

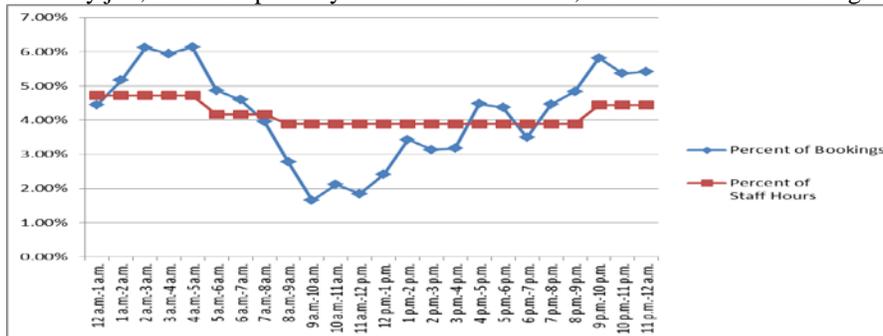
MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE OFFICE OF PRETRIAL SERVICES

AUDIT SYNOPSIS

This management audit examined the operations and practices of the Office of Pretrial Services to identify opportunities to increase its efficiency, effectiveness and economy. The audit report contains six major findings and 21 recommendations that would enhance operations of the Office of Pretrial Services and aspects of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services that serve pretrial release clients, as well as enhancing Countywide implementation of the State's new realignment program. Estimated savings is \$432,989 to \$1,286,512, in the form of reduced Office of Pretrial Services expenditures and reduced jail costs, as well as about \$65,000 in additional revenue to support the Valley Medical Center laboratory.

KEY FINDINGS

- Staffing in the Jail Division, which makes initial recommendations regarding own-recognition release for defendants booked into the County jail, was not optimally matched to workload, as shown in the following table:



A combination of 4-day, 10-hour and five-day, eight-hour shifts would optimize staffing versus workload, and permit reduction of 1.6 positions. The reduction was made, for budgetary reasons, and the Director of Pretrial Services concurs with exploring the schedule change, pending 2012 meet-and-confer negotiations with the relevant labor organization.

- A new risk assessment tool implemented to assist Jail Division and Court Division staff in making release recommendations to judges, has changed the basis for such decisions, in ways that indicated the new tool was having the desired effect. However, the audit found that Jail Division staff often did not clearly state the basis for recommending against releasing defendants that the tool indicated would be eligible for release.
- A two-month sample of Court Division recommendations found 312 of 418 defendants deemed low-risk by the new decision-making tool, 77 percent, and 786 of 850 defendants deemed average risk, 92 percent, were nonetheless not recommended for release. The Director of Pretrial Services reported that his staff, during the period of the audit, had already begun analyzing low risk cases not recommended for release, and would provide additional training to staff.
- Cutbacks in available County-funded substance abuse counseling and treatment programs create substantial delays in Pretrial Services clients getting treatment required by their release, contributing to pretrial release failures and a return to custody. Audit recommendations would improve utilization of the limited treatment resources, and would address lengthy telephone waiting times in the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services Gateway referral system. The audit also found a problem at Gateway in identifying clients eligible for treatment resources under the State's Fiscal Year 2011-12 realignment law. County departments should develop procedures to identify realignment-eligible clients.
- A case rating system used by the Supervision Division to assign cases to staff is not coordinated with a new risk assessment tool used in the Jail and Court divisions, and does not guide selection of supervision strategies, which are largely reactive, and don't vary much from one client to the next. Also, the Supervision Division does not use technology that peer agencies do, such as computerized voice-recognition check-in systems, to allow Supervision Officers to devote more of their time to the most difficult clients.
- About \$65,000 a year spent with a contractor to analyze drug test samples could instead be used to support the Valley Medical Center laboratory, which provides the same service to the Probation Department. In addition, staffing for specimen collection from female clients is inefficient, requiring \$50,372 to \$67,123 in unnecessary staff costs.

A copy of the full report is available at: <http://www.sccgov.org/managementauditor>