



San Francisco
Pretrial Diversion Project

SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL IS AN INDISPENSABLE PILLAR

San Francisco Pretrial is an indispensable pillar among the network of agencies and organizations improving public safety in San Francisco. Our work increases equity and justice within the criminal legal system and aids in the positive transformation of our community. We continue to meet all contractual requirements and maintain compliance with regulations. San Francisco Pretrial is growing as a national leader in bail and pretrial reform.

San Francisco Pretrial supports the court process by working with both justice system partners and our community members going through the pretrial process. **We help our clients meet more immediate obligations, like court appearances, while providing resources like housing support and stabilization and connections to physical and behavioral healthcare that will help them flourish in the longer term.** San Francisco Pretrial supports clients in taking accountability for past actions and for their futures. We help them build a stable foundation enabling them to both reintegrate into and positively contribute to their communities.

“ Our bottom line is community safety and good use of public resources. San Francisco Pretrial has delivered in both of these areas for 48 years, keeping our communities safe and using our money effectively. I look forward to their results for many years to come.”

—ROMA GUY, TAXPAYERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL IS...



A PUBLIC SAFETY
SOLUTION

A COST-EFFECTIVE
AND TRUSTED PARTNER



“

Going through this experience was a huge wake up call and gave me the opportunity to rethink. [Working with San Francisco Pretrial, I was able to] move forward in peace so I'm not angry and I can take accountability.”

—KLAUS, CLIENT

San Francisco Pretrial is accredited by the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies, a rigorous year-long accreditation demanding exceptional transparency in operations, policies, procedures, and data management. This accreditation positions San Francisco Pretrial at the pinnacle of professional and ethical standards, setting a benchmark for pretrial services nationwide.



SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL IS A

PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTION

Over the decades of San Francisco Pretrial's work, our outcome data has been top in the field. Now, in a moment of challenging conditions and historically high caseloads, **San Francisco Pretrial's safety outcome data has remained strong, exceeding outcomes in other California pretrial programs as well as established programs around the country.**

As our contract requires, San Francisco Pretrial serves every person the courts refer to us, and we are dedicated to helping our clients overcome numerous structural barriers. We have a hands-on approach where we don't just refer our clients to services, we accompany them—even meet them at their house, hotel, or tent—and ensure they get to their appointments.

“The San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project plays an important role in our city's criminal justice system by providing a wide range of services to justice-involved people. Our offices work together closely to address the root causes of recidivism and to offer alternatives to incarceration.” —SHERIFF PAUL MIYAMOTO

San Francisco jails are at their highest capacity since before COVID, and over 75% of people in San Francisco jails struggle with a behavioral health challenge.¹ Research shows that connecting people to behavioral health services reduces their likelihood of reincarceration.² **San Francisco Pretrial made 1,500 referrals to therapeutic resources for our clients in the last year, helping to reduce the likelihood of continued system involvement. These referrals include mental health, substance use, and other critical human services.**

“When I was released to Pretrial after the arrest, I finally realized after more than a decade, that there were still people who cared for people like me, that my life was still loved and worth living.” —Richard, client

93%

SF PRETRIAL SAFETY RATE

Measured by no new charges for clients while in program Jan–Dec 2023



OTHER PRETRIAL LOCALE SAFETY RATES



3 IN 4

People in SF jails have a behavioral health challenge



1500

REFERRALS

Made by San Francisco Pretrial to therapeutic resources

We connect people to:



HOUSING



MENTAL HEALTH
& MEDICAL CARE



DRUG
TREATMENT



SUPPORT
GROUPS



COMMUNITY
SUPPORT

¹ safetyandjusticechallenge.org/our-network/city-county-san-francisco-ca/

² vera.org/news/why-punishing-people-in-jail-and-prison-isnt-working

³ courts.ca.gov/documents/Pretrial-Pilot-Program_Final-Report.pdf

⁴ sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Justice%20Services/Probation/Documents/Planning%2C%20Implementation%20and%20Evaluation/Research%20and%20Reports/Public%20Reports/2021-Sonoma-County-Pretrial-Program-Annual-Report-Final-20220516.pdf

⁵ sccgov.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Legifile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=16196&MediaPosition=&ID=119721&CssClass=

⁶ psa.gov/sites/default/files/FY%202023%20Performance%20Outcomes_0.pdf

⁷ Data shared by Allegheny County Pretrial Services at NAPSA Conference in 2023

Despite the structural barriers many of our clients are facing, such as deep criminal legal system involvement, housing instability, addiction, and behavioral health issues, we find they are committed to fulfilling their court obligations and, with our support, are able to successfully fulfill—if not exceed—these expectations.

Our clients attended over 19,000 court dates Jan 2023–May 2024, over 96% of all scheduled dates. From July–Dec 2023, 79% of our clients attended their court dates without receiving any bench warrants (appearance rate). While San Francisco Pretrial serves an especially high number of high-risk and high-needs clients for longer than many other pretrial programs, **our appearance rates exceed those in Sonoma County⁴, Santa Clara County⁵ and the average of CA pretrial pilot programs.³**

In studies done across the country and locally, the most common reasons people miss a court appearance relate to **homelessness** and **instability**, **transportation** (affording it, navigating it and coordinating it), and **time off work** or **childcare duties**.⁸ In New York City research shows that 40% of people who miss a court appearance appear voluntarily within 30 days.⁹ **San Francisco Pretrial works with our clients to overcome these barriers and ensure our clients get back to court if they do miss a court date.**

From Jan 2023 to May 2024, SF Pretrial clients had:

19,837 SCHEDULED COURT DATES
SF PRETRIAL CLIENTS ATTENDED **>19,000**



79% APPEARANCE RATE

Measured by clients who appeared for court dates and were not subject to any bench warrants while in program from July–Dec 2023.

COMPARISONS: 69% Average of CA Pretrial Programs³ • **74%** Sonoma County, CA⁴ • **62%** Santa Clara County, CA⁵ • **87%** Washington, DC (federal agency)⁶ • **87%** New York City, NY¹⁰

“ I started to realize how unmanageable and insane my life was... San Francisco Pretrial has been essential for consistency [and has] helped me get supportive housing. I've gone back to work, and I've got a job in a place that has a work environment that I'm really excited about.”

—VICTOR, CLIENT

Common reasons for missed court dates:

**HOMELESSNESS AND INSTABILITY • TRANSPORTATION ISSUES
TIME OFF WORK • CHILDCARE DUTIES**

A recent study found that “housing was the most significant predictor of missing a court appearance and individuals with unstable housing were twice as likely to miss a court appearance compared to individuals with stable housing.”¹¹

SF PRETRIAL CLIENTS ARE: **35-40% UNHOUSED**

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRETRIAL RELEASE

One in three adults in the U.S. has been arrested.¹² People in pretrial have not yet been convicted of any wrongdoing, yet pretrial detention has lasting and long-term social and financial impacts. Jail conditions are notoriously poor, are traumatic, create vulnerability to abuse, and exacerbate physical and mental health conditions. For the majority of the pretrial population, **detention increases the likelihood of future arrests, limits job and housing prospects, and reduces access to life-saving behavioral health services, adversely impacting public safety.**^{13,14}

If held in pretrial detention, people are:

- **MORE ARRESTS:** 9.7% MORE LIKELY to be charged with a new misdemeanor within 18 months¹⁵
- **LESS EMPLOYMENT:** 12% LESS LIKELY to be employed 3 years after their bail hearing¹⁵
- **MORE CONVICTIONS:** 14% MORE LIKELY to plead guilty and 18% MORE LIKELY to be convicted¹⁵

Studies across the U.S. have found no negative public safety impacts connected to reducing pretrial detention. For example, a study in Texas shows that when people are released pretrial there is a 32% reduction in new felony charges within 18 months.¹⁵

⁸ prisonpolicy.org/blog/2023/08/15/fta/

⁹ nycja.org/assets/downloads/AR-2020.Final.pdf

¹⁰ criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Supervised-Release_Annual-2020-Scorecard.pdf

¹¹ rdaconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/RDA-Court-Appearances_Policy-Brief_20210930_STC-REV.pdf

¹² dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/directives/2013-02

¹³ nicic.gov/resources/nic-library/all-library-items/hidden-costs-pretrial-detention

¹⁴ journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/695285?journalCode=jle

¹⁵ socialpolicylab.org/mass-incarceration



SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL IS A

COST-EFFECTIVE AND TRUSTED PARTNER

Embedded in San Francisco for 48 years, San Francisco Pretrial has built over 200 lasting partnerships with community organizations and agencies, from the Superior Court, District Attorney's office and Sheriff's Office to Latino Task Force, HealthRight 360, Larkin Street, and NA/AA.

Our approach is based on trust, relationship-building, and community involvement. **We meet clients where they're at and, if a resource isn't readily available, our staff will go above and beyond to find it to help our client's get back on track.** Many of our staff have lived experience within the communities we serve and the criminal legal system. They care deeply about our clients, our city, and the safety of all of our families and loved ones. With research from Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research Collaborative, we know that hiring people with personal experiences with the criminal legal system is a best practice for pretrial work and improves outcomes.^{16,17} We hire strategically, invest deeply, and prioritize training and internal advancement. Our clients reap the benefits of community-connected staffing and long-term staff retention, which has been maintained at the highest level since San Francisco Pretrial's growth spurt.

By keeping people out of detention and accessing support in community, San Francisco Pretrial reduces jail overpopulation which, in turn, increases safety for incarcerated populations and reduces strain on city budgets. Through partnership with San Francisco Pretrial, San Francisco is showing the country another way forward to meet the needs of our community members and enhance long-term public safety.

SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL SERVES:

5,000 CLIENTS EVERY YEAR
AVERAGE ACTIVE CLIENTS EACH DAY **1,700**

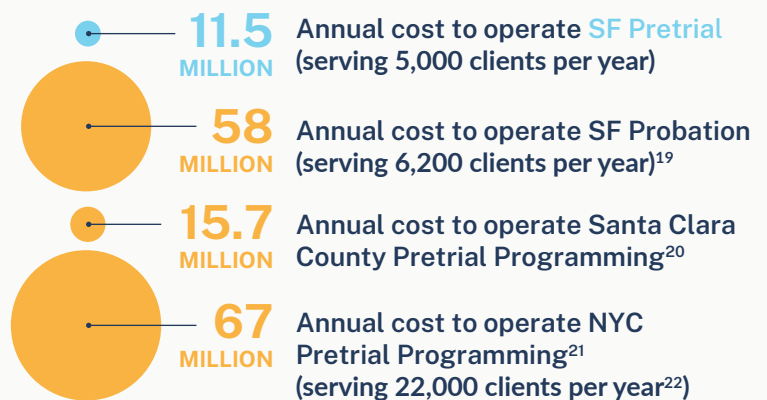
“ San Francisco Pretrial supports clients in meeting their individual needs and taking accountability for the impact they may have caused. They are a true partner of the Bar Association of San Francisco's Criminal Justice Task Force in leading criminal justice solutions for San Francisco.”

—YOLANDA JACKSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / GENERAL COUNSEL,
THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO



It is costly to incarcerate people. It costs an estimated \$250 per day to incarcerate an individual in San Francisco city and county jails¹⁸ and, in 2023 San Francisco Pretrial saved San Francisco 630,394 days of unnecessary and costly confinement.

Despite our comprehensive approach, San Francisco Pretrial remains relatively lower cost compared to other agencies operating community supervision and reentry programs:



In addition to our city funding, San Francisco Pretrial has secured over \$8 million over the past three years in additional foundation, individual, state, and federal funds ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability and allowing us to offer enhanced and diversified services.

16 advancingpretrial.org/story/i-walked-this-road-before/

17 samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/brss_tac/peer-support-2017.pdf

18 sfbos.org/sites/default/files/BLA.Costs%26OperationsatCountyJail%234101719.pdf

19 sf.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/Adult%20Probation_%20Budget%20Submission%20FY22%20and%20FY23.pdf

20 files.santaclearcounty.gov/migrated/fy-22-23-adopted-budget.pdf

21 bloomberg.com/news/features/2023-08-30/nyc-s-cash-bail-reform-program-is-working-but-caseworkers-need-help

22 criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/press-release/mocj-2023-highlights/