

Pretrial Services Program—PTS* * * *

Implemented May 2018 with technical assistance from the State of Montana Supreme Court (OCA) and funded by a grant from OCA and the 2017 County Operations Levy

Why

To maximize release from the Detention Center, court appearance, and public safety.

Cost

The 2021 Budget allocates \$354,886 to the Program.

Definition

“Pre-trial” refers to the period of time between an arrest and the court date. A person is considered innocent of their crime during the pre-trial phase.

The Process

1. An individual is arrested.
2. The individual (defendant) is booked into the Detention Center.
3. A Public Safety Assessment tool is created for the Court to use in determining bond conditions.
4. The Court may assign a defendant to PTS as their condition of bond.
5. Once assigned to PTS, a Pretrial Officer ensures the defendant receives text-reminders for all court dates and other court-related appointments. Officers also connect defendants with resources including substance use disorder and mental health evaluations and treatment, vocational services, and housing assistance to help ensure the defendants make all scheduled court appearances and are not charged with a new offense during the pretrial stage.

Successes

In Calendar-Year 2019, 623 defendants had a public safety assessment completed and were released to PTS. 89.5% attended all court appearances. 78.5% had no new arrest.