



**Superior Court of California  
County of Sonoma**

Bradford DeMeo  
Presiding Judge

ACCESS, SERVICE, JUSTICE

Arlene D. Junior  
Court Executive Officer

Shelly Averill  
Assistant Presiding Judge

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**For Immediate Release**

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

*On July 1, 2020, the Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma, will begin implementing its new Pretrial Pilot Program in partnership with the Sonoma County Probation Department.*

*“This pilot program is the latest evolution of a pretrial release program that was pioneered by Sonoma County Superior Court over twenty years ago,” said Presiding Judge Brad DeMeo. “Giving the judicial officers evidence-based tools, which are backed by real world research, brings the pretrial release program into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”*

*In August 2019, the Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma, was awarded a grant from the Judicial Council of California to expand and strengthen its Pretrial Program. The program will widen options and enhance supervision of people that get released on pretrial.*

*The goals of the Pretrial Program are to:*

- 1. increase the use of safe and efficient pre-arraignment and pretrial release;*
- 2. implement the least restrictive interventions and monitoring practices necessary to ensure public safety and reduce failures to appear;*
- 3. adopt a validated, transparent pretrial risk assessment tool;*
- 4. assess and reduce bias in the pretrial system; and*
- 5. build stronger collaboration and data exchange among the justice partners.*

*Pretrial Program services programs provide an opportunity to reduce jail costs, save resources, uphold public safety and individual liberty, and maximize court appearances. High rates of pretrial detention come at a high financial cost; nationally, \$14 billion are spent each year to detain people who have not been convicted of the charges against them. Evidence from past decades has shown that pretrial services programs can be more successful than money bail in ensuring public safety and court appearances.*

*Under various penal code sections, people booked for serious or violent felonies, non-bailable charges, or non-citable warrants would be ineligible for pre-arraignment release.*

*Under the current pretrial system, the first opportunity for pretrial release is at a first appearance hearing, which means people can be in jail 2-4 days waiting to be released. Pretrial detention puts people at risk of losing their jobs, falling behind in school, and losing housing and custody of their children. Through the Pretrial Program, going live on July 1, 2020, judicial officers will make pretrial release decisions within 12 hours of booking for eligible individuals booked into the jail on new charges. Research shows that among low-risk individuals held in detention for just 2-3 days were 40% more likely to commit new crimes before trial compared to low-risk defendants held no more than 24 hours.*

*“Even with the challenges of the pandemic, I am extremely pleased that the court was able to stay on track with the rolling out of the Pretrial Program—this is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all those involved,” commented Arlene Junior, the Sonoma County Superior Court’s Court Executive Officer.*

*The Judicial Council has funded the Pretrial Pilot Program through June 2021.*

**Locations:**

Hall of Justice  
600 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Empire Annex Courthouse  
3035 Cleveland Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Civil & Family Law Courthouse  
3055 Cleveland Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Juvenile Justice Center  
7425 Rancho Los Guilicos  
Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

**Phones:**

Main Information  
(707) 521-6500

Administration  
(707)521-6501