



# Law Enforcement Agency Booking Patterns in Bernalillo County: A Four-Year Analysis of Charge Types

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Prepared For:

Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention  
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January 2025

## Introduction

In October 2024, the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) contracted with the University of New Mexico's Center for Applied Research and Analysis (CARA) to comprehensively evaluate its operations. One focus of this research centered on analyzing patterns of bookings across different law enforcement agencies and examining the evolution of the severity of the highest booking charge over time. Understanding these patterns is important for several reasons: longitudinal analysis of highest charge types can reveal shifts in enforcement priorities and potential community safety challenges over time; examination of jurisdictional differences can spotlight variation in agency approaches and resource allocation needs; and identification of booking trends across agencies can inform detention center capacity planning. This brief report presents key findings of bookings by highest charge by agency in Bernalillo County from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2024.

## Sample Description

We obtained electronic jail booking data from the MDC spanning admissions between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2024. The final sample size for analysis was 33,318 unique individuals with 68,522 unique booking events; 38.7% of the unique individuals in the sample ( $n = 12,879$ ) had more than one booking event.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics summarizing the population of individuals booked into the MDC between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2024. Most sampled individuals (73.0%;  $n = 24,333$ ) were male, and most identified as Hispanic (42.8%;  $n = 14,276$ ). The average age of individuals was 35.4 years.

**Table 1** Descriptive Characteristics of the MDC Population between January 2021 and December 2024 (n = 33,318)

Characteristic	Frequency	Count
Sex		
Male	73.0%	24,333
Female	27.0%	8,984
Race-Ethnicity		
Hispanic	42.8%	14,276
White	33.1%	11,023
Indian	10.5%	3,501
Black	6.2%	2,079
Unknown	6.5%	2,169
Other	0.1%	270
Age Group		
18-24	18.0%	5,999
25-34	35.1%	11,687
35-44	26.6%	8,870
34-54	12.9%	4,308
55-64	5.9%	1,981
65+	1.4%	471

**Table 2.** Summary of Highest Charge Type between January 2021 and December 2024 (n = 68,444)<sup>1</sup>

Highest Charge Type	Frequency	Count
Felonies	40.2%	27,531
Misdemeanors	24.1%	16,489
Felony Warrants and Remands	15.5%	10,597
Parole and Probation Violations	10.8%	7,375
Misdemeanor and Traffic Warrants and Remands	6.8%	4,659
Petty Misdemeanors	2.3%	1,567

Figure 1 shows the monthly change in the number of bookings by highest charge over time. Between June 2021 and December 2024, Figure 1 reveals a substantial upward trend in felony bookings, which increased from approximately 400 to 700 monthly bookings, while misdemeanor bookings showed a moderate increase from about 300 to 400 monthly bookings. Other booking categories, including parole violations, warrants, and court appearances, remained relatively stable throughout the period, with felony warrants and remands showing a slight decline and consistently lower volumes than the primary offense categories.

<sup>1</sup> We exclude category "Here for Court/Other" (n = 226).

**Figure 1. Monthly Changes in Highest Charge Booking Count**

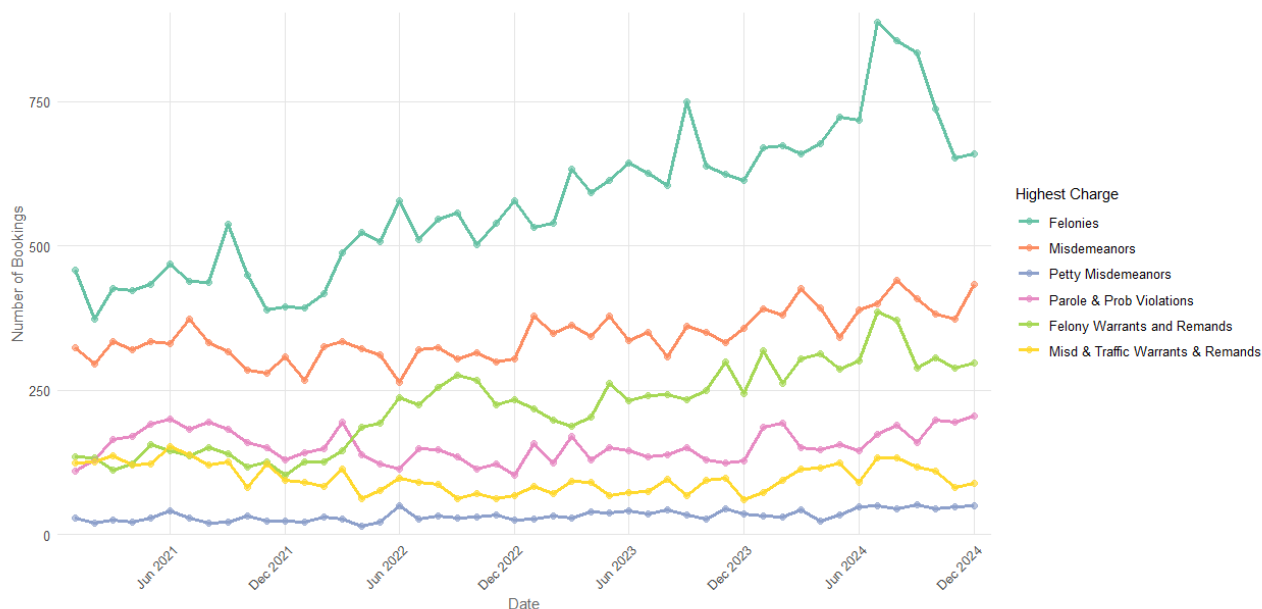


Table 3 summarizes the distribution of bookings by arresting agency between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2024. APD was responsible for most bookings (65.5%,  $n = 44,846$ ). BCSO accounted for about a fifth of all bookings (21.0%,  $n = 14,343$ ), while other agencies, including NMSP (5.2%;  $n = 3,563$ ) and various other entities (6.7%;  $n = 4,594$ ), made up the remainder. Only a small proportion of bookings (1.6%;  $n = 1,098$ ) had no recorded arresting agency.

**Table 3. Distribution of Bookings by Arresting Agency Between January 2021 and December 2024 ( $n = 68,444$ )**

Arresting Agency	Frequency	Count
APD	65.5%	44,846
BCSO	21.0%	14,343
Other	6.7%	4,594
NMSP	5.2%	3,563
NA	1.6%	1,098

Figure 2 presents the count of highest charges across different arresting agencies, with APD showing notably higher arrest volumes across all charge categories. The data reveals that felonies constitute the largest proportion of charges for APD, with approximately 20,000 bookings, followed by misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors, which total around 12,000 bookings. BCSO, NMSP, Other, and NA categories demonstrate substantially lower arrest volumes, with a consistent pattern of felonies and misdemeanors representing most charges.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the highest charges as percentages of each agency's total bookings, providing a normalized view of charging patterns. APD and BCSO show a similar distribution, with felonies comprising approximately 45% and 35% of their respective bookings. At the same time, NMSP demonstrates a distinct pattern, with misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors representing the highest proportion at nearly 50%. The "Other" category shows a unique distribution, with parole and probation violations constituting the largest percentage at approximately 45% of bookings, suggesting specialized enforcement focus or jurisdictional differences.

Figure 2. Count of Highest Charge by Arresting Agency

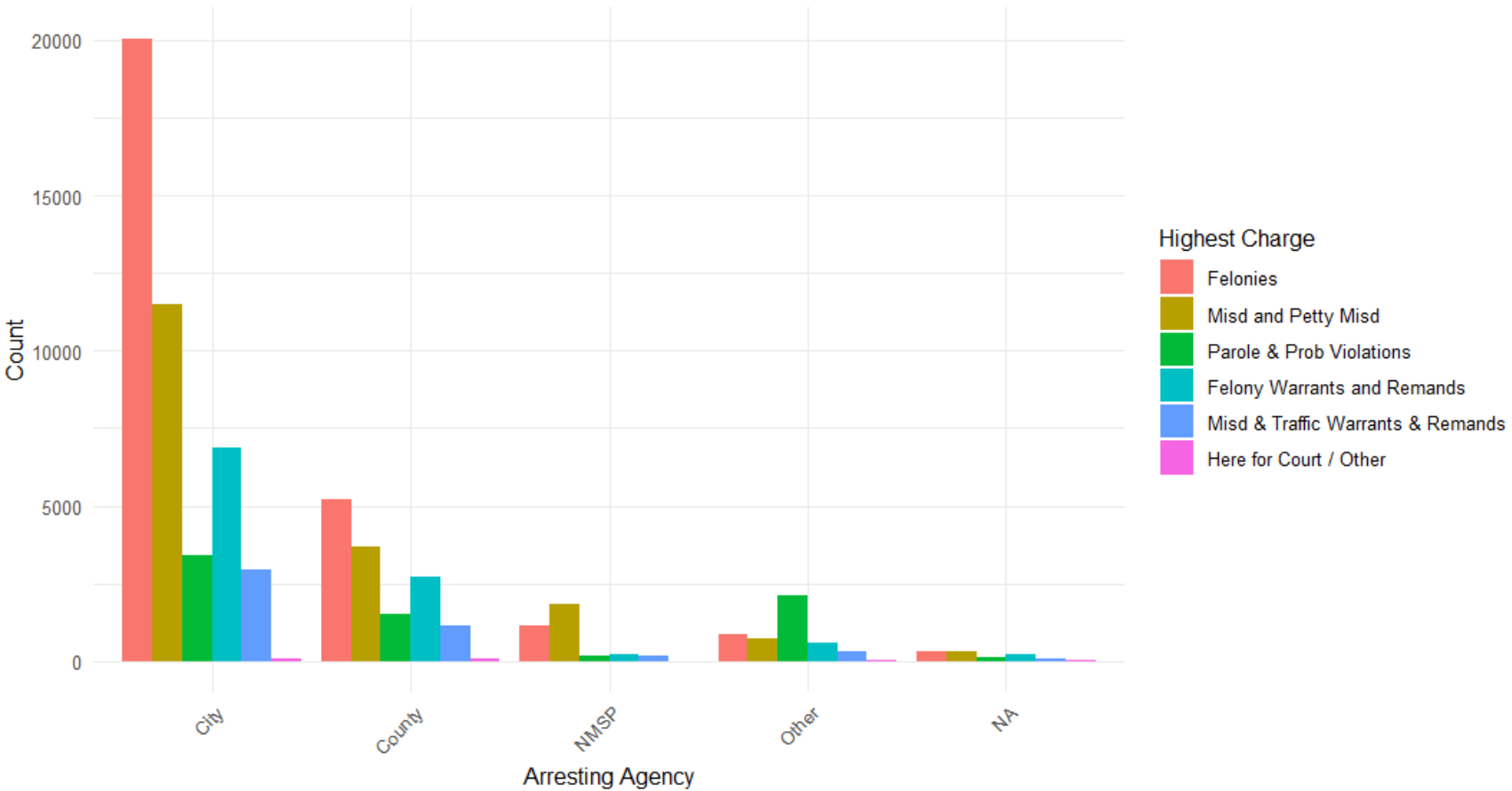
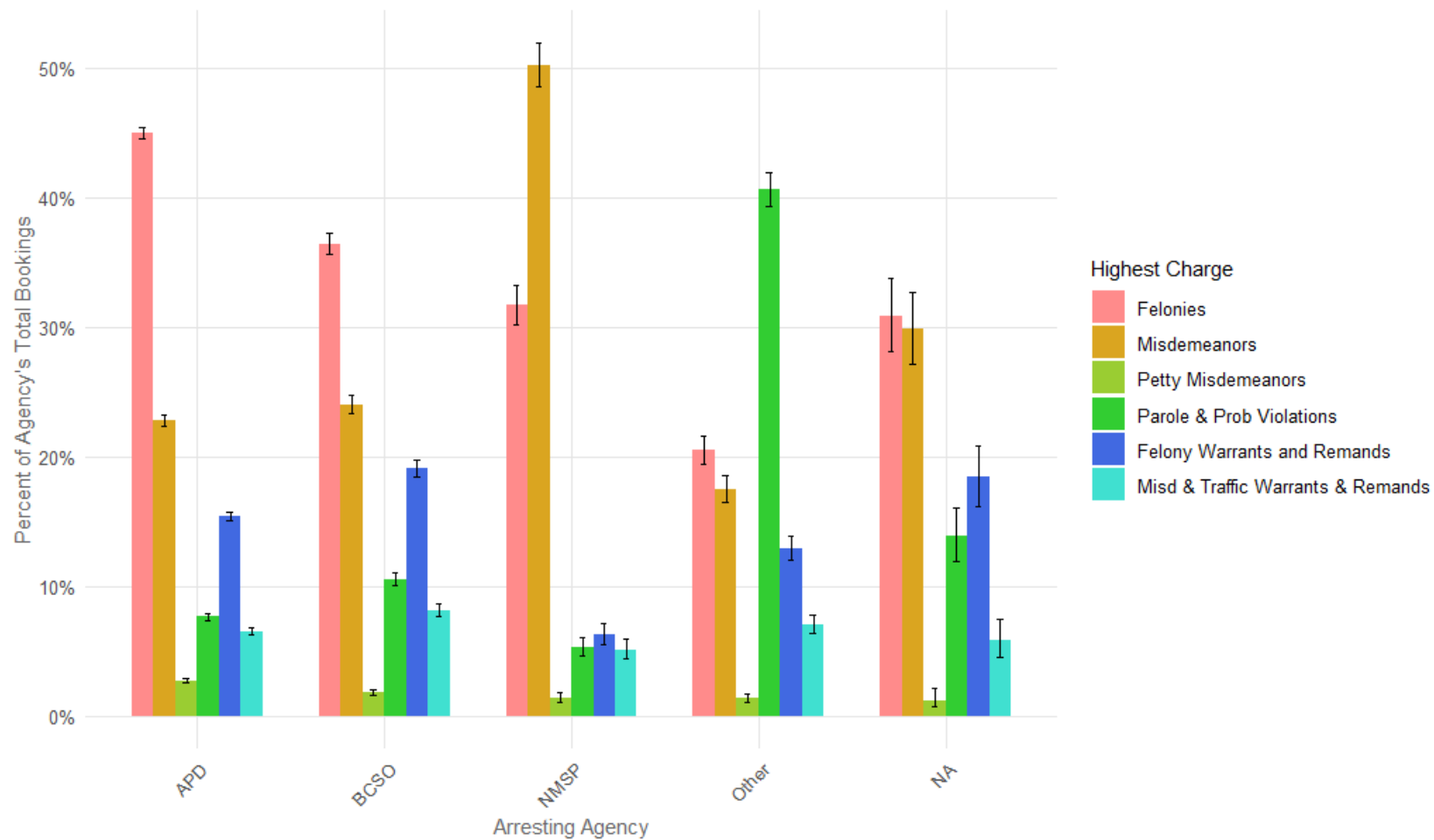


Figure 3. Distribution of Highest Charges by Arresting Agency



We also wanted to evaluate how the highest charge type varied across arresting agencies and over time. Figure 4 shows the percentage of the highest charge type by arresting agency, month, and year. Figure 5 shows a heatmap showing year-over-year changes in the distribution of the highest charge type within each agency. Figure 6 shows a line graph showing year-over-year changes in the counts of the highest charge type within each agency.

Figure 4 reveals distinct longitudinal patterns across agencies in handling different arrest types. APD and BCSO maintained relatively stable arrest patterns over time, with felonies consistently comprising about 40-50% of APD bookings and 25-35% of BCSO bookings. NMSP shows the most volatile pattern, with significant year-over-year shifts between misdemeanors and felonies, while a high proportion of parole and probation violations characterize the "Other" category.

Figure 5 reveals significant year-over-year variations in the highest booking charge patterns from 2022 to 2024. The most dramatic year-over-year changes appear in NMSP's handling of misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors in 2023 (shown in deep blue, indicating a significant increase), followed by more moderate year-over-year changes in 2024. When we specifically examine the most recent period (i.e., year-over-year changes between 2023 and 2024), we note that APD shows relatively modest year-over-year increases (light purple) across most charge types, particularly in Parole & Probation Violations and both warrant categories (Felony and Misdemeanor & Traffic). BCSO had more significant year-over-year increases (deeper purple) during the same period, with the most substantial rise in Misdemeanor & Traffic Warrants & Remands, followed by moderate increases in Felonies and Parole & Probation Violations.

Figure 6 illustrates the trajectory of changes over time with greater granularity than the heatmap in Figure 5. The visualization shows that most dramatic changes occurred in mid-2023, particularly for NMSP, with trends generally stabilizing by early 2024. Similar patterns appear between certain charge types for APD and BCSO.



Figure 5. Heatmap of Year-Over-Year Change in Highest Charge by Arresting Agency and Month-Year

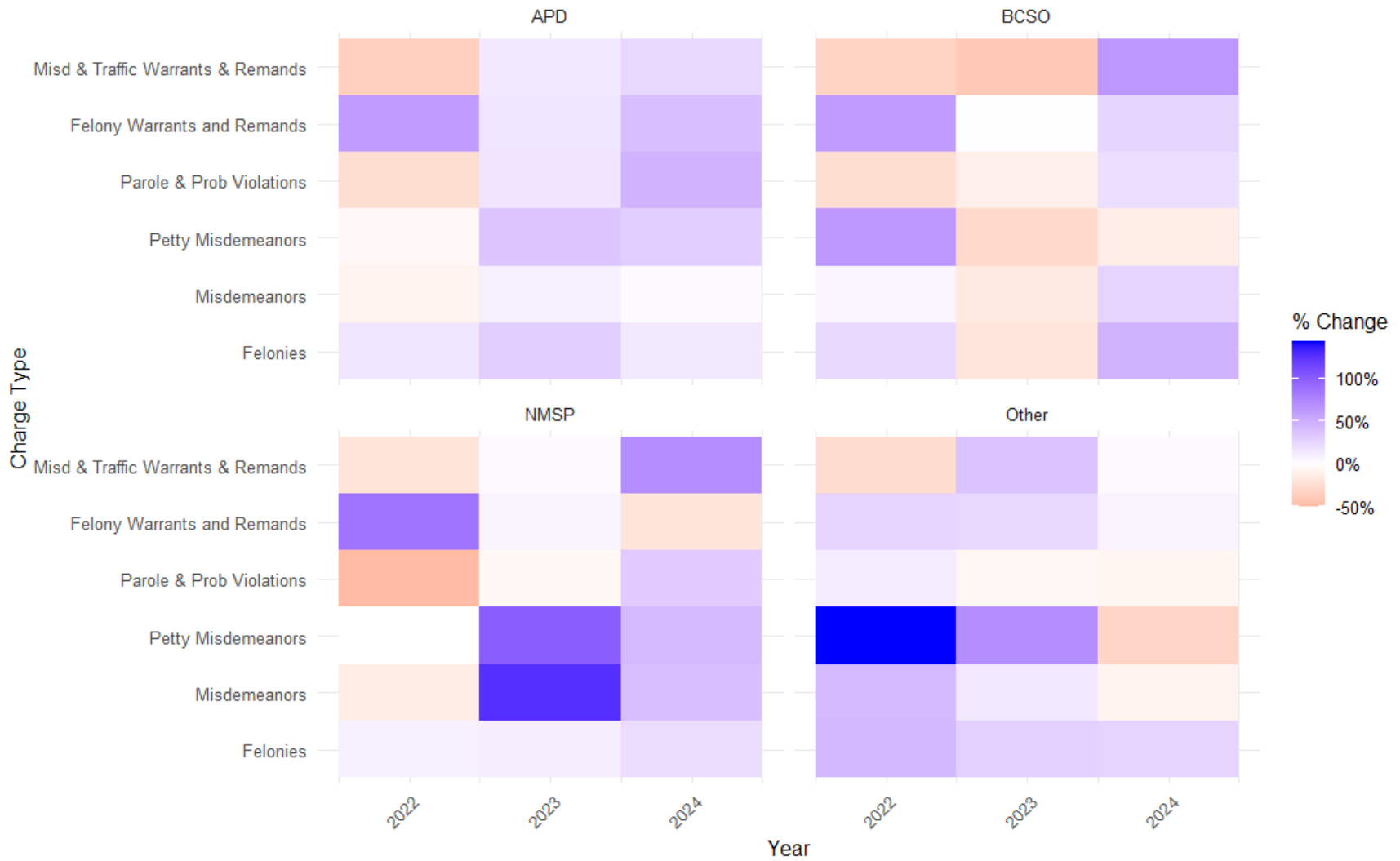
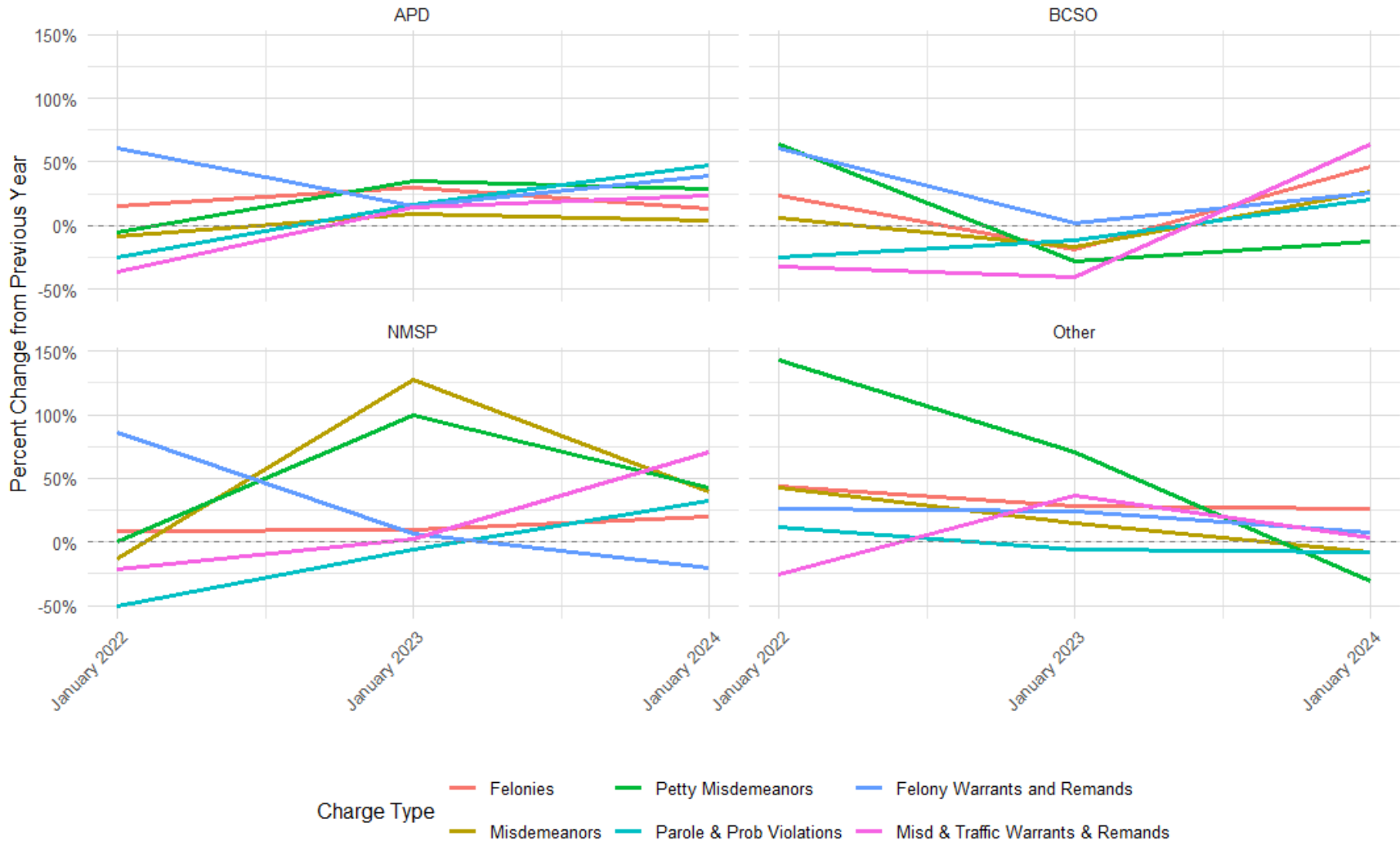


Figure 6. Line Graph of Year-Over-Year Changes in Highest Charge by Arresting Agency and Month-Year



## Conclusion

This report explores bookings by highest charge at the MDC between 2021 and 2024, spanning 68,522 unique booking events for 33,318 unique individuals. Our analysis reveals distinct patterns across arresting agencies, with APD agencies accounting for approximately 65.5% of all bookings and showing relatively stable charging patterns over time. Felonies consistently comprised the largest share of bookings (40.2% overall), though the proportion varied meaningfully by agency, from about 45% for APD bookings to 35% for BCSO. Notable temporal trends emerged in the data, particularly the substantial increase in felony bookings from approximately 400 to 700 monthly cases between June 2021 and December 2024, while misdemeanor bookings showed more modest growth from about 300 to 400 monthly cases during the same period. This upward trend in felony bookings may reflect changes in charging practices, modifications to pretrial detention criteria, or shifts in underlying crime patterns.

Future analyses could expand on these findings in several ways. First, examining the relationship between charge types and case dispositions, once processed through the courts, would provide valuable insight into how initial booking charges relate to final case dispositions. Second, analyzing demographic patterns within and across agencies could reveal significant variations in charging practices. Finally, incorporating data on length of stay and release conditions would provide a more comprehensive picture of how different charge severities relate to detention. These extensions would provide a richer understanding of the MDC booking ecosystem and could inform evidence-based policy decisions around pretrial detention, resource allocation, and inter-agency coordination.