



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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Pilot program aims to improve public safety, protect rights, and reduce jail costs

Supreme Court working with five courts to test pretrial assessment tool

LANSING, MI, February 14, 2019 – The Michigan Supreme Court has launched a pretrial pilot program aimed at protecting rights, improving public safety, and saving local resources. Launched in five district courts, the program involves piloting a pretrial risk assessment tool designed to help judges make bond decisions by using statistically validated predictors of pretrial risk.

“No Michigan residents should be sitting in jail just because they can’t afford to pay their bail,” said Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack. “Our goal is to help judges make bond decisions that protect rights, enhance public safety, strengthen communities, and save money.”

The pretrial pilot program addresses a problem that is hurting Michigan families and costing local jurisdictions resources. For example:

- The average cost to detain a pretrial defendant is nearly \$75 a day, costing taxpayers nationwide nearly **\$14 billion a year**.
- More than half of Michigan’s 15,000 jail inmates were pretrial defendants, and based on national data, three-quarters of the pretrial detained population are charged with nonviolent offenses.
- Nonviolent offenders take up jail space that could have been used to hold violent or high risk offenders who are under sentence.
- In addition to the risk of losing employment, housing, and child care arrangements, a pretrial detainee is over four times more likely to be sentenced to jail.
- Jailed pretrial defendants are 25 percent more likely to plead guilty than individuals released on bail; 22 percent more likely to fail to appear in court once they are released; and 17 percent more likely to commit new crimes than individuals released within 24 hours of their arrest.
- Jailed pretrial defendants also face longer sentences if they are convicted.

The following courts are included in the pilot program:

- 31st District Court in Hamtramck (Chief Judge Alexis Krot)
- 41B District Court in Clinton Township (Chief Judge Carrie Fuca)
- Isabella County Trial Court in Mt. Pleasant (Chief Judge Eric Janes)
- 67th District Court in Flint (Chief Judge Richard Yuille)
- 94th District Court in Escanaba (Chief Judge Steven Parks)

The State Court Administrative Office (administrative arm of the Michigan Supreme Court) is providing implementation assistance to the pilot sites while the Crime and Justice Institute is providing technical assistance regarding data collection.