



SINGLE TARGET BOOKINGS

CHARLESTON COUNTY UPDATE

CJCC RESEARCH BRIEF

September 2026

INTRODUCTION

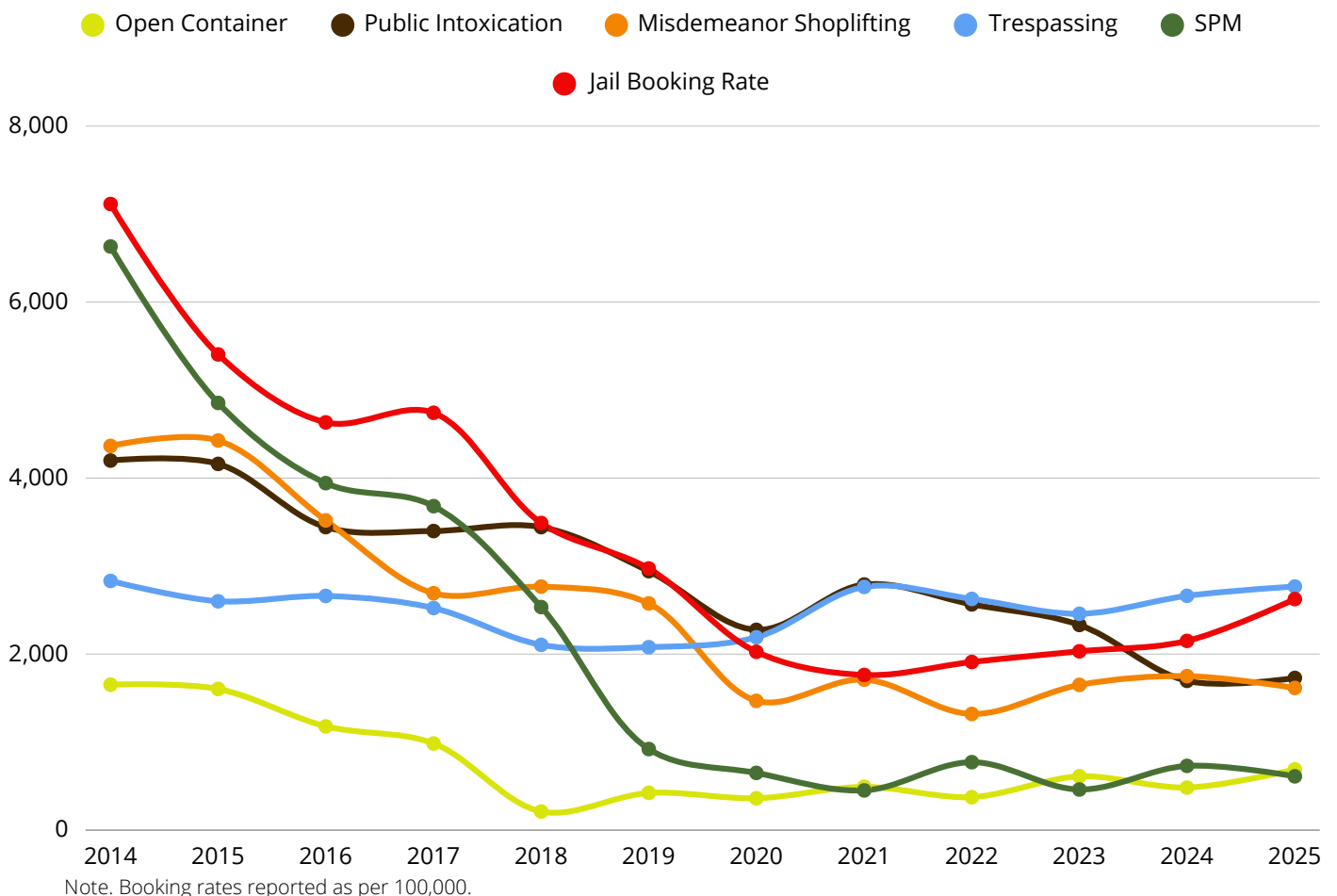
Since formally established, the **Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC)** has prioritized efforts to support justice stakeholders, including identifying appropriate avenues to relieve jail occupancy pressures without compromising public safety. Strategies such as cite-and-release, expansion of diversion pathways, and efforts to better understand jail use have remained at the forefront of partner collaborations and research.

Selected early on by the Council, five low-level (non-violent) single-booking[1] charges historically contributing

to higher representation of jail occupancy have been carefully tracked for over a decade. This brief analyzes booking-rate trends for these five offenses—**Open Container, Public Intoxication, Misdemeanor Shoplifting, Trespassing, and Simple Possession of Marijuana (SPM)**—using annual booking-rate data[2] from 2014 to 2025.

Findings indicate substantial and sustained declines in custodial bookings for these low-level charges, aligning with CJCC policy priorities and broader criminal-justice practices.

Single Target Charges - Bookings Rates



[1] Single-Booking Charges are instances when an individual is booked into the jail on one charge.

[2] Booking rates were calculated using yearly jail bookings and Charleston County population rates, converted to 100,000.





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CHARGE-SPECIFIC PERCENT CHANGES (2014-2025)

Charge	2014 Rate	2025 Rate	% Change
Open Container	1,652.37	689.84	- 58.3%
Public Intoxication	4,199.32	1,728.96	- 58.9%
Misdemeanor Shoplifting	4,365.67	1,615.44	- 63%
Trespassing	2,831.58	2,768.08	- 2.2%
Simple Possession of Marijuana (SPM)	6,631.67	611.25	- 90.8%

Note. Booking rates reported as per 100,000.

SHIFTS IN JAIL-USE PRACTICES

Between 2014 and 2025, Charleston County experienced a pronounced decline in jail booking rates, falling from over 7,100 per 100,000 in 2014 to approximately 2,600 by 2025. This downward trend reflects fewer total bookings overall, even when considering the increases in Charleston County’s population growth; however, increases have been observed since 2021. Prior [CJCC Annual Report](#) publication notes jail use in 2025 to be comprised predominantly of individuals during the pretrial phase of a criminal case, while longer jail stays are attributed to higher-level charges falling under the jurisdiction of General Sessions Court.

SPM saw the most substantial decline of 90%, while Misdemeanor Shoplifting booking rates fell by 63%. Alcohol-related offenses of Public Intoxication and Open Container also decreased by almost 60% each. In contrast, Trespassing booking rates have remained relatively stable, showing only a 2% decline.

While requiring more in-depth analysis, Council-supported initiatives such as cite-and-release, combined with overall

practice changes surrounding these targeted bookings, may have contributed to the overall sharp decline observed. Interestingly, the shallow decline in Trespassing may signal persistent structural drivers, such as homelessness and behavioral-health crises, that require strategic and holistic community-based alternatives to more substantially impact booking rates.

SUMMARY

Between 2014 and 2025, Charleston County experienced overall significant and sustained reductions in bookings for the five low-level charges examined. These trends demonstrate the tangible impact of coordinated system reforms on jail utilization, low-level offense processing, and overall criminal-justice efficiency in Charleston County, thereby reinforcing CJCC’s strategic approach in reducing custodial bookings for selected low-level offenses and highlighting the importance of demonstrating measurable progress through data.