



Arrest-Free Rates for Pretrial Defendants in Washington, DC

Over the last fifty years, the Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA) has become a national leader in the pretrial justice field by utilizing an effective system of non-financial release to promote the fair administration of justice, while also recognizing the need to assure community safety.

Tracking new arrests during the pretrial supervision period is a critical, national standard for pretrial service programs and measured as an outcome in at least 36 states and the federal judicial system.¹

PSA defines the arrest-free rate as the percentage of non-surety released defendants who remain free of new, papered, U.S. code or serious traffic charges in Washington, DC, while the original case is pending. The annual target for the Agency's arrest-free rate is 88%, which has been met or exceeded over the last several years.

As a part of our routine review of performance measures and targets, we recently expanded our examination of the arrest-free rate to the Washington, DC, metropolitan area (including Virginia and Maryland) and nationwide. Due to DC's geographic placement, addition of the metropolitan area was significant due to the tendency of residents to have strong ties to other parts of the area for work, housing, family, or other social activities.

During fiscal year 2016, a total of 19,975 defendants were released to PSA. Of this number, 2,500 defendants were arrested for an offense within DC while awaiting trial, leaving an arrest-free rate of 88%. When PSA's arrest-free rate is expanded to include the DC metropolitan area, the rate remains relatively stable at around 85%. Expanding the analysis nationally, the arrest-free rate remains consistent at 85%. The table below compares arrest-free rates locally, regionally (DC, Maryland and Virginia) and nationally.

Fiscal Year	Released Defendants	Arrests within DC		Arrests within DC Metropolitan Area		Arrests Nationwide	
		Number	Arrest-Free Rate	Number	Arrest-Free Rate	Number	Arrest-Free Rate
2013	20,976	2,207	89%	2,707	87%	2,762	87%
2014	20,984	2,363	89%	2,861	86%	2,920	86%
2015	18,981	2,091	89%	2,481	87%	2,516	87%
2016	19,975	2,500	88%	2,965	85%	2,990	85%

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¹ Pretrial Executives Network. (2011). Measuring What Matters: Outcomes and Performance Measures for the Pretrial Field. (2011). National Institute on Corrections. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.