

# PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

A Federal Executive Branch Agency



## Key Data and Operational Information FY 2025

### Release Rates for Pretrial Defendants in the Superior Court, Washington, DC: FY 2025

The Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA) assists judges in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the United States District Court for the District of Columbia by conducting a risk assessment for every arrested person who is presented in court, identifying detention eligibility and formulating release recommendations, as appropriate. Recommendations are based on several factors, including criminal history, drug use and/or mental health information and select demographic information. For defendants placed on conditional release pending trial, PSA provides proper supervision and risk mitigation services intended to reasonably assure defendants return to court and do not engage in criminal activity pending their trial and/or sentencing. Over the last 5 years in Washington, DC, an average of 87% of defendants have been released pretrial with non-financial conditions.

PSA tracks two primary release points which are used to calculate the overall release rate: “initial detention/release” and “subsequent release.” Initial detention/release occurs at an arrestee’s initial appearance before a judge at arraignment or presentment. At this point, the arrestee may be detained while awaiting a hearing pursuant to one or more of DC’s statutory preventive detention provisions, placed on conditional release with PSA supervision, or released on personal recognizance (PR) with no PSA supervision. All releases resulting from this first appearance are referred to collectively as “initial release.” For FY 2025, the initial release rate for all cases (felony and misdemeanor) in the Superior Court was 78%, one percentage point higher than the outcome for FY 2024 (77%).

The remaining 22% of cases resulted in detention under one or more provisions of the preventive detention statute. We refer to this as “initial detention.” Under DC law, detained defendants are entitled to a hearing within three to five days of initial appearance to determine whether there are conditions of release that will reasonably assure the defendant’s future court appearance and public safety. The result of this hearing can be continued detention, release to PR or PSA supervision, or dismissal of the charge. For FY 2025, of the 22% initially detained, 50% of the cases resulted in “subsequent release”, most at the time of the detention hearing. In some cases, subsequent release can occur later during the pretrial period, but prior to case disposition (e.g., if a felony case is not filed within the statutory timeframe).

When the initial and subsequent release rates are examined collectively, 89% of Superior Court cases result in defendants being released pretrial. This leaves 11% of cases resulting in detention until disposition of the case.

During FY 2025, a total of 15,064 criminal cases were filed in the Superior Court. The table below shows the ultimate release outcomes for those cases.

Pretrial Process Points	Felony		Misdemeanor		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cases Filed	3,514	100%	11,550	100%	15,064	100%
Initially Released	1,327	38%	10,421	90%	11,748	78%
<b>Initially Detained</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>1,129</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Subsequently Released [1]</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>50%</b>
Total Released Pretrial	2,324	66%	11,082	96%	13,406	89%
Total Held Pretrial	1,190	34%	468	4%	1,658	11%

<sup>1</sup> Percentage rates are calculated using the number of papered cases as the denominator, except for the subsequently released rate, which is a subset analysis that uses the number of initially detained cases as the denominator.