Understanding North Carolina Pretrial Supervision & Support Services

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In a new project, the UNC School of Government Criminal Justice Innovation Lab (the Lab) is partnering with the North Carolina Pretrial Association (NCPA) to learn more about North Carolina pretrial supervision and support services and lay a foundation for future research on the impact of those services.
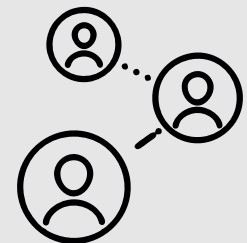
A Foundation to Evaluate Impact

Pretrial services programs aim to improve pretrial outcomes while promoting public safety, making court processes more efficient, and reducing unnecessary pretrial incarceration. Programs provide a range of services, including electronic monitoring, check-ins with staff, and referrals to social services such as substance use treatment. However, there is little research about the impact of these programs on outcomes like new criminal activity, failure to appear in court, jail bookings, and sentence length.

To assess whether we can design a rigorous evaluation of the impact of pretrial services, we will use a survey and stakeholder interviews to gather detailed information about county-level pretrial services and, when possible, review sample jail and pretrial risk assessment data.

Understanding the Pretrial Services Landscape

In addition to the limited research, there are very few resources that provide an overview of pretrial supervision and support services in North Carolina. In May 2023, the Lab did a brief survey to provide foundational information about these services. This project expands on that work, providing more current information on pretrial services statewide.

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