

Adult Detention Initiative

Fact Sheet

What is the Adult Detention Initiative?

The Adult Detention Initiative (ADI) is a collaborative of Hennepin County criminal justice partners focused on ensuring a fair, equitable and effective justice system that provides alternatives for low-risk individuals who do not need to be detained in the Hennepin County Adult Detention Center.

What is the Hennepin County Adult Detention Center?

The Hennepin County Adult Detention Center, sometimes referred to as the county jail, is primarily a pretrial detention facility where adult men and women are brought by police after being arrested. It is used by 47 law enforcement agencies across Hennepin County. Individuals who have been sentenced do not serve their sentences at the Adult Detention Center. Instead, most are held while waiting for a pretrial hearing or trial, while waiting for another agency to pick them up on a hold, or while waiting for a resolution of their probation matter.

ADI Partners

- Fourth Judicial District Court
- Hennepin County Attorney
- Hennepin County Sheriff
- Minneapolis Police Dept.
- Minneapolis City Attorney
- Hennepin County Public Defender
- Community Corrections
- Health and Human Services
- Suburban Prosecutors



There are 33,000 admissions annually with a cost of \$132 per individual per day.



Approximately 60% are for new offenses, some of which never result in charges. Nearly half have a length of stay of less than 24 hours.



Approximately 40% are for administrative reasons such as bench warrants, probation violations, and holds from other jurisdictions.



At least a third of the jail population suffers from an identified mental illness. Often, detaining these people in jail worsens their symptoms and conditions.



Those who remain in jail for low level offenses are disproportionately poor. Often, the only reason they remain in jail is because they cannot post a nominal bail amount set by the Court.

Who should be detained?

A pretrial detention facility should be used for those who pose a high risk to public safety or who have a high probability of not returning to court. Currently, our courts are detaining too many individuals who pose a low risk, many of whom are poor and mentally ill. Detention of low-risk individuals is expensive to taxpayers and results in many individuals losing employment and housing. Our goal is to reduce pretrial detention by avoiding detention for low-risk offenders when appropriate and by assessing those who are brought to the jail to ensure that we are detaining only those who pose a high risk.

How will ADI address unnecessary detention?

The ADI collaborative has developed and is executing a strategic action plan for identifying individuals who may not need to be detained in jail while their case is being resolved. It includes:

1) Appropriate alternatives for the mentally ill

We are collaborating with Health and Human Services to find appropriate alternatives to jail for the mentally ill, including:

- A Behavioral Health Center for the mentally ill and chemically dependent as an alternative to arrest.
- Pretrial assessments to diagnose mentally ill individuals and provide them appropriate services outside of a jail setting.
- Alternative placement options for inmates awaiting competency and commitment proceedings.
- Provide appropriate mental health services for those who are detained.

2) New strategies for probation non-compliance

The Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) supervises over 22,000 people. Less than 20% of these cases are considered high risk. DOCCR issued 4,000 warrants for probation non-compliance and 1,700 warrants for conditional release non-compliance last year.

DOCCR is currently reviewing all policies and procedures for issuing warrants for alignment with ADI goals, reserving arrest and subsequent jail time for occasions when compliance with court conditions and progress towards rehabilitation cannot be achieved through alternative means.

3) Reducing bench warrants for people who do not appear for court

In 2015, the court issued 21,000 bench warrants for failing to appear for court. 17,000 of these were for low-level misdemeanors. Unfortunately, many of these occur because people didn't know or forgot they had court.

To improve appearance rates, a court reminder program staffed by volunteers has begun calling, emailing and texting defendants in two pilot groups three days prior to their court date. The court is working on implementing an automated notification system for sending reminders for all court appearances, like many dental and medical clinics.

A sign and release bench warrant pilot has started for people who get their court notice through the US mail. Mail does not always make it to the intended recipient. This pilot will use a sign and release bench warrant so that people who may not have received proper notice of their court date get a second chance to appear before being taken into custody and detained in the jail.

4) Expediting processing and eliminating unnecessary delays

Over 700 people are in the Adult Detention Center awaiting court each day. To ensure that these individuals are not staying in jail longer than necessary, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office has instituted a "court expeditor" to monitor cases and assist in identifying system problems contributing to unnecessarily long stays.

5) Ensuring decisions to detain or release are based on risk

With over 33,000 jail admissions each year, making decisions about who needs to be detained and who can be released is critically important. For serious offenses, the newly re-validated Hennepin County Pretrial Scale provides an objective race-neutral assessment for judges and pretrial agents to use in assessing the need for bail or conditions of release. For low-level offenders held on cash bail, alternatives like a risk assessment to determine which low level offenders can safely be released by the Court without bail are being explored. A significant proportion of these people cannot afford even the low amount of bail set by the Court, so they end up staying for a first court appearance where they are usually released, making their jail stay unnecessary and disruptive to jobs and families.

How can I learn more?

To learn more, visit <http://www.hennepin.us/cjcc>.