

Agency Equity Action Plan

(1) Executive summary

- **Agency Name:** Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA or Agency)
- **Mission:** The mission of PSA is to promote pretrial justice and enhance community safety. In fulfilling our mission, PSA assists judicial officers in both the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (DC Superior Court) and the United States District Court for the District of Columbia (US District Court) by providing information to support the Courts' pretrial release or detention decision. We conduct a risk assessment for every person arrested on a criminal offense who is presented in court, identify detention eligibility and formulate release recommendations, as appropriate, based upon the arrestee's demographic information, criminal history, and substance use and/or mental health information. For defendants who are placed on conditional release pending trial, we provide supervision and treatment services that reasonably assure they return to court and do not engage in criminal activity.
- **Summary of Action Plan:** While PSA's programs, benefits, and services are court-ordered and not available to the general public, the Agency still strives to advance equity. The majority of the defendant population that PSA serves is part of historically underserved communities. To advance equity, PSA has clear and explicit policies against discrimination and remains vigilant against bias through the continuous self-assessment of our staff, our processes, and tools.

(2) Summary of Early Accomplishments

PSA formed an Equity Team that met regularly to outline the Agency's processes and tools in preparation of the 200-day report and implementation of action steps.

- **Reviewing data and planning for second revalidation of the Agency's defendant risk assessment.** During 2018, PSA contracted for an independent revalidation of the tool it uses to assess defendant risk. As a part of this process, the Agency Director requested a specific assessment of the extent to which the tool contains bias with respect to race. The independent assessment concluded that the Agency's tool contains minimal levels of bias with respect to race, and where the minimal bias is present, it is evenly distributed across racial groups. The Agency continues to monitor trends regarding race and has requested funding for a second revalidation during fiscal year 2023.
- **Reducing administrative burden.** With the introduction of new technology resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, PSA is assessing how it can leverage this technology to

reduce burdens on the population that it serves, including the expansion of virtual supervision and treatment options and the use of social media to provide updates and other instructions for defendants assigned to Agency for supervision. PSA's FY 2022 - 2026 strategic plan reflects the Agency's intent to utilize virtual supervision, as appropriate.

- **Engaging stakeholders.** As a part of the process for developing the Agency's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, PSA engaged with Agency personnel (internal stakeholders) as well as defendants served and criminal justice partners (external stakeholders). The feedback has been incorporated into the draft submitted to OMB in December 2021.
- **Reviewing procurement activity.** In support of the equity assessment, the Director requested a review of all procurement and acquisition activities to ensure that PSA is maximizing its use of small and minority-owned businesses. Additionally, PSA is exploring ways to increase our outreach to underserved procurement and vendor communities.

(3) Equity action plan

Due to the mandate and the mission of PSA, there are no identified programs, policies or processes recommended for intensive assessment. Specifically, PSA's programs, benefits, and services are court-ordered and not available to the general public. Most of the defendant population that PSA serves is part of historically underserved communities. To advance equity, PSA uses a scientifically validated risk-assessment instrument that promotes the fair administration of justice among PSA defendants. We conduct a risk assessment to determine each defendant's risk of pretrial misconduct. Our risk assessment guides release condition recommendations that include pro-social interventions, such as substance use testing, behavioral health assessment and treatment, global positioning system (GPS) electronic monitoring, and regular contact with a Pretrial Services Officer (PSO). Additionally, PSA remains vigilant against bias through the continuous self-assessment of our staff, our processes, and tools. The risk assessment instrument used for defendants awaiting trial was developed specifically for the adult defendant population within Washington, DC, and has been validated to ensure its predictive validity and evaluated to ensure that it is not biased with respect to race.