



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### PRETRIAL PROGRAMS SHOWN TO REDUCE JAIL USE

A new report affirms Santa Cruz County's continued leadership when it comes to breaking the cycle of crime and incarceration and promoting reentry through custody alternatives and diversion programs.

In 2016, the Santa Cruz County Probation Department continued using research-based risk assessments on pretrial detainees in local jails to more accurately assess the community's incarceration needs. The report found that pretrial assessments saved 22,832 bed-days, resulting in an expected savings to local taxpayers in excess of \$2 million.

"With our partners in law enforcement, in County leadership and in the community, Santa Cruz County is helping lead a national conversation on crime and punishment," Santa Cruz County Probation Chief Fernando Giraldo said. "Locking people up and throwing away the key has been costly to taxpayers, to our neighborhoods and to families. We will continue to look for a better way forward to reduce recidivism and help offenders break the cycle of crime."

The figures are included in the Probation Department's annual "Adult Probation Division Annual Report," one in a series of data-driven self-assessments of Probation Department programs. The Department has partnered with a numerous national, state and local programs to explore best practices to better understand public safety threats, encourage behavioral change in offenders and reduce victimization.

In California, pretrial detainees make up a majority of the inmate population in local jails, meaning they are awaiting trial or sentencing. Numerous public policy groups and criminal justice experts have pointed to bail reforms and improved



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pretrial assessments as a way to reduce overcrowding in California's local jails, and Santa Cruz County officials recently testified in support of a package of bail reforms moving through the State Legislature.

Through its Probation Department and Sheriff's Office, Santa Cruz County has been a model county on such issues. Similar risk-based assessments are utilized at other stages of the criminal justice process. This includes Juvenile Hall, where the average daily population has been reduced from 52 in 1998 to 18 in 2016.

The Adult Probation Division Annual Report also shows that despite an increasing supervision caseload, the Probation Department has demonstrated success in keeping clients from reoffending. Of pretrial detainees released into community-based supervision, 93 percent were not charged with a new offense.