

Release Assessment Validation Plan

The updated release assessment is being monitored and validated on an ongoing basis. Among other topics, CJA is monitoring 1) that the release assessment remains predictive of the risk of failure to appear, 2) how judges are using the release assessment in their decision-making, and 3) impacts with respect to race, ethnicity, sex, and other characteristics.

Measuring Outcomes

CJA will pay close attention to early results. From arraignment data, CJA will track the number of individuals scored, the distribution of scores and release recommendations, and judges' release decisions. From post-arraignment data, CJA will track the appearance rate at the initial appearance for those who are released, as well as the appearance rate through the disposition of the case. Results will also be tracked by severity of the arraignment charge, bail-eligibility under the new statute, and the race, ethnicity, and sex of the individual.

Arraignment Observation

In addition to these data items, knowledge gained from arraignment observations will be used to inform the validation. Trained CJA observers will regularly attend a purposive sample of arraignment parts throughout the City. Observers will record whether the prosecutor, defense attorney, or judge mentions the CJA release assessment, disputes information contained on the CJA interview report, or raises questions about the assessment or report. CJA collected a baseline data sample of such arraignment observations for thousands of continued cases in four boroughs in 2018 and conducted further observations in 2019 in all five boroughs, just prior to introduction of the updated release assessment and effective date of the new bail reform law. The 2018 and 2019 baseline samples will allow CJA to assess how the introduction of the updated release assessment affects courtroom dynamics, as well as to track broader changes over time.

Applying the Results of Validation

The validation research will provide essential information to make adjustments should they be needed. For example, additional training for CJA staff or additional stakeholder education might be needed to improve implementation. Once sufficient data accumulates, CJA will update the expected re-appearance rates listed on the new interview report using recent data. This update will enhance both the accuracy of the information and the usefulness of the form in the future. CJA will also evaluate other changes and recalibrations as needed to improve the assessment's performance and impact.