

District of Columbia Sentencing Commission FY2018

Agency District of Columbia Sentencing Commission

Agency Code FZ0

Fiscal Year 2018

Mission The mission of the District of Columbia Sentencing Commission is to implement, monitor, and support the District's voluntary sentencing guidelines, to promote fair and consistent sentencing policies, to increase public understanding of sentencing policies and practices, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidelines system in order to recommend changes based on actual sentencing and corrections practice and research.

2018 Strategic Objectives

Objective Number	Strategic Objective	# of Measures	# of Operations
1	Provide fair, consistent and transparent sentencing policy for felony sentences imposed in the District of Columbia to ensure that similar offenders who are convicted of similar offenses receive similar sentences.	3	2
2	Provide effective education and support to improve understanding and awareness of the District's Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines to ensure citizens of the District have a clear understanding of the sentencing process.	2	3
3	Provide high quality analysis and evaluation of sentencing data to inform the development of effective sentencing policy in the District of Columbia that increases public safety while decreasing unwarranted disparity in sentences.	2	2
4	Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent and responsive District government.**	9	0
TOT		16	7

2018 Key Performance Indicators

Measure	New Measure/ Benchmark Year	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Target	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Target	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Target
1 - Provide fair, consistent and transparent sentencing policy for felony sentences imposed in the District of Columbia to ensure that similar offenders who are convicted of similar offenses receive similar sentences. (3 Measures)									
Percentage of Compliant Guideline Sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>	98.2%	94%	97.7%	96%	95.8%	96.5%	96.4%	96.7%
Compliant Departures	<input type="checkbox"/>	96.2%	95%	91.9%	92.5%	88.7%	93%	91.1%	93.2%
Compliant In-The-Box Sentences Imposed	<input type="checkbox"/>	86.7%	85%	85.8%	86.5%	89.3%	86.5%	87.8%	87%
2 - Provide effective education and support to improve understanding and awareness of the District's Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines to ensure citizens of the District have a clear understanding of the sentencing process. (2 Measures)									
Effective Guideline Trainings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not	Not	Not	Not	Not	New	90.6%	82%

		available	available	Available	Available	Available	Measure		
Guideline Questions Answered	<input type="checkbox"/>	99.3%	97%	99.6%	99.7%	99.5%	99.5%	98.2%	99.5%
3 - Provide high quality analysis and evaluation of sentencing data to inform the development of effective sentencing policy in the District of Columbia that increases public safety while decreasing unwarranted disparity in sentences. (2 Measures)									
Data Request Response Time	✓	Not available	Not available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	New Measure	95%	75.5%
GRID/GSS tickets resolved within 14 days	✓	Not available	Not available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	New Measure	74.4%	65%

**We've revisited a project to standardize District wide measures for the Objective "Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent and responsive District government." New measures will be tracked in FY18 and FY19 and published starting in the FY19 Performance Plan.

2018 Operations

Operations Header	Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations	# of Measures	# of Strategic Initiatives
1 - Provide fair, consistent and transparent sentencing policy for felony sentences imposed in the District of Columbia to ensure that similar offenders who are convicted of similar offenses receive similar sentences. (2 Activities)					
SENTENCING GUIDELINE MONITORING	Identify Irregularities and Inconsistencies in Felony Sentences Imposed.	Review sentencing data received from the D.C. Superior Court to identify data quality issues to be resolved; identify sentences that are outside the recommended guideline sentence; and identify emerging sentencing trends that may require review by the Commission and potential policy modifications	Daily Service	1	1
SENTENCING GUIDELINE MONITORING	Review and Verify All Felony Sentences.	Review and verify each felony sentence imposed by the D.C. Superior Court is accurate, legal; and complete. Once the verification process is completed, calculate whether the sentence imposed matches the recommended guideline sentence in an accurate and timely manner	Daily Service	6	1
TOT				7	2
2 - Provide effective education and support to improve understanding and awareness of the District's Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines to ensure citizens of the District have a clear understanding of the sentencing process. (3 Activities)					
SENTENCING GUIDELINES TRAINING	Maintain and Update Agency Website.	Update the agency's website with "Guideline Alerts" to ensure the public and criminal justice community are notified of changes to sentencing policy or practices under the sentencing guidelines. Monthly update training and other guideline related materials to ensure public access to accurate and timely information about sentencing in the District of Columbia	Daily Service	1	0

SENTENCING GUIDELINES TRAINING	Provide Sentencing Guideline Training.	Provide Sentencing Guideline training to criminal justice professional that will increase their understanding of sentencing practices under the Guidelines and ensure proper application of the Guidelines thus reducing potential sentencing errors.	Daily Service	2	2
SENTENCING GUIDELINES TRAINING	Respond to Guideline Questions	On an ongoing basis the agency responds to questions from a number of sources including, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, judges, attorneys, and the public regarding criminal history scoring, sentence options, and offense rankings. Responding to these questions in an accurate and timely manner avoids procedural delays and ensure that the parties understand the sentencing options available under the Sentencing Guidelines	Daily Service	0	0
TOT				3	2
3 - Provide high quality analysis and evaluation of sentencing data to inform the development of effective sentencing policy in the District of Columbia that increases public safety while decreasing unwarranted disparity in sentences. (2 Activities)					
POLICY REPORTS AND PROPOSALS	Respond to Data Requests.	Effectively and efficiently respond to data requests from legislators, criminal justice professionals, and the public by providing accurate and timely sentencing information	Daily Service	1	1
SENTENCING GUIDELINE MONITORING	Monitor and Maintain the GRID System.	Monitor and maintain the data analysis module of the agency's data system (GRID) used to identify and evaluate sentencing trends throughout the year to inform the development of effective sentencing policy for the District. Technical and operational issues identified will be reported to the vendor for resolution within 14 days.	Daily Service	3	1
TOT				4	2
TOT				14	6

2018 Workload Measures

Measure	New Measure/ Benchmark Year	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual
1 - Identify Irregularities and Inconsistencies in Felony Sentences Imposed. (1 Measure)					
Number of Sealed Cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	2270	3441	1690	2144
1 - Review and Verify All Felony Sentences. (6 Measures)					
Number of CSOSA Criminal History Scores Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	2591	2730	1656	2004
Number of Felony Cases Sentenced	<input type="checkbox"/>	2056	1891	1843	2182

Number of Felony Counts Sentenced	<input type="checkbox"/>	2932	2611	2388	2658
Number of Departure Letters Sent	<input type="checkbox"/>	136	96	60	124
Departure Letter Responses	<input type="checkbox"/>	71.3%	84.4%	71.7%	79.1%
Number of Probation Revocations Sentenced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not available	Not Available	New Measure	New Measure
2 - Maintain and Update Agency Website. (1 Measure)					
Number of Agency Website Hits	<input type="checkbox"/>	10,681	14,050	23,424	14,495
2 - Provide Sentencing Guideline Training. (2 Measures)					
Number of Sentencing Guideline Trainings Provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	10	20	15
Agency Website Updates Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	57	38	42	64
3 - Monitor and Maintain the GRID System. (3 Measures)					
Number Hours required to complete data requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	510	525	826	1688
Number of GRID Tickets Entered	<input type="checkbox"/>	202	121	67	45
Number of new charge codes mapped in GRID	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not available	Not Available	New Measure	New Measure
3 - Respond to Data Requests. (1 Measure)					
Number of Data Requests Received	<input type="checkbox"/>	32	49	47	38

Initiatives

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Data Quality Checks	Data quality issues are often created by common data entry errors that occur when data is manually entered into electronic data sharing systems. These data quality issues can be resource intensive to correct and can directly impact research and analysis results. The agency's Guideline Data Information Reporting System, has the capability to electronically perform 13 data quality checks on data consumed by the system, including checks such as sentencing date cannot be less than date of birth or age at offense cannot be less than 15 years of age. To improve data quality, the data system will be modified to electronically send out an alert to research staff to verify when any of the four most critical data checks fail on any case sentenced after 2010. The four critical data checks will include: (1) age at offense is less than 15 years of age; (2) sentence date is greater than the current date; (3) criminal history score is less than 0; and (4) felony field is null. Research staff will then review, verify and submit a request for correction from the providing agency if necessary within 72 hours of each notification. This new process will increase efficiency	03-30-2018

	and data accuracy for analysis and research purpose. The electronic alert system will be developed by December 31, 2017 and tested and fully operational by March 30, 2018.	
Develop standardized data request response template	The agency will develop a template for responding to data request that will include standardized charts and graphs, allowing for visual display of the data requested, as well as, a written analysis. The use of a template will reduce the time required to respond to data requests from 20 days to 17 days given that the presentation of findings will be inserted into the template. The template will be designed with sufficient flexibility to allow for a wide range of data requests, while still incorporating a level of standardization. This initiative will decrease data request response time, improve efficiencies and reduce staff resources required to respond to the data requests. Drafts of the template will be completed by December 31, 2017. The template will be used as a piloted for 4 months to determine if any modifications to the template are necessary. The template will be formally implemented by September 3, 2018.	09-03-2018
Arrest Data Feed	Dependent on available funding to be provided through year-end reprogramming, the agency will develop an electronic arrest data feed from the Metropolitan Police Department that will provide arrest data that will be matched with felony case information provided by the DC Superior Court to provide a complete felony case record from arrest through sentencing with in the agency's Guideline Reporting Information Data (GRID) System. Currently the agency receives all felony criminal history and court related data but does not have arrest related information. With the addition of the arrest data feed, the agency will be able to create a complete and comprehensive record for every felony case sentenced in the District. With this additional data, the agency will be able to better analyze sentencing differences for similar offenses and make modifications to the Guidelines if appropriate. This multi-year project will involve several stages including: (1) identifying the data system technical requirements and business needs to be completed by November 15, 2017; (2) developing and issuing a request for proposal and selection of a vendor to be completed by April 30, 2018; (3) designing and developing of the data system will start on May 1, 2018 and be completed by February 28, 2019, and (4) testing and full implementation to be completed by August 16, 2019.	08-16-2019
Data Quality Checks	Data quality issues are often created by common data entry errors that occur when data is manually entered into electronic data sharing systems. These data quality issues can be resource intensive to correct and can directly impact research and analysis results. The agency's Guideline Data Information Reporting System, has the capability to electronically perform 13 data quality checks on data consumed by the system, including checks such as sentencing date cannot be less than date of birth or age at offense cannot be less than 15 years of age. To improve data quality, the data system will be modified to electronically send out an alert to research staff to verify when any of the four most critical data checks fail on any case sentenced after 2010. The four critical data checks will include: (1) age at offense is less than 15 years of age; (2) sentence date is greater than the current date; (3) criminal history score is less than 0; and (4) felony field is null. Research staff will then review, verify and submit a request for correction from the providing agency if necessary within 72 hours of each notification. This new process will increase efficiency and data accuracy for analysis and research purpose. The electronic alert system will be developed by December 31, 2017 and tested and fully operational by March 30, 2018.	03-30-2018
Increase Public Understanding of Sentencing Guidelines	In FY 2018, the agency will expand the scope of its training activities to focus on community and citizens groups with the goal of increasing the public's general understanding of how the DC Voluntary Sentencing Guideline operate. An interactive training agenda will be developed specifically for community organizations by November 15, 2017, which will focus on how the guidelines are structured and how sentences are calculated and the role of criminal history, as well as, a brief overview of sentencing trends in the District. A minimum of three community based Sentencing Guideline trainings will be completed between January 1, 2018 and September 30, 2018. Training evaluation forms will distributed at the end of each training secession to gather feedback from participants and to ensure the information provided is beneficial to participants.	09-30-2018