

# REPORT SUMMARY

## SONOMA COUNTY PROBATION

September 2019

### 2018 Annual Pretrial Report

Sonoma County's Pretrial Services program was implemented in 2015 as a collaboration between the Sheriff's Office and the Probation Department. The program was developed as a safe alternative to detention to maximize public safety and Court appearance rates, in response to key priorities identified in Sonoma County's Criminal Justice Master Plan. The 2018 Annual Report provides a program overview, and presents program data on the pretrial screening process, release decisions, and program outcomes.

#### Key Findings:

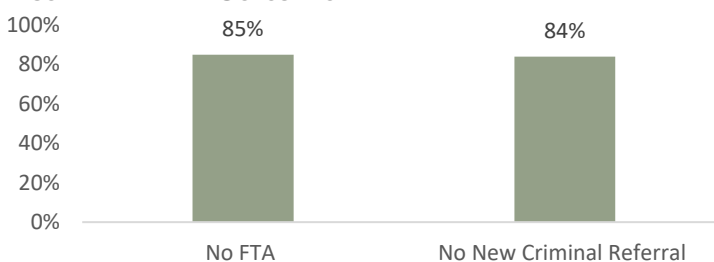
##### THE COUNTY'S PRETRIAL SYSTEM HAS EXPANDED

The number of defendants released onto pretrial supervision increased 64% in 2018 to 2,027.

##### PRETRIAL OUTCOMES REMAIN STRONG

The rate of people completing Pretrial Supervision without a new offense (84%) is high. Among those charged with a new offense during an existing grant of pretrial, the overwhelming majority (73%) are for misdemeanor offenses. Court appearance rates also remain high, with 85% of pretrial defendants appearing to all scheduled hearings.

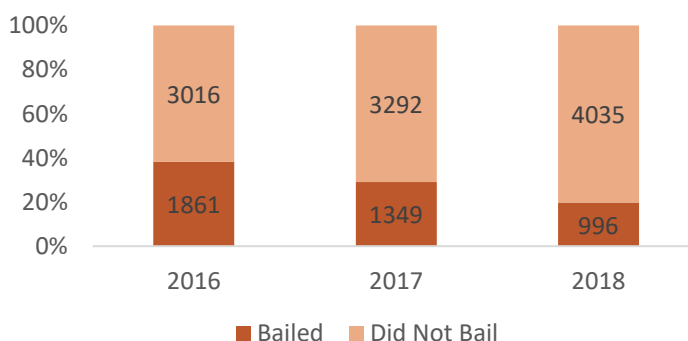
FIGURE 1. PRETRIAL OUTCOMES



##### USE OF MONEY BAIL HAS DECLINED BUT REMAINS COMMON

The percentage of defendants with a SPRAT assessment who posted money bail at first appearance decreased by almost half, from 38% in 2016 to 20% in 2018.

FIGURE 2. POSTING OF MONEY BAIL PRIOR TO FIRST APPEARANCE (2016-2018)



##### SPRAT ENHANCEMENTS CONTINUE TO LEAD TO MORE RESTRICTIVE LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

While the number of individuals released pretrial has increased over time, the increase has been concentrated among those released onto the most restrictive level of supervision. Since 2016, the number of individuals placed on Enhanced Supervision has increased by 139%.

### **OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO INCREASE RELIANCE ON RISK-BASED DECISION MAKING**

A third of Pretrial Supervision grants occur without a SPRAT having been done, representing a missed opportunity to consider assessed risk in hundreds of pretrial placement decisions.

### **HIGH VOLUME OF TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS SUGGESTS POSSIBLE “NET WIDENING” EFFECT**

Nearly half of the individuals on pretrial release had a technical violation filed with the court for violating the terms and conditions of pretrial release. Over the last 1-2 years, the approach to responding to violations has shifted, where arrests by pretrial officers for violations are now rare unless a serious public safety threat exists.

### **DATA SUGGEST SOME DIFFERENCES IN HOW GENDER AND RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS EXPERIENCE THE PRETRIAL SYSTEM**

A decision point analysis identified some differences in how gender and racial/ethnic groups experience the pretrial system. While Hispanic/Latino defendants are generally represented across the pretrial system at similar rates as whites, black defendants experience considerable disparity upon entry to the system, mirroring national trends. Black defendants are over five times more likely to be booked in the jail on a new charge, compared to white individuals in the county. While many social, economic and historical factors contribute to this disproportionate representation, and the analysis cannot point to a singular cause, it is intended to raise questions and encourage further study.

View the full report on Probation’s website: <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Probation/Planning-Implementation-and-Evaluation/Research-and-Reports/Pretrial-Annual-Report-2018-Final-REVISED-20191015-rem/>