



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF **SENTENCING COMMISSIONS**

**2025 Annual NASC Conference
All States Update**

Includes updates submitted through August 4, 2025

ALABAMA



Alabama continues to undergo significant changes to its criminal justice system that mandate or require Commission action. The Commission last year amended its Voluntary and Presumptive Sentencing Standards to comport with new legislation providing more discretion to trial courts possibly increasing length of time served for the State's lower felony offense classifications.

Alabama's prison population is approaching 22k after dropping to 18k during the Covid-19 pandemic but is still significantly less than the 27k prison census before Alabama shifted to presumptive sentencing standards for non-violent offenses in 2013.

Alabama's sentencing structure remains fairly stable, but other elements of the criminal justice system have changed length of stay time for those in prison including changing parole practices, and changes to the State's "good-time" earning system for certain offenders in the prison system.

New prison projections are on schedule to be completed and published by October 1, 2025, to incorporate changes to parole board membership and guidelines, changes to the good-time law, changes to the sentencing standards, and the creation of double-digit new judgeships across the State.

Alabama elected a new Chief Justice in November 2024, and she took office in January 2025. Chief Justice Sarah H. Stewart asked Bennet Wright, Executive Director of the Alabama Sentencing Commission, to also lead a new division of the state court system called the "Criminal Services" division. Bennet now also oversees the State's adult Accountability Court System (drug, mental health, and veterans' courts) and the Court Referral Officer Program and the Court Referral Education Program where state and municipal court judges refer felony and misdemeanor drug offenders for monitoring, treatment services and education.

ALASKA



During 2024-2025, the Alaska Data Analysis Commission focused on studying pretrial delay and pretrial release data, publishing a major domestic violence report, and preparing a report updating a 2017 comprehensive look at Sexual Offenses. The Commission reported on reentry programs, reviewed data about disparities for rural areas in resources and services, and surveyed agencies serving victims about available victim data.

The commission's sixteen members represent rural and urban law enforcement, the executive branch agencies with criminal justice responsibilities, the courts, the legislature (non-voting positions), a victims' representative, and other stakeholders. One commission member is a convicted felon who has unconditionally completed their sentence, chosen by the Public Defender and the state's Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Affairs. The Alaska Judicial Council staffs the Commission.

The Commission submits an annual report that documents key criminal justice system metrics for the legislature, public, and other branches. The DAC also can respond to requests for information and analysis from the legislature, the governor, or the chief justice of the state court system.

To meet its statutory obligation to address victims' needs, the commission surveyed about fifty organizations known to have information about victims, including the FBI, state and local law enforcement, and victims' services agencies. The survey asked whether each group could share data about victims (taking into account confidentiality requirements), what types of data, how the data were collected and stored, and barriers to access to the data. A majority of the groups responded, either directly or through their umbrella groups.

The survey, and follow-up work, showed that while most groups were willing to share, confidentiality concerns and lack of resources to both enter and extract data were major barriers. One group, the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, is moving aggressively to respond to these concerns. It has adopted the Vela database, approved by WVAVA, hired a research analyst, and is training the state's domestic violence shelters and service agencies in data entry and the value of data for their work. Another primary data source, the National Incident-based Reporting System (NIBRS) mandated by the Department of Justice, will not be in use by the Anchorage Police Department – which accounts for about half of Alaska arrests—until sometime in 2026. Both APD, and the State's Department of Public Safety are actively working to get NIBRS fully running in the next year.

In the next year, the Data Analysis Commission expects to complete the update to the Sex Offenses report, complete its analysis of pretrial and time to disposition data, and complete an analysis of probation and parole data. Members also respond to requests for data and will continue to work with the University of Alaska and other organizations as opportunities arise.

ARKANSAS



Implementation of the Protect Arkansas Act of 2023

The Protect Arkansas Act of 2023 brought huge changes to the transfer eligibility system for offenders sentenced to a term of incarceration. Pursuant to the Protect Act, offenders who committed offenses on or after January 1, 2025, and a small number of offenses on or after January 1, 2024, are subject to the new transfer eligibility system. Specifically, there is no longer release eligibility by operation of law as there was under the former system of release consideration. Every inmate starts out serving 100% of the period of incarceration imposed by the sentencing court. Inmates can earn time against the imposed period of incarceration in two ways: (1) completion of programming and good behavior and (2) participation in work practices.

Felonies are classified in four categories:

1. Felony Ineligible to Receive Earned Release Credits – 100% of sentence imposed is served
2. Restricted Release Felony – 85% of sentence imposed must be served before a person is eligible for release
3. 50% Felony – 50% of sentence imposed must be served before a person is eligible for release
4. 25% Felony – 25% of sentence imposed must be served before a person is eligible for release

Earned release credits are applied in percentages to the total sentence depending on the category of the felony. As an example, for 85% offenses, at least 85% of the sentence must be spent in confinement, plus up to 7.5% of the sentence in earned release credits based on behavior and work, and up to 7.5% of the sentence in earned release credits based on completion of programming may be earned to get to 100% of the sentence.

New Legislation

- There were thirty-nine (39) new felony offenses created in the General Session this year. For offenses that are not either 100% or 85% by statute, the Sentencing Commission pursuant to its rulemaking authority makes classification recommendations for felonies as either 50% or 25%.
- A Recidivism Task Force made several recommendations that were implemented during the 2025 General Session. One of the recommendations was for the Sentencing Commission to provide sentencing guidelines for both terms of probation and suspended impositions of sentences. As a result, the sentencing grid for Arkansas will be updated to include those guidelines.

New Director

In November of 2024, Elaine Lee succeeded Tawnie Rowell as Director of the Arkansas Sentencing Commission, who is now Chief Legal Counsel for the Arkansas Department of Corrections.

CONNECTICUT



Over the past year, the Commission remained active in responding to research inquiries and advancing legislative proposals across a broad array of issues. The Commission also continued to expand its work focusing on mental health and the criminal legal system. Highlights from this past year include the following:

Legislative Updates

During the 2025 legislative session, the commission prioritized three areas: (1) The authorization of police chokeholds when reasonably necessary to protect third parties from deadly force; (2) Permission for court staff to modify bond amounts under \$10,000; and (3) development of a diversionary program for individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. The first two proposals advanced successfully, with the first being enacted into law and the second being administratively adopted by the courts. The third did not pass due to questions surrounding program structure and resource allocations. Regarding the latter, the Commission has been looking at other states, such as New Jersey, to help provide guidance on diversion best practices for this population.

Pretrial Justice

In March of 2025, the Sentencing Commission began analyzing a vast amount of pretrial data from the Connecticut Judicial Branch and the Department of Corrections. The Commission is working with faculty from the UConn School of Law, School of Public Policy, and the Department of Economics to analyze this data for dual reports. One report will broadly examine pretrial system outcomes, focusing on trends and metrics, such as failure to appear and re-arrest rates. The other report will focus on racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic disparities in pretrial outcomes, including conditions of release, detention rates, and bond amounts. Drafts of both reports are expected by the end of this year.

One of the Commission's prior initiatives led to the adoption of an automatic seven and ten percent cash bail system for surety bonds under a certain threshold. The Superior Court adopted an automatic ten percent cash bail in 2020 and then expanded the system in 2024, including more arrestees and lowering the required deposit to seven percent. In November of 2024, the Commission received data evaluating this system that showed rising utilization rates, steady failure to appear and re-arrest trends, and the return of over eleven million dollars of bond funds to defendants.

Criminal Justice/Sentencing Database Study

The Commission continued work on a feasibility study regarding the creation of a statewide sentencing database. This research involves semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, carried out in two phases. The first phase focuses on external stakeholders, including representatives from other state sentencing commissions, gathering insights into their database practices and challenges. The second phase examines Connecticut-specific needs and obstacles by engaging internal stakeholders. The report is expected by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

Domestic Violence Homicide Report

Based off a 2024 legislative request, the Commission began conducting legal and data explorations of domestic violence homicide in the state. Preliminary findings presented to Commission members in June 2025 outlined annual victimization rates, victim/offender demographics, the presence of court orders of protection, outcomes of cases, and sentences of family violence offenses compared to non-family violence offenses. These preliminary findings are available on our website (ctsentencingcommission.org).

Intellectual Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System

The Commission continued its partnership with Disability Rights Connecticut to complete a legislatively requested report on the experiences of persons with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) involved in the criminal justice system. This study will examine (1) rates of incarceration of such persons compared to the overall population of such persons in the state, (2) the advisability of behavioral assessments of such persons before sentencing and costs of such assessments, and (3) best practices of other states concerning such persons. The report will also include a discussion of practitioner training from arrest through case resolution, data collection shortcomings, the prevalence of certain charges within the IDD/ASD justice-involved population, potential diversionary practices, and programming and services for those incarcerated. Preliminary findings were presented to the Commission in July 2025. Please find presentation slides on our website (ctsentencingcommission.org). The report is due to be completed by January 1, 2026.

Behavioral Health Diversionary Program Online Resource

The Commission, in collaboration with the Courts and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, has also been working on the creation of an online resource of behavioral health diversionary programs. The resource will include overviews of major diversionary programs and interactive dashboards on program utilization rates, completion rates, and other outcomes. The resource also will include guidance on crisis stabilization, police deflection training, and the role of judges/prosecutors, aligning with the sequential intercept model of how individuals with mental and substance use disorders interact with and move through the criminal justice system.

Competency to Stand Trial Report

The Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, is in the final stages of publishing a comprehensive report regarding competency to stand trial (CST). This report will review literature on CST best practices, outline Connecticut statutory assessment and restorations processes and provide recommendations. Metrics to be reported include evaluations and restoration referral rates by setting (outpatient vs. inpatient), restoration rates, lengths of restoration, and discharge sites. The report is slated for release by the end of the year.

Executive Director Search

Lastly, the Connecticut Sentencing Commission is undergoing a transition since long-time Executive Director, Alex Tsarkov, accepted a position as a member of the Board of Pardons and Paroles. We thank Alex for his more than nine years with the Commission as its first full-time director. A search committee has been formed, and Rich Sparaco has been chosen as Interim Director to lead the Commission's activities. A job posting is expected to be finalized in the coming months.

ILLINOIS



In the past year we dedicated ourselves to recruitment and now we are almost fully staffed! Being fully staffed helped us work on some very dynamic projects. One of these projects is being presented at the conference: Developing and applying a methodology to adjust the race and ethnicity of certain Hispanic/Latino people in our criminal history data. We refined the methodology we will use in Illinois, wrote a report about our methodology and its outcomes, then presented it to our council and now at this conference.

We also revised the format and content of our bill analyses we publish each year during the legislative session. These bill analyses provide criminal justice system population impacts and cost benefit analyses but they also now include a policy impact section, an infographic that summarizes key points, and a bill summary that situates the reader between the existing law and how the law would change should the bill go into effect. These bill analyses represent a truly collaborative effort between our team and our varying expertise.

We mentioned last year how we were going to study the use of felony murder and the accountability theory in Illinois. Advocates have been working on revising the law around these and often want to know what the data reflects in how they are used. Last year when we mentioned this effort we got great feedback from our friends in other states with the work they have done. We researched that information and then embarked on a file review to get more information about how felony murder and accountability theory are used. Illinois has a felony murder statute that we confirmed is relatively accurate in tracking this information. But there is no reliable and consistent way to determine if the accountability theory has been used other than reviewing individual records. We hope to have a report or a draft of a report written by the end of year. And maybe will present our research at a future conference.

The last important project we have been working on is related to proposals to change the Truth in Sentencing laws in our state, which we all know are the thresholds that limit the credit someone can earn in prison. In Illinois we refer to Truth in Sentencing thresholds as percentages and the offenses associated with each percentage that limit the amount of credit a person can earn. Those percentages are 100%, 85%, and 75%. Any offenses not associated with a percentage earn day for day credit. Before Truth in Sentencing thresholds were enacted in 1998, everyone sentenced to prison in Illinois that didn't have a life sentence earned day for day credit. Some advocates in Illinois want to repeal all the thresholds and go back to day for day credit for everyone and then make this repeal retroactive. We published analyses that detail how a change like this would impact the prison population and costs and we are also working on a companion report to provide more explanation and context about the history and the impacts of such a proposal.

KANSAS



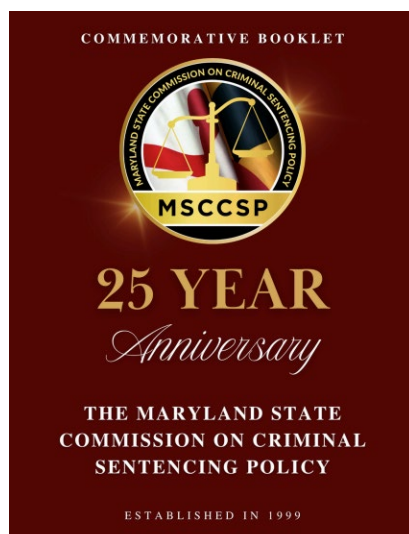
The Kansas Sentencing Commission (KSSC) is making notable progress this year in two main areas: developing its Kansas Sentencing Application (KSApp) and expanding its substance use disorder treatment program.

1. Electronic Journal Entry Project: The KSSC, in partnership with Domo, Inc., a Utah-based company, is transforming how felony sentencing data is collected and managed in Kansas. The KSApp is automating manual data entry, enabling interagency sharing, and paving the way for future growth. It had a soft launch last October, and over 1,200 users are now completing Presentence Investigation reports, sentencing, and revocation journal entries. This fall, we've teamed up with the judicial branch to connect the KSApp with their eFile system for smoother operation. We expect the KSApp to be mandatory for all felony sentencings by January 1, 2026. This will help the KSSC conduct detailed studies to identify possible demographic factors affecting sentencing in Kansas. The adaptable nature of the Domo platform will also support future integration with other Kansas state agencies, promoting public safety by sharing currently isolated data. The KSApp received the 2024 Community Ovation Award for Most Innovative Business App from Domo.

2. Substance Use Disorder Treatment: The Commission's substance use disorder (SUD) program, commonly known as SB 123, has expanded three times over the past six years to now include certain drug, nondrug, and diversion offenders. If statutory criteria are met, offenders receive state-funded SUD treatment administered by the KSSC. To further encourage statewide clinician participation and improve outcomes, the SB 123 program increased its reimbursement rates for its treatment modalities and added medication-assisted treatment this past year. We look forward to even more successful outcomes with the addition of MAT for opiate and alcohol treatment.

These developments highlight KSSC's commitment to innovation, interagency collaboration, and transparency in its operations.

MARYLAND



Recognition of 25-Year Anniversary

In 2024, the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) proudly celebrated its 25th anniversary! To honor this milestone, the MSCCSP published a commemorative booklet, acknowledging the significant accomplishments of the MSCCSP's work. The booklet includes six sections. The *History and Purpose* section summarizes the origins and mission of the Commission, while the *Membership* and *Staff* sections identify the more than 80 Commission members and 36 staff who have contributed to its work. The *Timeline of Notable Events* and the *By the Numbers* sections of the booklet illustrate the breadth and comprehensiveness of the Commission's work, while the *Reflections* section highlights the Commission's significant impact and influence. As the MSCCSP reflects on 25 years of accomplishments, it looks

forward to continuing to inform and promote fair, proportional, and non-disparate sentencing practices throughout Maryland for many years to come.

MAGS 12.1 and 13.0 Deployments

On April 3, 2025, the MSCCSP released an updated version of the Maryland Automated Guidelines System (MAGS). MAGS 12.1 included two significant updates. The first update added an alert message when a user attempts to initiate a worksheet with the same offender name, date of birth and jurisdiction as a previously initiated but unsubmitted worksheet. The purpose of the alert is to prevent users from initiating duplicate worksheets and to ensure that only one worksheet is completed for sentencing events involving multiple case numbers sentenced by the same judge, on the same day. The update is accomplishing this goal, as the staff is not receiving nearly as many user requests to combine worksheets pertaining to the same single sentencing event. The second MAGS 12.1 update added an alert message that makes it easier for worksheet submitters to identify required missing fields prior to submission. This feature has also been well received as it saves time for MAGS users by identifying which specific field is missing.

On June 30, 2025, the MSCCSP released MAGS 13.0. MAGS 13.0 includes multiple updates, but the most prominent update was the inclusion of a revised list of common sentencing guidelines departure reasons and corresponding instructions. The MSCCSP revised the list of common departure reasons to (1) more closely align with the reasons reflected in the current guidelines data, (2) reflect input received via a survey of circuit court judges, and (3) provide greater insight into the circumstances of the case.

MINNESOTA



In 2025, Minnesota's Commission completed the first phase of its first comprehensive review of its 45-year-old sentencing guidelines. Due to a change in the State's fiscal situation, the 2025 Legislature was unable to fund the comprehensive review into Phase 2. Without the time or money anticipated, Chair Kelly Lyn Mitchell devised a plan to accelerate and compress much of the work of the comprehensive review in calendar year 2025, with the goal of identifying a smaller number of meaningful change items that the Commission could agree to adopt this year. (The Commission is going to dig into specific change items at a special, all-day meeting on Wednesday in Saint Paul, so forgive us if we don't linger late on Tuesday evening!) After 2025, the Commission will, during its regular monthly meetings, continue working through the information learned during Phase 1 with a view toward seeing whether additional improvements to the Sentencing Guidelines are possible.

One sad note from Minnesota: Many of you were lucky enough to meet the gregarious and charismatic Chris Crutchfield last year in Raleigh. Chris was the inaugural appointee to the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission's new treatment-or-rehabilitative-services-provider seat. I regret to inform you that Chris died suddenly on November 4 of a tear in his main artery, at work, doing what he loved.



Background

On January 22, 2025, Gov. Whitmer signed HB 4173 (*available at* <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2023-HB-4173>) and HB 4384 (*available at* <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2023-HB-4384>), which created the Michigan Sentencing Commission, a permanent commission housed within the Legislative Council.

Michigan has not had a permanent Sentencing Commission since its Sentencing Guidelines were enacted in 1998, and the need for a commission to provide oversight, collect data, conduct research, and provide technical assistance, sentencing policy expertise, and policy recommendations for the Legislature has long been clear.

Supporters of this effort are excited to see the Commission begin operations, but startup funding is still working its way through the Legislature as part of next year's budget (Michigan's fiscal year begins on October 1, and a new budget has yet to pass).

Commission Composition & Duties

Composition (15 members total; see HB 4173)

- Chairperson (nonvoting)
- Two State Senators (one from each party)
- Two State Representatives (one from each party)
- Attorney General (or designee)
- Two Circuit Court Judges (one from a county with a population of >800,000, and one from a county with a population of <800,000)
- Representative of Law Enforcement (County Sheriff or Chief of Police)
- Representative of Prosecuting Attorneys
- Representative of Criminal Defense Attorneys
- Representative of Crime Victims and Crime Victims Services Organizations
- Formerly Incarcerated Person
- Representative of Mental and Behavioral Health fields
- Director of the Department of Corrections (or designee)

Duties (see HB 4384)

Sec. 34b.

(1) The Michigan sentencing commission shall do all of the following:

- (a) Collect, prepare, analyze, and disseminate information regarding state and local sentencing and release policies.
- (b) Conduct ongoing research regarding the effectiveness of the sentencing guidelines in achieving the purposes set forth in subdivision (d).
- (c) In cooperation with the department of corrections, collect, analyze, and compile data and make projections regarding the populations and capacities of state correctional facilities, the impact of the sentencing guidelines, and the effectiveness of efforts to reduce recidivism.

- (d) Develop recommended modifications to the sentencing guidelines.
- (e) Consider the suitability and impact of offense variable scoring with regard to victims and victims' families and victim input and advice regarding sentences.
- (2) In developing modifications to the sentencing guidelines, the commission shall submit to the legislature a prison and jail impact report relating to any modifications to the sentencing guidelines. The report must include the projected impact on total capacity of state and local correctional facilities.
- (3) Modifications to sentencing guidelines must include recommended intermediate sanctions for each case in which the upper limit of the recommended minimum sentence range is 18 months or less.
- (4) Subject to this subsection, the commission may recommend modifications to any law that affects sentencing or the use and length of incarceration. The commission shall not make recommendations that would change the body of enumerated criminal offenses as defined by the legislature. The commission shall not make a recommendation for any policy implementing any behavioral or programming credits. The commission shall not make a recommendation that would retroactively change existing sentences already imposed on an individual. The recommendations must reflect all of the following policies:
 - (a) To render sentences in all cases within a range of severity proportionate to the gravity of offenses, victim input, and the blameworthiness of an offender.
 - (b) When reasonably feasible, to achieve offender rehabilitation, general deterrence, incapacitation of dangerous offenders, restoration of crime victims and communities, and reintegration of offenders into the law-abiding community.
 - (c) To render sentences no more severe than necessary to achieve the applicable purposes in subdivisions (a) and (b).
 - (d) To preserve judicial discretion to individualize sentences within a framework of law.
 - (e) To produce sentences that are uniform in their reasoned pursuit of the purposes in subsection (1).
 - (f) To eliminate inequities in sentencing and length of incarceration across population groups.
 - (g) To promote research on sentencing policy and practices, including assessments of the effectiveness of criminal sanctions as measured against their purposes.
- (5) The commission shall submit any recommended modifications to the sentencing guidelines or to other laws to the senate majority leader, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the governor.
- (6) By December of each year, the commission shall submit to the legislature, the governor, and the Michigan supreme court a report on the implementation of legislative policies adopted in the current legislative session affecting the criminal justice system. The report must include, but need not be limited to, all of the following:
 - (a) Education of practitioners on changes in legislative policy, including changes in criminal statutes and an analysis of the expected impact of those changes on prison and jail populations and the average length of the sentences imposed.
 - (b) The length of probation supervision terms imposed.
 - (c) The number of noncompliance, risk, and major risk sanctions imposed on the probation population.

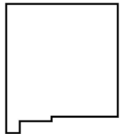
Status of Implementation

Hon. Chris Yates, a Michigan Court of Appeals judge, was appointed by Gov. Whitmer to be Sentencing Commission Chair on April 10, 2025. No other Commission appointees have been announced to date, but the selection process is moving forward behind the scenes and we expect more appointments to be announced soon.

An appropriation of \$1 million in funding for the Commission has been requested from the Legislature, and this funding is working its way through the budget process. Michigan operates on an Oct. 1 to Sept. 30 fiscal year. The budget is usually finished by now, but budget negotiations between the new Republican Speaker and the Democratic-controlled Senate have broken down.

Any funding that is ultimately appropriated for the Commission will not be available until at least Oct. 1, and the implementation planning that has occurred thus far has been through the efforts of Chair Yates and technical assistance by supporters of the Commission project that are funded by philanthropy.

NEW MEXICO



On the legislative front, the New Mexico Sentencing Commission has continued its work on a proposal to amend New Mexico's Juvenile Community Corrections Grant Act to make funding for services for system-involved youth available to a wider spectrum of people. The bill was introduced again this past Legislative Session but failed to pass. The NMSC hopes to bring the bill back again in the future. After a dormant period, the NMSC has returned to its proposal to expand New Mexico's felony structure from five to eight levels of felonies, with the hope that a bill will be introduced either in the upcoming Legislative Session in 2026 or in the 2027 Session. If that new structure is adopted into law, the NMSC will then propose revisions to the state's child abuse statutes, criminal sexual penetration and contact statutes, and sexual exploitation of children statutes that were developed alongside the restructuring of felonies.

The NMSC continues its work disbursing crime reduction grants to help support communities to develop locally-based crime reduction programs. Nineteen new grants were awarded to communities across the state for FY26. Aside from awarding the grants, the Commission has the responsibility to monitor the grants and track performance measures for the grants. As a way to build community around the grants, the NMSC held its third annual Convening of crime reduction grant grantees and members of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils. This year, in addition to the Convening, the NMSC hosted its first-ever CLE, concerning brain trauma and criminality. Both the Convening and the CLE were well attended; the NMSC hopes to build on the success of those events in the future.

The NMSC is currently working on a series of issue papers that are deep dives into certain crimes in the state. These reports will focus on crimes that are regularly discussed during New Mexico Legislative Sessions. The first set of reports will examine weapons violations, violent juvenile offenses, drug trafficking, shoplifting, motor vehicle theft, sex offenses, and racketeering. The hope is that these reports will provide legislators and other policy-makers with a robust set of information and data as they consider changes to statutes in these areas.

This year has seen a leadership transition at the New Mexico Sentencing Commission. Long-time Executive Director of the Commission, Linda Freeman, retired at the end of September 2024. After a period of transition, Douglas Carver, the former Deputy Director, was chosen as the new Executive Director at the end of April 2025. Keri Thiel, the NMSC's Staff Attorney, was made Deputy Director at the end of July 2025. Along with Director of Research Nancy Shane, the NMSC leadership team looks forward to refocusing in the coming year.

NORTH CAROLINA

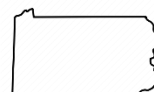


After the completion of a study of sentencing practices in late 2023, the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission established a Sentencing Practices Subcommittee tasked with further unpacking the study's key findings, which included the impact of systemic factors (i.e., jury trial, attorney type, credit for time served) on receiving less favorable outcomes and the interaction effect between Nonwhite individuals and prior record level. The Subcommittee is currently examining criminal history and is in the process of gathering more data to understand the individual components of prior record scoring. Additionally, the Subcommittee is investigating potential disparities by offense type, specifically for possession of firearm by a felon. Other areas for future exploration include examining: (1) felony class charge reductions by extralegal factors, (2) the underlying offenses used to establish habitual felon status and, (3) the classification of offenses.

In June 2025, the Commission voted to establish a Drug Offense Classification Subcommittee. The Commission's current Offense Classification Criteria are not applicable to drug offenses. With an increasing number of new drug offenses covering different substances and conduct, the development of criteria could bring more consistency to classification determinations.

Lastly, North Carolina's court system is in the final stages of transitioning from a legacy system to a new information management system. As a result, Commission staff are in the process of incorporating new data on felony and misdemeanor convictions and sentences into existing datasets. All counties are expected to transition to the new system in October 2025; currently, 87 of 100 counties are using the new system.

PENNSYLVANIA



Implementation of 8th Edition Guidelines. The Education and Outreach Unit continues to advance implementation of the 8th Edition Sentencing Guidelines, having facilitated 128 individual sessions for 3,315 attendees. These sessions, delivered in both in-person and virtual formats, have included judges, attorneys, probation officers, and other practitioners across all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. Notable groups in attendance included members and staff of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, the Public Defenders Association of Pennsylvania, the Department of Corrections, the Parole Board, and various bar associations. In addition to training sessions, the Unit has developed and distributed over 30 user guides and five eLearning courses.

The Unit has also launched a new initiative focused on the reporting of resentences from the Courts of Common Pleas. Within the first few weeks of the project, outreach has been initiated with 45 counties,

with the goal of achieving full reporting of these court proceedings at a level comparable to the reporting of sentences, which reached 98% for calendar year 2024.

Development of the Commission on Sentencing Records Exchange (CSRE). Commission staff continue to work on the development of a next generation application to replace SGS Web—the Commission’s legacy application. CSRE will support the 8th Edition sentencing guidelines, risk assessment, resentencing guidelines, and other Commission mandates. The new application is being designed to accommodate increased functionality and improve user experience. An example of the new application is provided below.

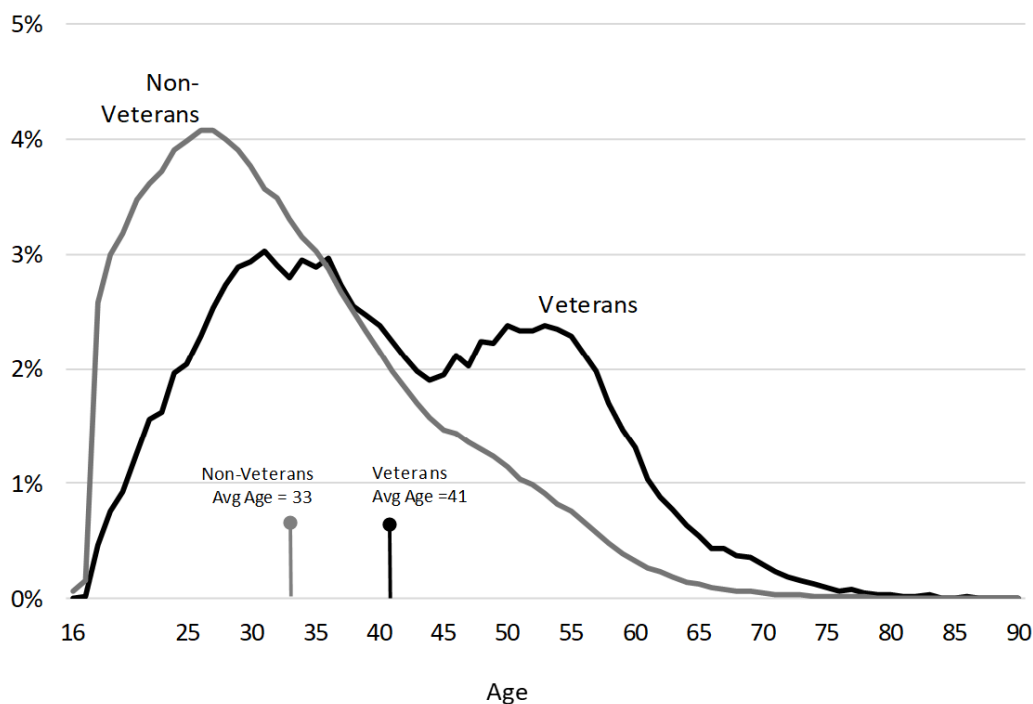
Commission on Sentencing Records Exchange (CSRE)

The screenshot displays the CSRE application interface. On the left, a sidebar shows the user profile for 'Simpson, Dustin' with personal information (Sex: Female, Date of Birth: 08/19/1988, Age: 36, Race: Unknown, Ethnicity: Hispanic, Employed: Unknown, Wage Rate: Unknown) and identification numbers (SID: 623-55-52-2, FBI ID, PPID, Offender ID: CS-25-000047, Other ID). Below this is a section for aliases. The main area features a navigation bar with tabs for Offense(s), Offense Details (selected), Prior Record, OGS and PIS, Sentence Recommendation, and Sentence. A progress indicator at the top shows the current step in the process. The 'Offense Details' section displays the following information: Commission ID: N00010066, County: Clinton, Judge: Gordon, Levan (Common Pleas, Philadelphia), and a checkbox for 'Visiting Judge'. Below this, the docket number is CP-18-CP-9009139-2024 and the OTN is H44367919. The offense details table shows two counts. Count 1 is for '30 § 5502 A.32* M Oper. watercraft under influence; controlled substances & incapable of safe operation; 1st off' on 05/03/2024, OGS 7. The title is '30 Section: 5502 Subsection: A.32* Grade: M Description: Oper. watercraft under influence; controlled substances & incapable of safe operation Disposition: Unknown'. The count is 1, and the date of offense is 5/3/2024. The supervision at the time of offense is Probation-County, and the offender's age at the time of offense is 36. The offense description detail is '1st off'. The mandatory minimum is '30 § 5502 (c-1)(3) BUI: 1st off (3 Days)'. The enhancement is 'Deadly weapon'. Count 2 is for '30 § 5502 A.34* M-1 Oper. watercraft under influence; controlled substances; solvent, etc.; 1st off; 1st minor <18 passenger' on 03/13/2024, OGS 7.

Research and Evaluations. In July 2024, the Commission received a mandate from the Pennsylvania Senate to conduct a thorough and comprehensive study on the effects that posttraumatic stress disorder or injury, military sexual trauma and traumatic brain injury have on service members, veterans and their families who are directly or indirectly involved or implicated in any portion or component of the criminal justice system. Providing services to veterans in the criminal justice system is complex, involving local, state, and federal partners and resources across the criminal justice, healthcare, and social services systems. To better understand and address this complexity and the directives contained in the mandate, PCS staff drew on a wide variety of sources, including: 1) administrative data from the Department of Corrections (DOC), Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). A key component of the study was developing an administrative data flag for veteran status allowing for an in-depth profile to be developed for veterans involved in the criminal justice system; 2) a comprehensive review of literature on veterans and the criminal justice system; 3) a review of national and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania policies, practices, procedures, and programs directed at veterans involved in the criminal justice system; 4) site visits to three counties in Pennsylvania and one state correctional institution; 5) structured interviews with over 50 stakeholders who work in the criminal justice system and/or with veterans; and 6) Commonwealth-

wide surveys of president judges and county jail wardens. A final report will be submitted to the General Assembly this September.

Example Exhibit from Veterans study (age of individuals involved in the CJ system)



Parole Guidelines Reports. Pennsylvania’s State Parole Guidelines became effective in January 2023, with the Parole Board implementing their use of the guidelines in June 2023. The Commission, in collaboration with the Parole Board, recently developed quarterly and annual reports for the Board summarizing the guideline recommendations, parole decisions, and the Board’s conformity to the guidelines. In addition to the quarterly report, Commission staff also prepared individual Board Member reports to highlight individual voting patterns associated with 2024 parole decisions. The Commission will provide individual Board Member parole decision reports annually.

Example of Parole Board Quarterly Report

Grant Rate for Violent and Non-violent cases: Oct-Dec 2024

		Violent					Non-violent		
		Preparedness Category					Preparedness Category		
		Low	Medium	High			Low	Medium	High
Risk Category	High	1.6%	49.1%	92.8%	Risk Category	High	4.0%	69.1%	94.2%
	Medium	1.4%	34.9%	88.3%		Medium	3.8%	65.5%	93.2%
	Low	3.0%	18.3%	87.3%		Low	0.0%	40.4%	96.6%
Q4 Grant Rate: 39.3%					Q4 Grant Rate: 54.6%				

Conformity Rate for Violent and Non-violent cases: Oct-Dec 2024

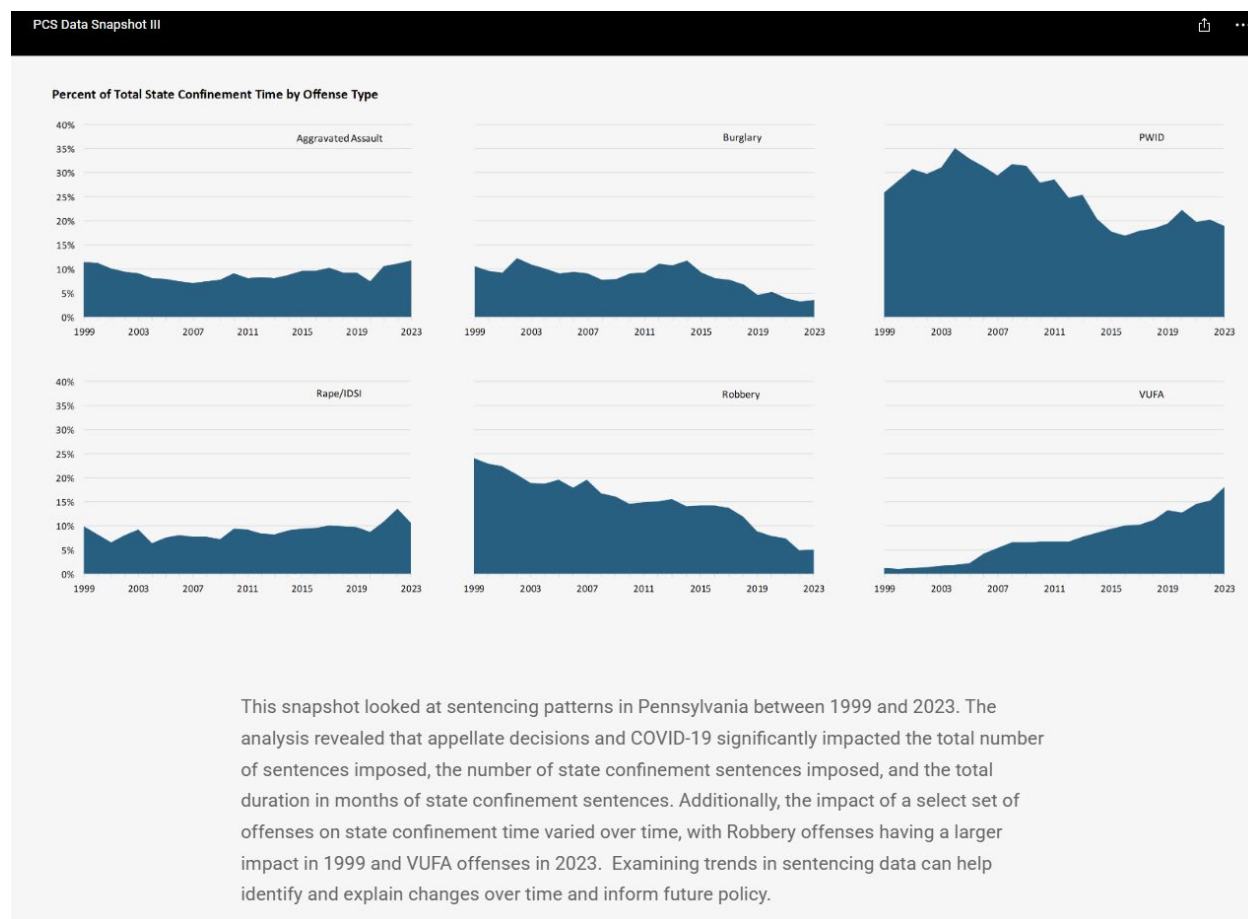
		Violent					Non-violent		
		Preparedness Category					Preparedness Category		
		Low	Medium	High			Low	Medium	High
Risk Category	High	98.4%	50.9%	92.8%	Risk Category	High	96.0%	30.9%	94.2%
	Medium	98.6%	65.1%	88.3%		Medium	96.2%	65.5%	93.2%
	Low	97.0%	18.3%	87.3%		Low	100.0%	40.4%	96.6%
Q4 Conformity Rate: 82.3%					Q4 Conformity Rate: 81.1%				

Note: Shaded regions represent a recommendation to refuse parole; unshaded regions represent a recommendation to grant parole.

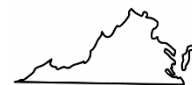
Data Snapshots. The Research and Data Analysis Unit serves as the clearinghouse and information center for the collection, preparation and dissemination of information on Commonwealth sentencing, resentencing, and parole practices. The Unit recently introduced *Data Snapshots*—a quarterly publication designed to provide stakeholders with overviews of sentencing practices for different case types, summaries of evaluations of programs and policies, impact analyses, and other research initiatives of the Commission. To date, the Commission has developed four data-driven infographics, including: sentencing practices for marijuana-related possession with intent to deliver; an overview of the Commission’s evaluation of the DOC’s Short Sentence Parole program; state confinement sentencing trends over a twenty-five-year period; and the subcategorization of possession with intent delivery fentanyl as a response to the opioid crisis. The snapshots can be found at:

<https://pcs.la.psu.edu/research-data/data-snapshots/>

Data Snapshot Example



VIRGINIA



The Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission has a number of ongoing activities. The Commission has continued its extensive training curriculum and various community outreach programs to assist users and the public throughout the Commonwealth. Refinement of the Commission's automated Guidelines application (known as SWIFT) based on judges' feedback is proceeding. For the 2025 legislative session, 306 corrections impact statements were prepared, along with additional analyses requested by individual legislators or other agencies. Charged with overseeing the Virginia Pretrial Data Project, the Commission compiles data from multiple sources to track defendants through the pretrial process, including use of pretrial release options, appearance at court proceedings, and new criminal arrests incurred during the pretrial period. This dataset is used by scholars and policymakers to assess the impact of pretrial services.

The Commission developed new Robbery Guidelines, which became effective on July 1, 2025. In 2021, the General Assembly adopted legislation to create four classes of robbery with different statutory penalties based on the circumstances of the offense. The Commission concluded that the existing Guidelines would not accurately reflect the typical, or average, robbery sentencing outcomes based on the new classifications. Data were insufficient to perform the analysis necessary to develop Guidelines

based on the new penalty structure. The Commission, therefore, suspended the Robbery Guidelines until a full analysis of sentencing under the new penalty structure could be completed. That analysis was completed in 2024 and the new Robbery Guidelines were accepted by the General Assembly.

In 2025, the Commission began reanalysis of the Fraud and Larceny Guidelines so that these Guidelines better reflect sentencing patterns that have emerged following the increase in the felony larceny threshold from \$200 to \$1,000. As required by statute, the Commission will also reevaluate the nonviolent offender risk assessment instrument for these offense categories.

The Commission has been approved by the FBI to receive national criminal history records for both the Pretrial Data Project and the Guidelines reanalysis project. With assistance from the U.S. Sentencing Commission staff, the Commission has developed a method to “read” the criminal history records and translate the information into database format. These records will support both the Pretrial Data Project and the comprehensive reevaluation of all Guidelines offenses and improve the accuracy of a number of criminal history, risk, and outcome measures.

WASHINGTON STATE



- For the first time since 2018, the Sentencing Guidelines Commission has not been assigned a work project by the Legislature and, thus, has been able to create its own work plan. That work plan includes:
 - Reviewing adult and juvenile sentencing alternatives.
 - Reviewing indeterminate sentencing schemas.
 - In 2010, the SGC produced a sentencing trends report that included data up through 2008. Along with the assistance of the Public Safety Policy and Research Center, the SGC would like to update that report through 2024 data.
- In response to emerging issues with the state’s juvenile detention facilities, and since the SGC also advises the Legislature and the Governor on juvenile sentencing policies, the SGC has created a Juvenile Committee as a standing committee.
 - Currently, the Juvenile Committee is assisting the full SGC with reviews of juvenile sentencing alternatives and a juvenile-related indeterminate sentencing schema.
 - After that work has been completed, the Juvenile Committee will conduct a review of the state’s juvenile sentencing grid.
- The SGC continued to testify during the Legislative session from January – April on adult and juvenile criminal sentencing bill proposals.

UNITED STATES (FEDERAL)



The Commission has had a productive year. Most notably, the Commission approved several 2025 amendments scheduled to take effect on November 1 following Congress's 180-day review period.

Key 2025 Amendments:

- The **Supervised Release Amendment** provides courts with greater discretion under the guidelines to impose individualized terms and conditions of supervised release and respond to

supervised release violations. The amendment encourages courts to conduct an individualized assessment for all supervised release decisions, and eliminates certain requirements, such as mandatory imposition if a term of imprisonment of longer than one year is imposed. The amendment emphasizes the different purposes of probation and supervised release and provides guidance on modification and early termination.

- Noting the decline in the use of departures post-*U.S. v. Irizarry* and other Supreme Court decisions, the **Simplification Amendment** simplifies the guidelines by removing step two of the current three-step sentencing process, which requires courts to consider departures provided for within the *Guidelines Manual*. While retaining some provisions (e.g., Substantial Assistance) in another form, the amendment deletes most departures from the *Guidelines Manual* and moves them to an appendix for future reference and makes several other conforming changes throughout the manual.
- The Commission also approved a multi-part **Drug Offenses Amendment**. Part A of the amendment addresses concerns that the mitigating role cap and role adjustment as they currently apply in tandem do not adequately account for the lower culpability of individuals performing low-level functions in a drug trafficking offense. Part B of the amendment addresses concerns that the *mens rea* requirement in §2D1.1(b)(13)(B) was vague and difficult to apply.

The Commission released new research on the use of cyber technology in federal crime and the prevalence of overdoses in federal drug trafficking cases.

In September 2024, the Commission released a new study of [Cyber Technology in Federal Crime](#), which provides demographic and sentencing information for individuals who used hacking, cryptocurrency, and the dark web to commit a federal crime. The Commission found that cyber technology was most often used in child pornography (30%), fraud (28%), drug trafficking (21%), and money laundering (9%) offenses. Prior to the Commission's examination of this matter, there had been little analysis of the individuals sentenced for a federal offense who use cyber technology for illegal purposes.

In March 2025, the Commission finalized a report titled [Overdoses in Federal Drug Trafficking Crimes](#). The Commission's research covers the prevalence of these offenses, the drug types involved, the outcomes of each overdose, the victims' awareness of the drugs they were taking, the conduct of the individuals who were sentenced, and the sentences imposed by the courts in these cases over the five-year study period. The Commission found that overdoses were involved in less than two percent of the federal drug trafficking cases studied but their prevalence increased by 44% from fiscal years 2019 to 2023. Fentanyl and its analogues were involved in 80% of the overdose cases studied.

In June 2025, the Commission published its first-ever examination of prison contraband presented in a [Special Edition QuickFacts](#) including high-level interactive data and an in-depth data briefing video. The project examines five years of data on individuals sentenced under §2P1.2 of the *Guidelines Manual* for providing or possessing contraband in prison. Commission staff examined various aspects of these cases, including the type of contraband possessed, how the contraband was smuggled into the facility, how the contraband was discovered, etc.

The Commission formed two new advisory groups to expand, strengthen, and modernize the scope of expert voices it will regularly call upon in its work.

In May 2025, the Commission announced the formation of an *ad hoc* Research and Data Practices Advisory Group (RDPAG). Among other responsibilities, the RDPAG will study the best practices of other government agencies and nongovernmental organizations relating to the collection, maintenance, use, analysis, and dissemination of mission-relevant data, and the development and execution of research agendas. RDPAG will also report and make recommendations on how the Commission may incorporate these best practices and fulfill its unique role as a clearinghouse for federal sentencing statistics and practices.

The Commission also announced the formation of a standing Sentence Impact Advisory Group (SIAG). Among other responsibilities, the SIAG will provide to the Commission its views on the Commission's activities and work as they relate to sentenced individuals, and the dissemination of information regarding federal sentencing issues to sentenced individuals, families of sentenced individuals, and advocacy groups, as appropriate.

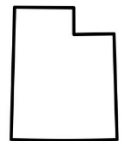
The Commission expanded the Interactive Data Analyzer (IDA) to include new data and dashboards.

IDA is an online platform where the public can explore, customize, and export the federal sentencing data regularly collected, analyzed, and maintained by the Commission. In April 2025, the Commission updated IDA to include a complete decade of federal sentencing data. The Commission also launched new dashboards with demographic characteristics, including race, gender, age, and citizenship data.

The Commission's interactive resource on the practical application of the First Step Act has served nearly 35,000 visitors since its launch in January 2024.

The Commission's resource explains the eligibility requirements for Earned Time Credits under the First Step Act and provides a searchable table of crimes ineligible for receiving such credits.

UTAH



- Utah is working to respond to a number of changes made to its makeup and processes by the legislature in 2024. Among these is a requirement that the guidelines be submitted to and approved by the legislature as part of each legislative session. This has created new opportunities to educate and interface with policymakers directly as the guidelines are developed. It has also made timelines tight for annual updates.
- In recent years, Utah has developed several special sentencing matrices for offenses of great concern to the public, including high value financial offenses, sexual exploitation offenses, and DUI resulting in injury or death. We have received positive feedback from stakeholders and practitioners focused on these areas. There has also been increasing concern that as the guidelines become more complex, they risk becoming too complicated for practitioners (and especially the public) to understand.
- Utah has begun to explore long term options to simplify the guidelines. This project may create opportunities to re-assess the guidelines and make sure they are consistent with the sentencing commission's statutory directives and public policy goals.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SENTENCING COMMISSIONS

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