



SAN FRANCISCO PRETRIAL DIVERSION PROJECT

Statement Regarding San Francisco's Recent PSA Validation - 7/22/21

San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project's (SF Pretrial) work is centered on transparency, accountability and a commitment to public safety and high quality services. Unfortunately, a recent validation study of the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) has been wrongfully equated with an assessment of SF Pretrial's performance.

The validation study, completed by California Policy Lab (CPL), is not intended to evaluate SF Pretrial's programs. The study's sample is composed of pretrial defendants who were released from custody through a number of different mechanisms, including bail.

Background

The PSA was implemented by San Francisco's justice system partners in 2016 and is used by the San Francisco Superior Court to guide determinations regarding pretrial release. The PSA is a research-based tool, designed to indicate someone's likelihood of success if released during the pretrial phase.

As required by state law, San Francisco's criminal justice partners brought in researchers to complete a validation study on the PSA. The validation study's purpose is to measure how accurately the PSA estimates the likelihood of success for pretrial individuals and whether it contains algorithmic bias. This evaluation allows us to understand whether the PSA is performing at a high level and creates bias based on race and sex. A local PSA Work Group, including the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney, Public Defender, Adult Probation, SF Bar Association, Police Department, SF Pretrial and Superior Court, meets quarterly to discuss the PSA and its related outcomes.

The validation was led by UC Berkeley's California Policy Lab and was released on June 30th. It was completed with quantitative rigor and accurately defines the impact of the PSA on San Francisco's pretrial system.

CPL Validation Study vs Pretrial Performance Measurements

The CPL validation study captures the entire pretrial population, including individuals released through a number of mechanisms, including bail, promise to appear, alternate case resolutions and SF Pretrial's supervision programs. Also, in excess of 5,000 individuals charged with lower level misdemeanors that were cited or diverted prior to arraignment were largely not included in the PSA validation study.

Best Practices for Pretrial Reporting

SF Pretrial's data reporting methods are determined in accordance with the National Institute of Corrections *Measuring What Matters* publication, which is the foremost reference on pretrial performance metrics. Its definitions for safety and appearance rates are as follows:

- *Safety rate: The percentage of released defendants who are not charged (as opposed to booked) with a new criminal offense pending case disposition.*
- *Appearance rate: The percentage of released defendants who make all scheduled court appearances pending case disposition.*

Our reporting methods and outcomes were evaluated during SF Pretrial's accreditation, which was completed by the National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies in 2021, the only nationally recognized accreditor in the pretrial field. The accreditation process involved an exhaustive review of our policies and procedures, including our performance measurement criteria, methods and outcomes.

SF Pretrial's lifetime safety and appearance rates, which measure success based on the entire duration of an individual's time under pretrial supervision, are included in the table below. This data was compiled by the California Policy Lab. As decided by the collaborative partners and based on standard practice, the PSA Work Group also uses quarterly rates to assess ongoing progress for quarterly meetings.

We stand by our outcomes and are committed to evidence-based practices, soliciting constructive feedback and publishing our performance outcomes in a wide and accessible manner. In collaboration with our criminal justice and research partners, we will continue to evaluate our work in the interests of public safety, client success and justice reform. If you have any questions, please reach out to David Mauroff, CEO of the San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project: davidm@sfpreatrial.org.

Measure	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Appearance Rate	64%	62%	62%	65%	76%
Safety Rate	88%	86%	81%	81%	90%
Safety Rate (Violent Charges)	96%	96%	92%	95%	95%