



***PSA Releases its FY 2013-14 Report of Findings on  
Initial Detention and Subsequent Release in the District of Columbia***

The Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA) recently completed its study of persons arrested in the District who were initially detained pursuant to one of the D.C. preventive detention statutes.

For cases processed through the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the study found that 58% of persons initially detained in FY13 were subsequently released prior to case disposition – **71% of those were released within seven days of their initial detention**. For FY14, 56% were released prior to case disposition, with **66% being released within seven days of their initial detention**.

Recent studies have shown what tremendously negative impacts even brief periods of incarceration can have on the arrestees, their families, and the community.

*Although most defendants admitted to jail over the course of a year are released within hours or days, rather than weeks or months, **even a short stay in jail is more than an inconvenience**. Being detained is often the beginning of a journey through the criminal justice system that can take many wrong turns. . . . These costs are also borne by their families and communities, depressing economies, contributing to increased crime, and breaking familial and social bonds. For the disproportionately high number of those who enter jails from minority communities, or who suffer from mental illness, addiction, and homelessness, time spent in jail exacerbates already difficult conditions and puts many on a cycle of incarceration from which it is extremely difficult to break free. (Emphasis added.)<sup>1</sup>*

The statistics contained within this report should compel the stakeholders in the D.C. criminal justice system to examine what changes should be made in the application of its preventive detention statutes.

PSA remains committed to fulfilling its mission of promoting pretrial justice and enhancing community safety. We will work with our criminal justice partners to ensure that even a brief period of incarceration is being used in only the most appropriate of circumstances.

The full report can be accessed at [www.pretrialservices.gov](http://www.pretrialservices.gov).

---

<sup>1</sup> *Incarceration's Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America*. Ram Subramanian, Ruth Delaney, Stephen Roberts, Nancy Fishman, Peggy McGarry. Vera Institute. 2015

Additional support for this can be found in a study conducted by the Arnold Foundation, *The Hidden Costs of Pretrial Detention*: “Detaining low- and moderate-risk defendants, even just for a few days, is strongly correlated with higher rates of new criminal activity both during the pretrial period and years after case disposition; as length of pretrial detention increases up to 30 days, recidivism rates for low- and moderate-risk defendants also increases significantly.” [http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LJAF\\_Report\\_hidden-costs\\_FNL.pdf](http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LJAF_Report_hidden-costs_FNL.pdf).