



Arrest-Free Rates for Pretrial Defendants under Supervision 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. 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%.

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 2019, a total of 18,362 defendants were released to PSA. Of this number, 2,344 defendants were arrested for an offense within DC while awaiting trial, leaving an arrest-free rate of 87%. When PSA's arrest-free rate is expanded to include the DC Metropolitan area (DC, Maryland and Virginia), the rate remains relatively stable at around 87%. Expanding the analysis nationally, the arrest-free rate remains consistent at 88%. 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
2015	18,981	2,091	89%	2,481	87%	2,516	87%
2016	19,975	2,500	88%	2,965	85%	2,990	85%
2017	21,529	3,120	86%	3,313	85%	3,320	85%
2018	21,226	2,740	87%	2,828	87%	2,830	87%
2019	18,362	2,344	87%	2,398	87%	2,402	87%

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.