

Pretrial Services Annual Report



FY 2023

Court Administration

Seventh Judicial Circuit

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Volusia County Pretrial Services

Volusia County Pretrial Services provided accurate, unbiased information to judges concerning arrestees, monitored those placed under pretrial supervision, and screened specimens submitted to urinalysis laboratories.

Pretrial Services was re-accredited on June 28, 2023, by the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC). The accreditation process involves an independent audit by FCAC assessors of the program's compliance with approximately 70 standards over a three-year period. Receiving and maintaining accreditation signifies the program is achieving the highest level of professionalism and setting the standard for the profession. The program has maintained accreditation for more than fifteen years and was awarded Excelsior status in 2023. Excelsior recognition is awarded to Florida criminal justice agencies which have demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment to the Florida accreditation process. Excelsior agencies must have been awarded five successful accreditation cycles by the Commission.



Each of the units within Volusia County Pretrial Services performs specialized functions, all vital to a successful and comprehensive program. As such, each unit has specific goals. Performance highlights of the Drug Screening Laboratories, Assessment, and Supervision units are as follows.

Drug Screening Laboratories



The primary goal of the laboratories is to provide screening services in a professional manner to the court, court programs, and community-based programs, while applying best practices for collection and screening.

In accordance with best practices, the laboratories retain the services of an independent testing laboratory. This resource enables the laboratories to send urine specimens for additional testing to confirm screening results and test for additional substances of abuse.

The Volusia County laboratories will continue to place emphasis on meeting industry standards and provide educational training to community partners. The laboratories will continue to comply with State of Florida Department of Health regulations. In FY2023, the drug screening laboratories achieved a satisfactory inspection rating from the State of Florida Department of Health, the highest rating available, and increased the number of Certified Pretrial Services Professional lab staff.

Drug Screening Laboratory Goals for 2024

- Achieve a satisfactory inspection rating from the State of Florida Department of Health.
- Increase or maintain the number of lab staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.
- Cross-train lab staff in other pretrial departments.

By the Numbers

FY2022	FY2023	Testing
191,589	171,305	Individual screens run
4,265	4,343	Individual screens run with positive results
20,553	18,949	Specimens screened
3,747	3,678	Specimens with positive results

Assessment

On a daily basis, including weekends and holidays, Pretrial Assessment diligently reviews defendant criminal histories, interviews defendants, and contacts alleged victims of domestic violence. This research is compiled to create a comprehensive report utilized by the First Appearance judge to make release decisions. During the 2023 fiscal year, 14,540 individuals attended First Appearance.

On January 4, 2016, Volusia County Pretrial Services implemented the Public Safety Assessment (PSA), a nationally validated pretrial risk instrument created by Arnold Ventures. The PSA provides the judiciary with an unbiased and scientifically validated method of determining a defendant’s likelihood to commit new law violations and fail to appear for scheduled court events prior to case disposition. Additionally, the PSA is validated annually.

Additionally, the assessment unit coordinates with the jail regarding the release of individuals who are ordered to be monitored by Global Positioning Systems (GPS). This assures the GPS equipment is properly installed in a timely manner before a defendant is released from custody.



Assessment Goals for 2024

- Continue to explore remote work options, ensuring that operations can continue during unexpected events.
- Increase or maintain the number of assessment staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.

By the Numbers

FY2022	FY2023	Testing
2,704	2,642	Cases ordered to Pretrial Supervision at First Appearance
18%	18%	Percent of cases released to Pretrial Supervision at First Appearance
12,502	11,823	Assessments completed

Supervision

Pretrial Supervision monitors defendants released into the community while awaiting disposition of their criminal cases. Supervision consists of monitoring compliance with court ordered conditions of release, ensuring appearances at scheduled court proceedings, and promoting a lawful lifestyle. The supervision unit monitored 3,629 cases in fiscal year 2023, resulting in a court appearance rate of 96%.



Periodically, judges request that the supervision unit attempt to locate a defendant who has failed to appear for a scheduled court date. During fiscal year 2023, eleven investigations were conducted, and three defendants were successfully located and rescheduled for court. This avoids the costs associated with the service of a warrant.

All Pretrial Services units place an emphasis on continuing education. During this fiscal year, each pretrial employee completed a minimum of 40 hours of training, resulting in over 1,400 hours of training department wide. In FY2023, Pretrial Services maintained adherence to FCAC accreditation standards and increased the number of staff who achieved Certified Pretrial Services Professional status.

Supervision Goals for FY2024

- Maintain compliance with agency accreditation standards through the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission.
- Increase or maintain the number of supervision staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.
- Increase the number of FTA investigations.

By the Numbers

FY2022		FY2023		Supervision
2,704		2,642		New cases received at First Appearance
670		300		New cases received after First Appearance
3,374		2,942		Cases closed
2,680	77%	2,338	80%	Cases closed successfully
3,224	96%	2,817	96%	Cases closed without Failing to Appear
3,062	91%	2,062	91%	Cases closed without Failing to Comply
3,142	93%	2,135	93%	Cases closed without a New Arrest

Program Achievements and Projects

- Four employees attended the 2023 National Association of Pretrial Services Conference.
- New employees were cross trained in various pretrial services disciplines.
- Staff participated in national and local pretrial related boards and committees.
- Staff assisted with County Court mediation scheduling.
- Staff helped identify potential Drug Court candidates.
- The program achieved Excelsior status through FCAC.
- The program received a proclamation from Volusia County acknowledging the agency's success and commitment to excellence.
- A total of 16 employees have achieved or maintained certification, an increase from last year.
- PSA enhancements continue to be implemented, increasing functionality.
- FTA investigations did not increase as planned (50 in 2022 and 11 in 2023) a decline of approximately 78%.

The Volusia County Pretrial Services statistical summary below captures fiscal year data from October 1 through September 30.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY & DATA FOR PRETRIAL SERVICES

6 YEAR COMPARISON	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NUMBER OF DEFENDANTS AT FIRST APPEARANCE	19,511	18,351	15,586	15,669	15,465	14,540
NUMBER OF RELEASES TO PRETRIAL	4,431	4,707	3,998	3,336	3,097	2,989
PRETRIAL SERVICES CASES CLOSED	4,555	4,733	3,838	3,603	3,374	2,942
Unsuccessful	1,232	1,377	997	829	694	604
Successful	3,323	3,356	2,841	2,774	2,680	2,338
Appeared in court	4,432	4,525	3,623	3,408	3,224	2,817
Appearance Rate	97%	96%	94%	95%	96%	96%
No New Arrests	4,240	4,366	3,409	3,252	3,142	2,135
No New Arrests Rate	93%	92%	89%	90%	93%	93%
Complied with Program	3,767	3,356	3,485	3,346	3,062	2,062
Compliance Rate	83%	83%	91%	93%	91%	91%