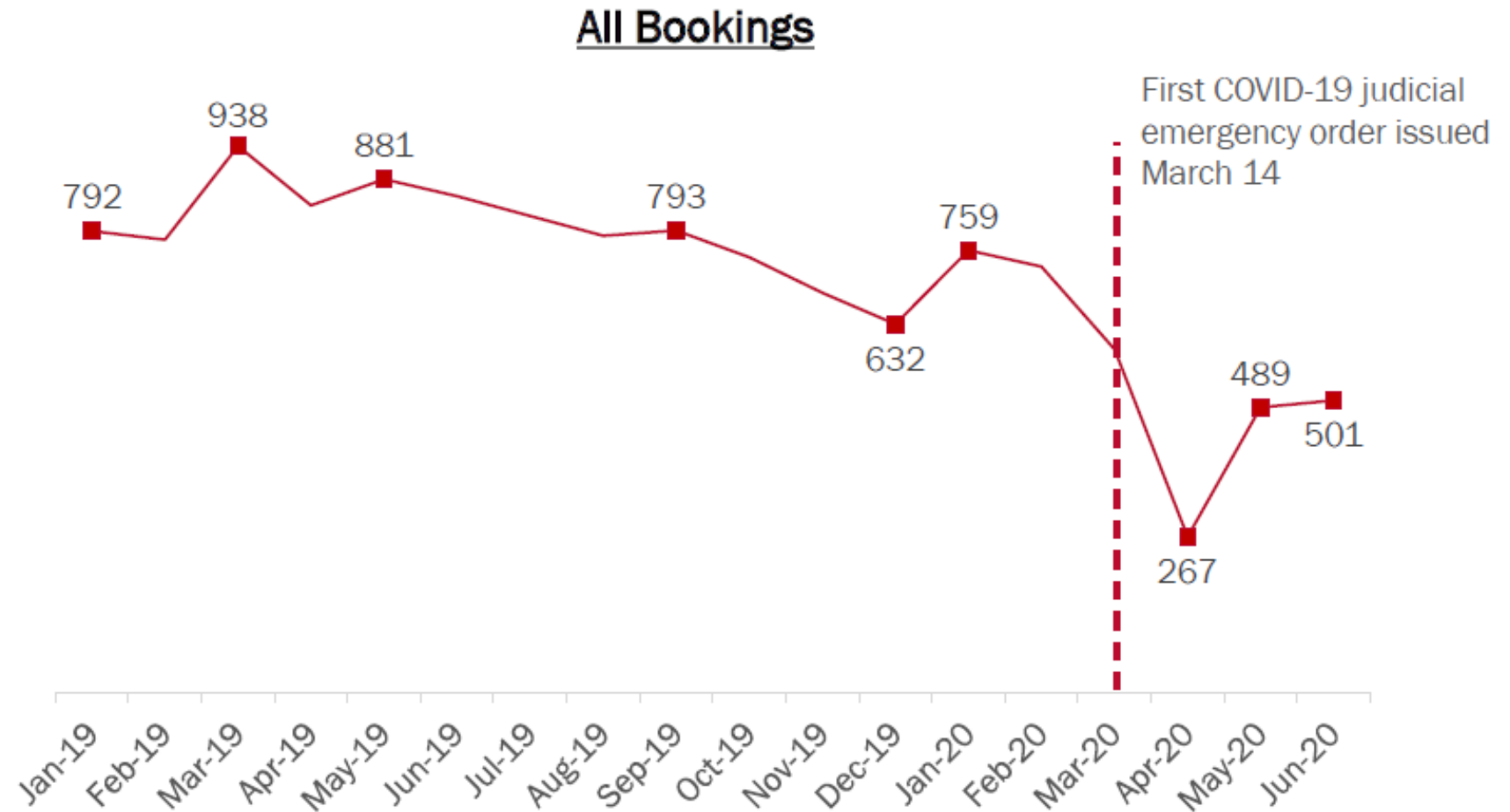


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Participating Counties monthly bookings January 2019- June 2020

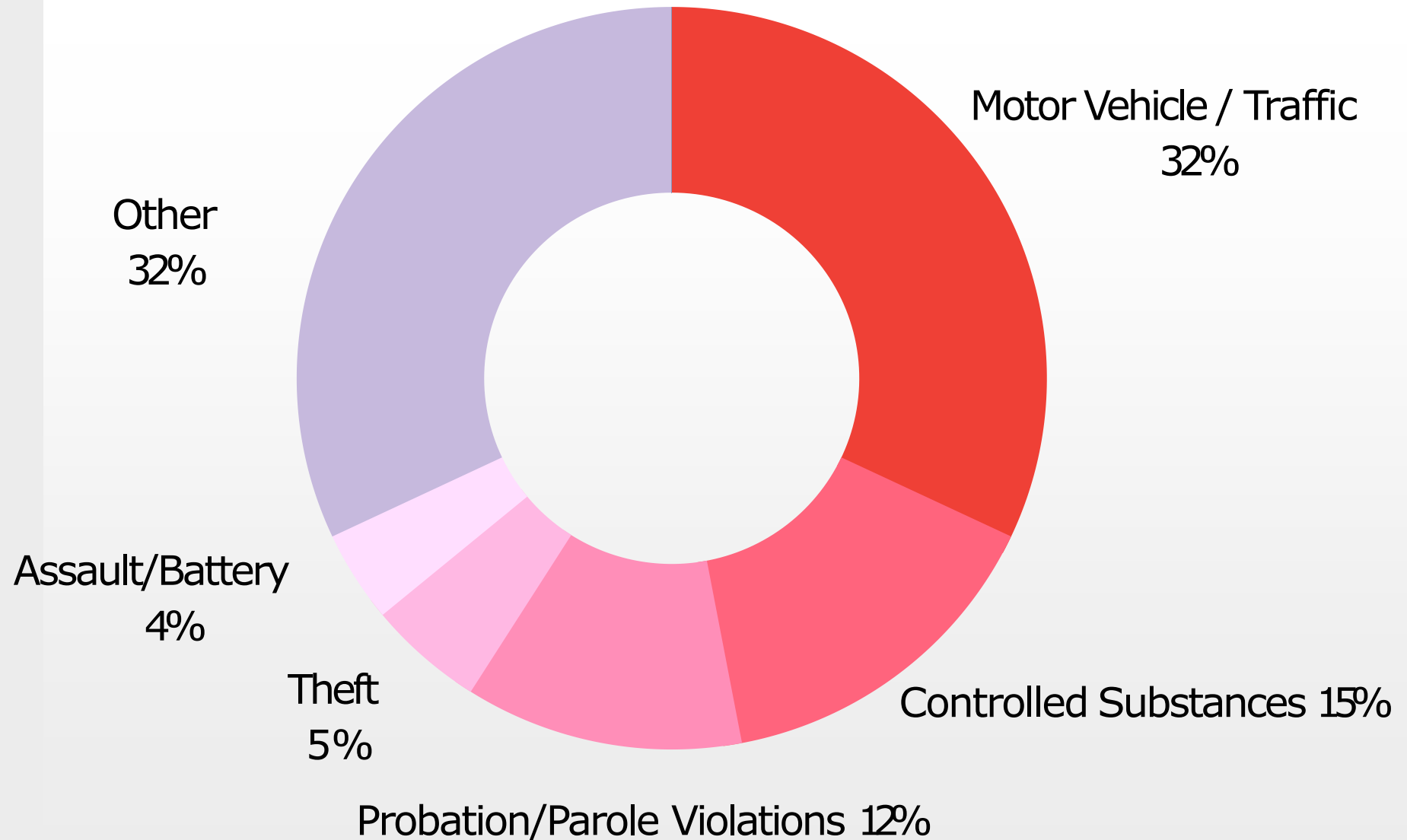


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7 Counties Overall Charge Categories: Bookings



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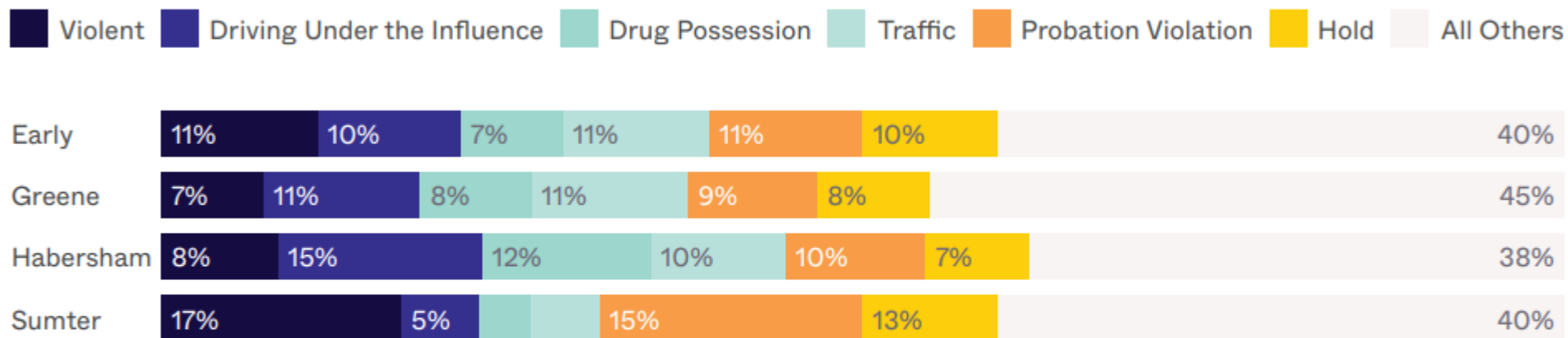
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Top Charges: Bookings (4 counties)

Six most common top charges for jail admission (January 2019–June 2020)

Represents the percentage of total jail admissions by the top charge category driving each booking.



The category “All Others” includes the following charges, in order of frequency across all four counties: theft/fraud/forgery (7.6%), failure to appear (5.4%), arson/burglary/robbery/trespass (5%), offenses against the administration of government (3.5%), public order (3%), drug manufacturing/distribution (2.6%), weapons (2.4%), temporary jail stays (1.7%), and number of other less frequent charge types (6%, collectively).

Source: University of Georgia data (provided by counties), with Vera top charge analysis.



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3 Most Frequent Top Charge Categories: Bookings (4 counties)

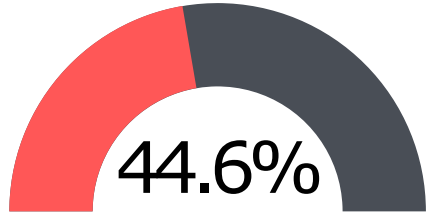
| Early | Greene | Habersham | Sumter |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Violent | Traffic | DUI | Violent |
| Probation | DUI | Drug possession | Probation |
| Traffic | Probation | Probation | Holds |



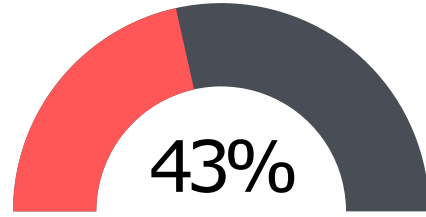
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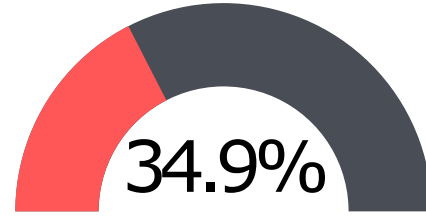
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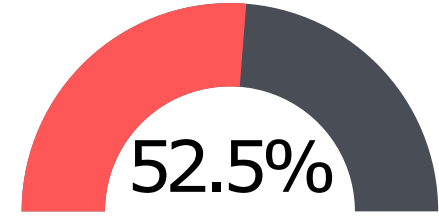
Early County
4.5 days avg



Greene County
1.7 days avg



Habersham County
4.1 days avg



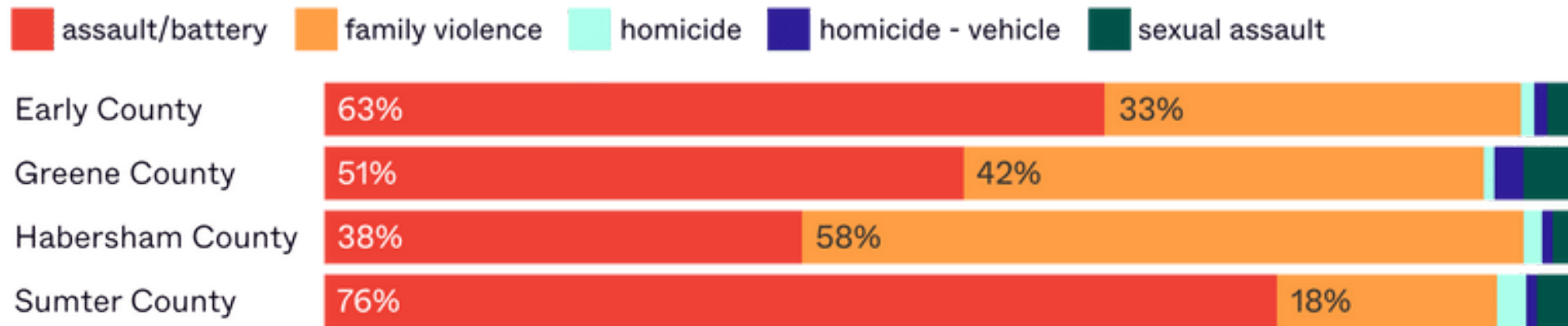
Sumter County
3.1 days avg

Driver's license suspensions
are the most common type of
traffic-related top charges

- after separating DUI, serious charges
- compared to driving charges and vehicle- or admin- related traffic charges

Family violence assault and battery charges were common among violent top charges

Categories of Violent Top Charges



As a proportion of all bookings (top charges), violent charges made up 11% in Early, 7% in Green, 8% in Habersham, 17% in Sumter

Length of Stay (LOS)



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Overall, jail stays are not long

Length of Stay in Jail

| | Early | Greene | Habersham | Sumter |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Less than one day | 33% | 41% | 46% | 27% |
| Less than seven days | 72% | 78% | 71% | 60% |

Source: UGA fact sheets, all charges



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Top 3 LOS by Top Charge Categories (4 counties)

| Early | Greene | Habersham | Sumter |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sex offense (91, 2%) | Person (78, .5%) | Sex offense (127, 1%) | Sex offense (167, 1%) |
| Probation (73, 9%) | Probation (51, 7%) | Drug manuf. (114, 2%) | Inchoate (148, 1%) |
| Child neg./end. (68, 2%) | Parole (40, 1%) | Bond/supervis. (68, 1%) | Weapons (119, 2%) |

Parentheses = (average days jailed, percent of total bookings)



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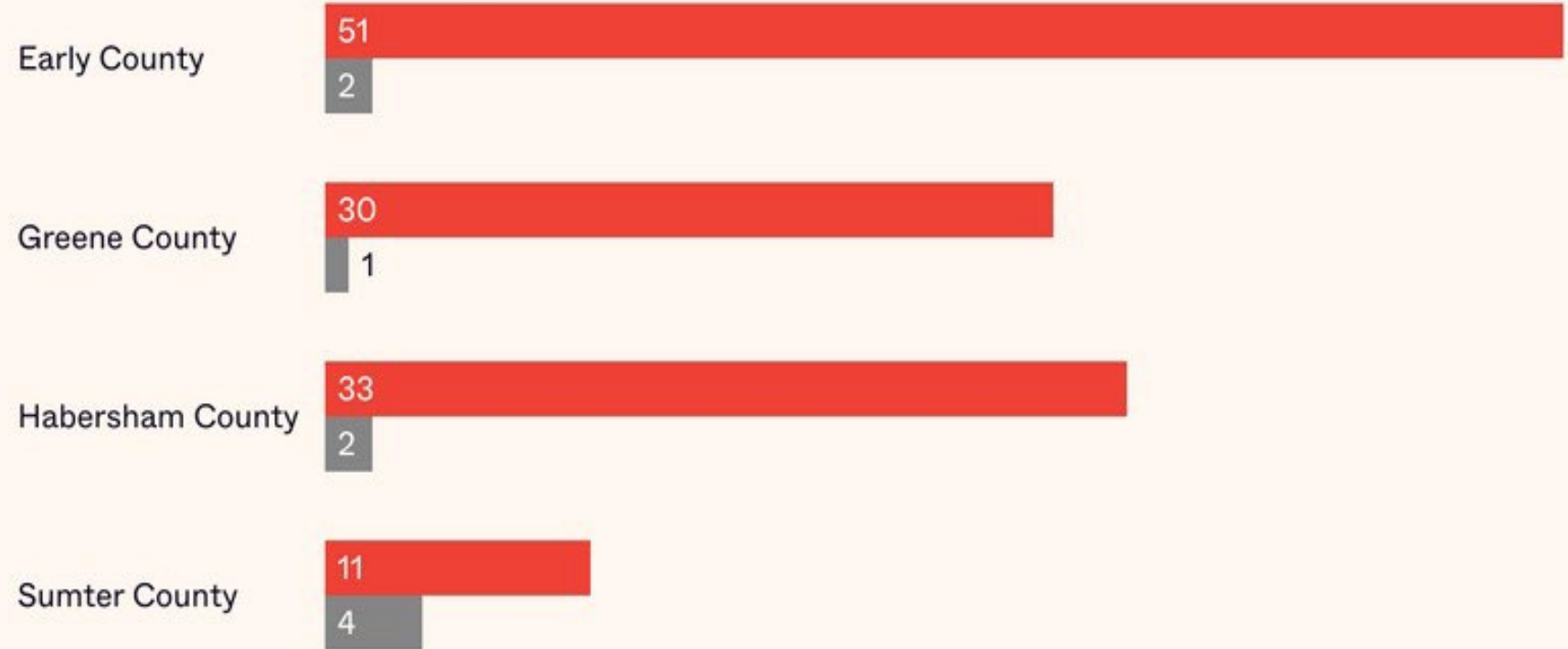


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Probation violations:
Common top charge & longer lengths of stay

Median Number of Days in Jail

■ Probation Violation Charges ■ All Top Charges



(based on top charge per booking)



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Violent charges length of stay by felony/misdemeanor

LOS (days) for Violent Felony Top Charges in Four Rural Counties

| <u>County</u> | <u>25th percentile</u> | <u>50th percentile</u> | <u>75th percentile</u> | <u>Mean</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Early | 2 | 4 | 80 | 60 |
| Greene | 1 | 3.5 | 51 | 40 |
| Habersham | 2 | 34 | 140 | 117 |
| Sumter | 2 | 57 | 188 | 128 |

LOS (days) for Violent Misdemeanor Top Charges in Four Rural Counties

| <u>County</u> | <u>25th percentile</u> | <u>50th percentile</u> | <u>75th percentile</u> | <u>Mean</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Early | 1 | 2 | 13 | 5 |
| Greene | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Habersham | 1 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| Sumter | 0 | 1.5 | 19 | 20 |



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Summary & Solutions

Among top charges across participating rural counties:

- Drug charges & DUI make up significant portion of jail bookings
- Probation violations (mostly technical) lead to higher jail populations due to high number of bookings and longer lengths of stay

In our conversations with local stakeholders:

- Significant need for more local resources and alternatives to incarceration (e.g., for substance use and mental health challenges)

Further reforms to probation are needed (e.g., eliminate “pay only”) as well as ensuring implementation of existing reforms, like early termination



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1. General review of raw data, assess limitations, check for null values or missing data, see whether charge dates line up with admission/release dates, etc.
2. Standardize charge names based on the charge codes and charge descriptions in the dataset. Assign charge type
3. Develop a charge hierarchy
4. Using combination of charge severity and charge hierarchy, assign a "top charge" to each booking

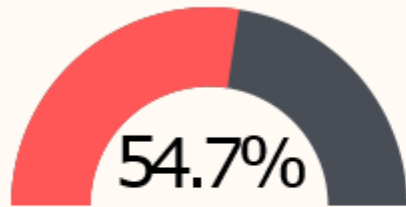
- Started with GA CCH codes (GA Criminalized Computer History statute codes)
 - Too many (130)
 - Seem intended to categorize offenses by theme rather than assist in determining severity
 - For example, the charge “Dog Owner With Previous Conviction For Violation Whose Classified Dog Causes Serious Injury To Human” is classified as “Animal,” whereas we would classify as a person offense
- Communities will sometimes share their own way of ranking charges
- FBI’s [Uniform Crime Reporting program](#) provides broad classification scheme for offense types
- Strike a balance between being too high-level and not granular enough, keeping analytical objectives in mind
 - Ex. Splitting out drug possession from drug manufacturing/distribution
 - Splitting out technical probation violations from those with other new charges

- Violent
- Sex Offense
- Weapons
- Other person offenses
- Arson/burglary/robbery/trespass
- Theft/fraud/forgery
- Other property offenses
- Drug manufacture/distribution
- Drug possession
- Other drug offenses
- DUI
- Offenses against the administration of government (contempt of court, obstructing government operations)
- Child neglect/endangerment/support
- Public order (disorderly conduct, violate family violence order, obstruction of law enforcement officer)
- City/county ordinance violation
- Alcohol
- Inchoate offense
- Parole violation
- Probation violation
- Bond/supervision violation
- Failure to appear
- Traffic
- Other
- Warrant
- Hold
- Unknown

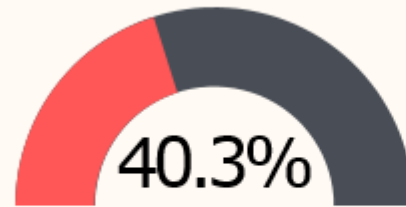
- Develop a decision tree model that assigns top charge based on meeting different conditions (in order)
- A. Rank charges based on charge severity
 - Felony>Misdemeanor>Municipal
- B. Rank charges based on charge hierarchy
 - Violent>Sex offense>Weapons>Drug Possession....Unknown
- C. Each charge gets assigned a ranking that is the sum of severity ranking + hierarchy ranking

Drug charges (4 counties)

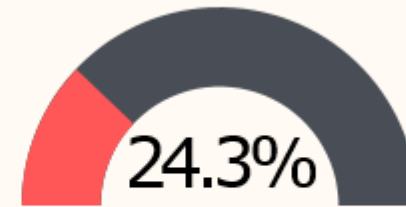
- Marijuana possession most common top charge for drugs
- Serious charges (e.g., trafficking) are rare
- Meth possession a significant portion of bookings in Habersham County



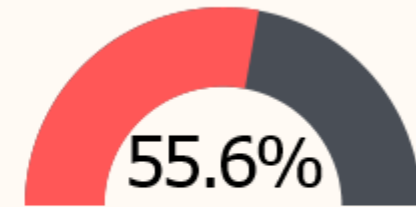
Early County
(12% meth)



Greene County
(13% meth)



Habersham County
(47% meth)



Sumter County
(1% meth)



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