

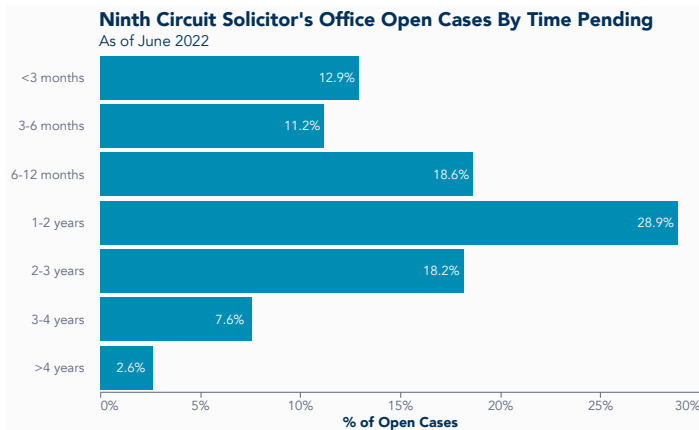
# The Case for Screening

Justice Innovation Lab (JIL) and the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office (SOL9) worked together to analyze case trends and develop a data-informed approach to improving outcomes through prosecutorial screening.



## Pending Cases

As of June 30, 2022, there were 13,592 total undisposed General Sessions Court cases under the purview of SOL9, with 57% of cases being open longer than 1 year and 28% being open longer than 2 years.



## Early Disposition Opportunities

# 23%

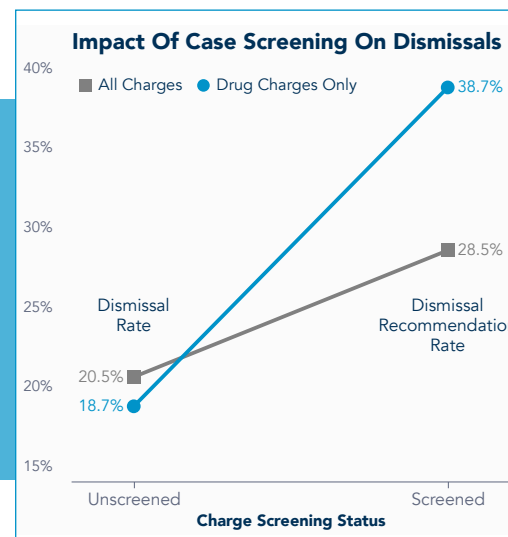
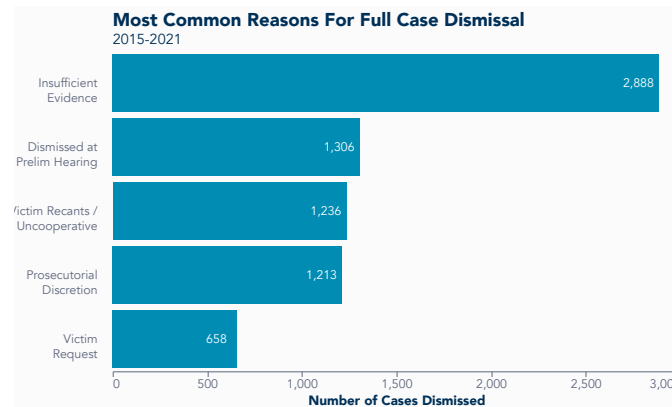
Approximately **23% of defendants** had at least one non-prosecutable case closed for reasons that could be identified at charge referral, such as for insufficient evidence, yet it takes a **median time of 221 days** to close charges in these situations.

## Pilot Screening

The Charleston Police Department and SOL9's pilot screening program involving a select group of various charges resulted in increased identification of charges that were not viable for prosecution.

## Insufficient Evidence

The most common reason for full case dismissal by SOL9 is lack of sufficient evidence.



## Cost of the Status Quo

# \$44M

Prolonged incarceration for low-level, non-violent offenses imposes significant costs to the jurisdiction, both monetarily and societally.

During the time period examined, South Carolina spent approximately **\$44 million in incarceration costs** on sentencing enhancements for low-level, non-violent offenses.

## Conclusion

A case screening process, where charges referred for prosecution receive a preliminary review, can be used to identify cases for quicker disposition and improve outcomes for arrestees, prosecutors, and the community. Without intervention, **it is predicted to take about 6 years to clear the current case backlog** in Charleston and Berkeley Counties. Case screening is one tool to reduce this number.

Appropriately charging individuals and maximizing alternatives to prosecution will reduce these costs and focus resources on addressing the most serious and violent crimes while providing resources to better address the root causes of non-violent crime.

To read the full report on **The Case for Screening**, visit <https://why-screen-charleston-sc.justiceinnovationlab.org/>