

Pretrial Services Agency  
for the District of Columbia

# Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2026 - 2030



[www.psa.gov](http://www.psa.gov)



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## Message From the Director

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It is my privilege to lead the Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA), where our talented and dedicated employees work tirelessly to advance our important public safety mission.

For nearly 60 years we have ensured that public safety in our Nation's Capital is prioritized, and the pretrial release process is administered fairly and appropriately. Our risk assessment, drug testing, and innovative supervision and risk mitigation programs allow us to achieve our statutory mission while delivering outcomes that reflect our fidelity to excellence and quality.

Our strategic plan for fiscal years 2026 through 2030 reflects a continued commitment to leveraging data and information to guide agency operations, as well as a renewed pledge to continuous evaluation and improvement of the services we provide to external stakeholders, defendants, and the community at large.

During this strategic period, our efforts will focus on minimizing rearrests amongst defendants awaiting trial in the community, maximizing court appearance, and demonstrating efficiency in the administration of PSA resources and services. We will continue to build upon our foundation of risk-based defendant engagement and redouble our efforts to strengthen our data governance and infrastructure.

In addition, we remain committed to the cultivation of partnerships and collaborations across the Washington, DC criminal justice and law enforcement landscape, to ensure effective, coordinated execution of our interconnected missions.

Using excellence as our guiding principle, we are excited to continue strengthening public safety in the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

Leslie C. Cooper, Esq.



# Leadership

## Executive Management

Leslie C. Cooper, Esq.  
Director

Tracey Palmer, Esq.  
Chief of Staff

Kisha C. Gordon, Ph.D  
Assistant Director  
Defendant Engagement and System Support

Karen L. Lellock  
Assistant Director  
Management and Administration



# About the Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia

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The Pretrial Services Agency (PSA or agency) for the District of Columbia (DC or District) was created by an act of Congress (the *District of Columbia Bail Agency Act*) in 1967;<sup>1</sup> and, under the *National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997*, was established as an independent entity within the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) in the executive branch of the federal government.<sup>2</sup> As a federal agency, PSA's mission is to promote pretrial justice and enhance community safety in the Nation's Capital.

In fulfilling its mission, PSA assists judges in both the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (DC Superior Court) and the United States District Court for the District of Columbia (US District Court) by conducting a risk assessment for every arrested person who is presented in court, identifying detention eligibility and formulating recommendations for release conditions, as appropriate. PSA's recommendations are based upon the arrestee's criminal history, drug use and/or mental health information, and relevant demographic information. Judges consider this information, along with representations from the prosecutor and defense attorney, when making pretrial release and/or detention decisions. For defendants who are placed on conditional release pending trial, PSA provides proper supervision and risk mitigation services intended to reasonably assure that defendants return to court and do not engage in criminal activity pending their trial and/or sentencing.

The District of Columbia operates a bail system that promotes clear and reasoned decisions about release or detention. DC bail statutes authorize preventative detention for those who pose an unacceptable risk to the community, emphasize using the most appropriate release conditions for eligible defendants, and permit money bond, as appropriate. PSA employs scientifically validated assessments and evidence-based practices to help judges in local and federal courts make appropriate and effective bail decisions.

PSA's efforts focus on creating a culture that achieves its statutory mandates, ensures defendant compliance with release conditions, and contributes to public safety in Washington, DC. The result is an effective system of release and detention, which contributes to making our Nation's Capital a safe place for people to live, visit, and work.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/89th-congress/house-bill/15860>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/105th-congress/house-bill/1963>



## Stakeholder Engagement

PSA's FY 2026–2030 strategic plan was developed with active engagement of internal stakeholders, and in consultation with external stakeholders. During the FY 2022–2026 strategic period, PSA held annual strategic planning conferences, which were attended by staff at all levels of the agency. During these conferences, staff provided input on the development of the agency's new vision statement and participated in exercises, affording them the opportunity to make meaningful connections between their daily work and the strategic plan. Additionally, PSA has established dedicated "suggestion boxes" (both physical boxes in PSA offices and email) where staff are invited to send questions, comments and suggestions related to operations and the agency's strategic direction. In FY 2024 and 2025, PSA invited staff to complete surveys and participate in focus groups on topics critical to strategic planning and internal communications. Feedback received was considered in the development of the FY 2026–2030 strategic plan and, specifically, informed the agency's management objective.

In addition to eliciting feedback from internal staff, PSA also consults with external stakeholders on elements of the agency's strategic direction. Established pursuant to DC Code § 23-1304, PSA leadership routinely meets with the Executive Committee which is comprised of the Chief Judges of the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, US District Court for DC, DC Court of Appeals and DC Superior Court; the US Attorney for DC, the Director of the DC Public Defender Service, and the Director of CSOSA.<sup>3</sup> PSA is also a member of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), which is a forum for both DC and federal criminal justice and law enforcement agencies working in the Nation's Capital to identify and collaboratively address broad ranging public safety issues involving multiple criminal justice agencies. Through these interactions, PSA regularly shares information regarding the agency's strategic direction and invites partners to provide feedback.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/23-1304>



# PSA's Fiscal Years 2026–2030 Strategic Plan

For fiscal years (FY) 2026 through 2030, PSA established two strategic goals and one management objective that frame the long-term outcomes PSA aims to achieve. The strategic goals focus on effective mission accomplishment and are supported by specific objectives that target agency progress; the management objective focuses on agency efficiency.

PSA's strategic goals and management objective are:

- **Strategic Goal 1:** Minimize Rearrest
- **Strategic Goal 2:** Maximize Court Appearance
- **Management Objective 1:** Efficient Agency Administration

This strategic plan details PSA's approach for achieving these goals and objectives over the next five years, and agency leaders and employees will use the plan to drive resource allocations and transform strategies into tangible actions and measurable results. Implementation strategies detail how PSA's objectives will be achieved, and progress towards mission accomplishment will be routinely assessed and collaboratively reviewed at all agency levels. This review process will promote thoughtful discussion and aid in identifying opportunities for improvements and adjustments.

Prepared pursuant to the *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, Public Law 111-352*;<sup>4</sup> and in accordance with guidance from Part 6 of *OMB Circular A-11*, PSA presents its strategic plan for FY 2026–2030 to the President, Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the public.<sup>5</sup> The following sections describe the agency's strategic goals and objectives for the five-year planning period, and implementation strategies for achieving those goals and objectives.

## Strategic Goal 1: Minimize Arrest

PSA supervision is designed to enhance public safety and, as such, the agency's first strategic goal focuses on minimizing rearrest. Since its inception, PSA has utilized some form of risk assessment to inform supervision recommendations and practices. To leverage the agency's considerable investment in risk assessment and better align its supervision strategies with best practices, PSA transitioned to a risk-based services (RBS) model during the FY 2022–2026 planning period. Under this model, release condition recommendations are individualized, and supervision is aligned with and tailored to each defendant's risk

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/2142>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/a11.pdf>



designation. These recommendations may include assessment-driven behavioral health services, regular drug testing, global positioning system (GPS) electronic monitoring, and regular contact with a pretrial services officer (PSO) to reduce defendant risk of engaging in criminal behavior, help defendants remain arrest-free, and address defendant stabilization.

To evaluate the effectiveness of PSA's efforts in minimizing rearrests, the agency continuously tracks the arrest-free rate of supervised defendants. Additionally, assessments for behavioral health needs, placement of eligible defendants into appropriate risk mitigation programs, resource connections, and responses to defendant misconduct are continually monitored.

### Strategic Objective 1.1: Leverage risk assessment data to provide appropriate supervision and services (Risk-Based Services)

PSA conducts a risk assessment to determine each defendant's risk of pretrial misconduct. The instrument used for defendants awaiting trial in DC Superior Court was developed specifically for the adult defendant population within Washington, DC and, during the FY 2022–2026 strategic planning period, PSA revalidated that risk assessment tool to ensure its predictive validity. During that time, PSA also developed and validated a new instrument for defendants awaiting trial in US District Court. The new instrument mirrors a model developed by the federal judiciary to ensure synchronization of PSA's efforts with those of other federal judicial districts nationwide. Use of both risk assessment instruments enhances the agency's ability to provide a comprehensive summary to the court of each defendant's criminal history, demographic information, and recommended release conditions. Moving into the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will implement recommendations from the risk assessment revalidation to further reinforce the foundation upon which pretrial decisions are based.

Risk assessment provides the basis for developing pretrial services reports (PSRs). To support judicial decisions, the agency provides a PSR to the court, which contains appropriate recommendations grounded in defendant risk. The PSR supplies information judges consider in determining whether and under what conditions a defendant can be released into the community. PSA recommends appropriate release conditions consistent with reasonably assuring community safety and return to court. A PSR is deemed "complete" when it contains defendant interview responses (or documented refusal thereof), lock-up drug test results, criminal history, and release condition recommendations based on the risk assessment, prior to the case being called in court. During the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will update its PSR to better inform judges and enhance its utility for making judicial decisions.

To effectively manage individuals on pretrial release and enhance public safety, PSA focuses supervision resources on defendants most at risk of violating their release conditions and uses graduated levels of supervision and appropriate risk mitigation approaches to promote compliance. Defendants released on personal recognizance without PSA supervision while awaiting trial receive only notification/reminders of their court dates. Defendants placed under pretrial supervision while awaiting trial are supervised



according to their assessed risk level. Lower and medium risk defendants require more direct contact with PSA, which may include a combination of telephone, virtual, and in-person supervision meetings with a PSO. Higher risk defendants are subject to more frequent and primarily in-person contact with assigned PSOs. If deemed necessary, defendants may also be monitored electronically using GPS technology.

In addition, PSA's supervision strategy includes imposing swift and consistent responses for non-compliance with release conditions and providing appropriate incentives for defendants who consistently comply. Graduated sanctions are used to modify non-compliant defendant behaviors that may be precursors to criminal activity and/or failure to appear for court. Examples of such behaviors include failing to provide current contact information or report for supervision meetings. Responding promptly to non-compliance is directly related to achieving the agency's mission. When infractions and/or violations of conditions are detected, PSA uses all available administrative sanctions, informs the court of those infractions and, when warranted, seeks judicial sanctions, including revocation of release. PSA also reinforces compliant behavior by harnessing the power of incentives to encourage positive changes in defendant behavior. Common incentives include reduction in the method and/or frequency of contacts required and reduction in the frequency of drug testing. PSA will continue evaluating its strategies throughout the FY 2026–2030 planning period, making adjustments as needed.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Implement risk assessment revalidation recommendations.
2. Provide timely drug test results to judges and PSOs to inform appropriate defendant supervision.
3. Revise PSR to enhance utility for judges.
4. Utilize appropriate risk-based approaches throughout the supervision period.
5. Submit timely, detailed, and accurate court reports to request judicial action, as appropriate.
6. Conduct timely loss of contact investigations to avoid lapses in supervision.

### Strategic Objective 1.2: Reduce the risk of pretrial misconduct by employing appropriate risk mitigation services (Assessment-Driven Risk Mitigation)

An effective approach for minimizing rearrests during the pretrial period is addressing underlying issues, such as substance use disorder and mental health needs, using appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Following a comprehensive assessment, PSA provides—either through contracted services or referral—suitable risk mitigation services to address defendant stabilization needs and enhance supervision compliance.

Addressing substance use and/or mental health disorders is provided as a component of, and never as a substitute for, robust supervision protocols. Just as all defendants are assigned to supervision levels



based on risk, defendants with behavioral health needs are assigned to supervision units that provide mitigation services based on both risk and need. In addition to appropriate risk mitigation, defendants placed in these units have release conditions to support compliance, including drug testing, regular supervision contact, and participation in programs aimed at mitigating risk.

In addition, PSA routinely partners with other criminal justice agencies, government and non-profit entities, and community organizations to enhance the agency's ability to provide effective risk mitigation services, enforce accountability, and develop opportunities to address defendant needs while under pretrial supervision. These engagements with external stakeholders bolster PSA's ability to ensure defendants remain arrest-free and return to court as scheduled. During the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will continue to maintain these partnerships and seek opportunities for new collaborations.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Ensure timely assessment and connection to behavioral health services to reduce risk of rearrest.
2. Maintain effective partnerships with providers of risk mitigation services.

## Strategic Goal 2: Maximize Court Appearance

To uphold the integrity of the judicial process and maintain public safety, it is critical that defendants attend all scheduled court hearings. As such, maximizing court appearance is a fundamental outcome measure for pretrial programs. National standards identify minimizing failures to appear (FTA) as a central function for pretrial services agencies, and it serves as the focus of PSA's second strategic goal.

To assess the effectiveness of PSA's strategies to maximize court appearance, the agency monitors the timeliness with which it conducts bench warrant and FTA investigations, as well as the accuracy and timeliness with which defendants are notified of upcoming court hearings. The agency measures the defendant appearance rate by determining the percentage of defendants on pretrial release who make all scheduled court appearances.

### Strategic Objective 2.1: Investigate and take appropriate action to address defendants in bench warrant status and/or who fail to appear for scheduled court hearings (Failure to Appear Investigations)

Promptly responding when defendants miss scheduled court hearings is crucial for ensuring public safety. When a defendant misses a court date, an investigation is conducted to determine the reason for a defendant's FTA. The pertinent information is documented, and the court is expeditiously informed of the findings. During FY 2025, PSA established a team dedicated to reengaging defendants who either lost contact with supervision or are subject to bench warrants. Through comprehensive investigative



outreach—including coordination with criminal justice agencies, family members, and community service organizations—the team works to resolve outstanding warrants and restore supervision and compliance. During the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will continue to expand efforts to minimize FTAs.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Conduct timely bench warrant/FTA investigations and take actions to re-establish contact.

### Strategic Objective 2.2: Provide defendants with timely and effective court appearance reminders (Court Appearance Notifications)

To minimize failures to appear, PSA notifies defendants of upcoming court dates, utilizing automated text messages and email notifications as well as letters mailed to the defendant’s residence. During the initial contact, defendants are asked to provide their primary method of contact for court date notifications. An automatic hierarchy is then generated for notifications to be sent based on the defendant’s primary method of contact. Because data suggest that text messages are the most effective in yielding the highest court appearance rates, PSA encourages the use of this method when possible. Additionally, pretrial supervision officers customarily verify and remind defendants of upcoming court dates during all office visits and other contacts. During the FY 2026–2030 strategic period, PSA will enhance court date notices, simplifying them to ensure they are more easily understood by defendants.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Verify next court date during each defendant supervision contact.
2. Enhance court date reminder notices.
3. Provide accurate and timely court date reminder notices.

## **Management Objective 1: Efficient Agency Administration**

PSA continuously strives for excellence and greater efficiency by optimizing the use of resources to achieve organizational goals. By streamlining processes, reducing administrative costs, strengthening internal controls, and making operational decisions based on sound data and information, PSA fosters a culture that promotes accountability and transparency to advance the mission of the agency.



### Management Sub-Objective 1.1: Ensure that PSA's business decisions and operations are based on appropriate and accurate data and information (Data-Driven Operations)

PSA aims to sustain a data-driven culture in which decisions at all levels are made using reliable information. Throughout the FY 2026–2030 planning period, the agency intends to set and enforce priorities for managing and using data as a strategic asset, beginning with enhancing and modernizing its client management system (CMS). Strengthening core capabilities and building the data foundation will allow PSA to advance in evidence-building activities that support operational decisions.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Maintain a durable data infrastructure to support decision making.
2. Maintain secure, state-of-the-art client and records management systems.

### Management Sub-Objective 1.2: Engage in continuous evaluation and improvement of PSA programs and services (Continuous Evaluation and Improvement)

Continuous evaluation and improvement refers to the systematic, ongoing process of assessing, monitoring, and refining PSA programs, services, and practices. This process involves regular monitoring, data collection, and analysis of inputs and procedures to ensure programs and services deliver desired outcomes. To this end, PSA routinely examines and conducts internal briefings on challenging supervision cases with agency leadership, operations staff, and representatives from other agency components. These briefings often result in action items, which are used to resolve identified directive or process gaps and improve operations. Moving into the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will continue to enhance these briefings and apply lessons learned, as appropriate. Additionally, PSA will monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of services offered by the agency's management and administration offices to ensure ample support for the agency's operations offices.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Conduct routine post-incident debriefings (e.g., sentinel event reviews).
2. Engage in proactive strategic, budget, procurement, facilities, and human capital planning.
3. Routinely examine key performance indicators for all agency components.

### Management Sub-Objective 1.3: Ensure transparent communication within and outside the PSA enterprise (Transparent Communication)

Effective communication both within and outside an organization is critical for operational success and building strong partnerships. Effective internal communication may result in improved employee



engagement, increased productivity, and an overall stronger culture. It fosters transparency and trust, facilitates knowledge sharing, and enhances collaboration. During the FY 2022–2026 planning period, PSA created the foundation for modernizing the agency’s brand and streamlining both internal and external communications. This work will continue into the FY 2026–2030 period.

Partnerships with external stakeholders offer numerous benefits, including shared knowledge and resources, expanded reach and awareness, and opportunities for mutual support. By effectively communicating PSA’s brand with partners, the agency may gain advantages working in the community. During the FY 2026–2030 planning period, PSA will continue to expand its presence at community engagement events, maintain mutually beneficial partnerships with current stakeholders, and seek opportunities for new collaborations.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Promote clear and transparent internal and external communication.
2. Establish and sustain effective partnerships with law enforcement, public safety, and community affiliates.
3. Provide timely responses to court orders/requests for information.
4. Provide timely and accurate drug test results to partners.



# Appendix A: PSA's Strategic Framework



## PSA 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan

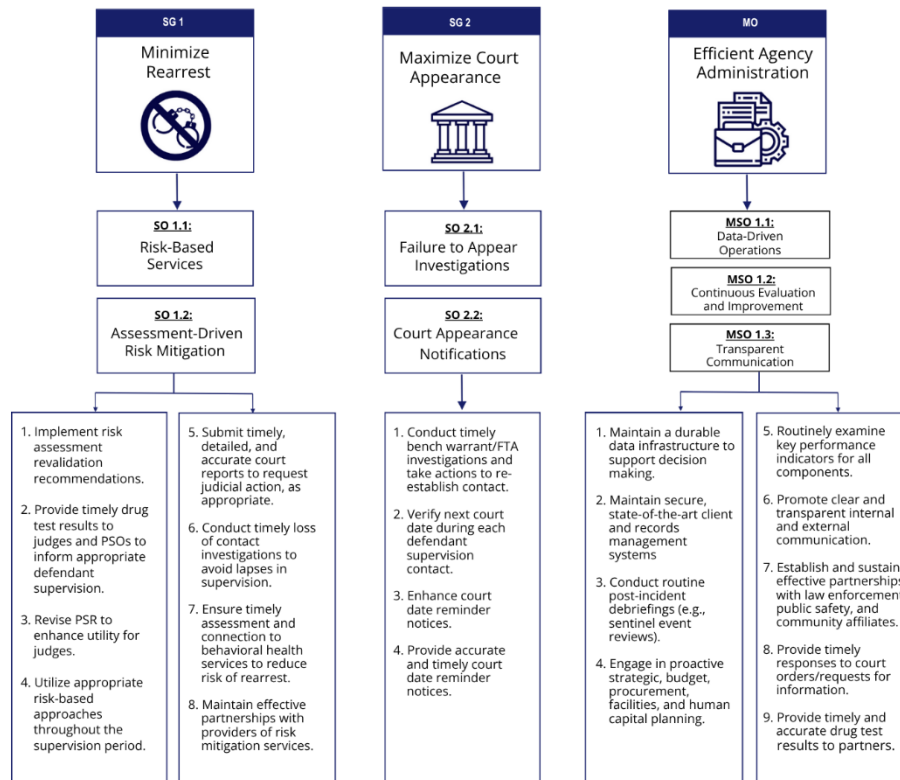
### Mission

To promote pretrial justice and enhance community safety in the Nation's Capital.

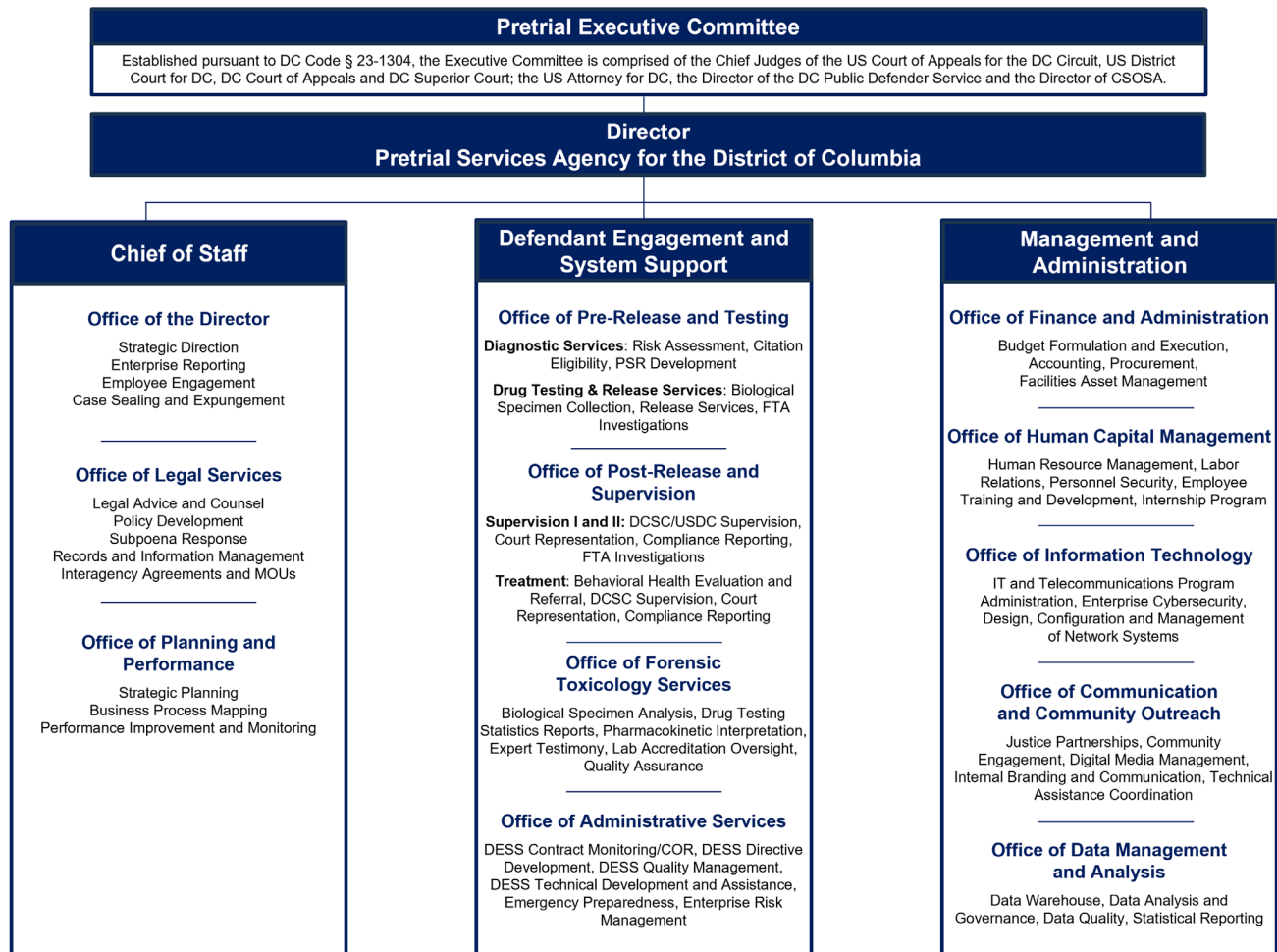
### Strategic Goals & Management Objective

### Strategic Objectives & Management Sub-Objectives

### Implementation Strategies



# Appendix B: PSA's Organizational Structure



**PSA** Pretrial Services Agency  
for the District of Columbia  
Promoting Pretrial Justice and Enhancing Community Safety



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