



# **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SENTENCING COMMISSION**

## **FY 2025 PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

**JANUARY 15, 2026**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Accountability Report (PAR) for the District of Columbia Sentencing Commission.

The PAR is the second of two agency performance documents published each year. A Performance Plan is published at the start of the fiscal year when budget decisions have been finalized. A PAR is published in January following the end of the fiscal year. Each PAR assesses agency performance relative to its annual Performance Plan.

**PAR Structure:** PARs are comprised of agency Objectives, Administrative Structures (such as Divisions, Administrations, and Offices), Activities, Projects, and related Performance Measures. The following describes these plan components, and the types of performance measures agencies use to assess their performance.

**Objectives:** Objectives are statements of the desired benefits that are expected from the performance of an agency's mission. They describe the goals of the agency.

**Administrative Structures:** Administrative Structures represent the organizational units of an agency, such as Departments, Divisions, or Offices.

**Activities:** Activities represent the programs and services an agency provides. They reflect what an agency does on a regular basis (e.g., processing permits).

**Projects:** Projects are planned efforts that end once a particular outcome or goal is achieved.

**Measures:** Performance Measures may be associated with any plan component, or with the agency overall. Performance Measures can address questions about an agency's overall performance, the performance of an organizational unit, program, or service, or the implementation of a major project. Performance Measures can answer questions like "How much did we do?", "How well did we do it?", "How quickly did we do it?", and "Is anyone better off?" as described in the table below.

Measures are printed in the Performance Plan along with the Objective, Administrative Structure, Activity, or Project that they measure.

Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Quantity	Quantity measures assess the volume of work an agency performs. These measures can describe the inputs (e.g., requests or cases) that an agency receives or the work that an agency completes (e.g., licenses issued or cases closed). Quantity measures often start with the phrase "Number of..."	"Number of public art projects completed"
Quality	Quality measures assess how well an agency's work meets standards, specifications, resident needs, or resident expectations. These measures can directly describe the quality of decisions or products or they can assess resident feelings, like satisfaction.	"Percent of citations issued that were appealed"
Efficiency	Efficiency measures assess the resources an agency used to perform its work and the speed with which that work was performed. Efficiency measures can assess the unit cost to deliver a product or service, but typically these measures assess describe completion rates, processing times, and backlog.	"Percent of claims processed within 10 business days"
Outcome	Outcome measures assess the results or impact of an agency's work. These measures describe the intended ultimate benefits associated with a program or service.	"Percent of families returning to homelessness within 6- 12 months"

(continued)

Measure Type	Measure Description	Example
Context	Context measures describe the circumstances or environment that the agency operates in. These measures are typically outside of the agency's direct control.	"Recidivism rate for 18-24 year-olds"
District-wide Indicators	District-wide indicators describe demographic, economic, and environmental trends in the District of Columbia that are relevant to the agency's work, but are not in the control of a single agency.	"Area median income"

**Targets:** Agencies set targets for most Performance Measures before the start of the fiscal year. Targets may represent goals, requirements, or national standards for a performance measure. Agencies strive to achieve targets each year, and agencies provide explanations for targets that are not met at the end of the fiscal year in their PAR.

Not all measures are associated with a target. Newly added measures do not require targets for the first year, as agencies determine a data-informed benchmark. Changes in some measures may not indicate better or worse performance. They may be "neutral" measures of demand or input or outside of the agency's direct control. In some cases, the relative improvement of a measure over a prior period is a more meaningful indicator than meeting or exceeding a particular numerical goal, so a target is not set.

## 2 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SENTENCING COMMISSION OVERVIEW

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**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.

**Summary of Services:** The Commission advises the District of Columbia on policy matters related to criminal law, sentencing and corrections policy. The Sentencing and Criminal Code Revision Commission Amendment Act of 2007 established a permanent voluntary felony sentencing guidelines and requires the Commission to monitor and make adjustments as needed to promote sentencing policies that limit unwarranted disparity while allowing adequate judicial discretion and proportionality. The sentencing guidelines provide recommended sentences that enhance fairness so that offenders, victims, the community, and all parties will understand the sentence, and sentences will be both more predictable and consistent. The commission provides analysis of sentencing trends and guideline compliance to the public and its representatives to assist in identifying sentencing patterns for felony convictions.

### **Objectives:**

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. 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. 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.

### 3 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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#### 3.1 PUBLISHING A GUIDELINES MANUAL IN SPANISH

As part of its effort to increase access to the Manual and other Commission materials, in FY 2025, the Commission published its first translated Manual. The Spanish Manual was published in September 2025 and distributed electronically.

**Impact:** The new Manual will allow more individuals access to the Manual. It will also allow Spanish-language attorneys to better review Guidelines rules with clients, victims, and those involved in the case.

#### 3.2 RESTRUCTURING OF THE DC VOL. SENT. GUIDELINES

In 2025, the Commission completed a complete non-substantive update and restructuring of the Guidelines Manual. The updated manual improves overall organization and ease of understanding by moving discrete concepts into separate chapters and subsections, increasing language consistency throughout the document, and ensuring that all Guideline's rules and examples have distinct citations. Additionally, almost every example or hypothetical was either rewritten or replaced. New examples were added to address common questions the Commission receives.

**Impact:** Completion of this project has made the Sentencing Guidelines easier to use and understand. It has also allowed the Commission to utilize consistent language throughout its publications.

## 4 OBJECTIVES

### 4.1 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Percent of all counts sentenced that are deemed compliant with the Guidelines</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	98.55%	95.52%	93.73%	95.64%	95.86%	93%
<b>Percent of all counts sentenced that are within the recommended Sentencing Guidelines range/options</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	96.73%	90.64%	91.25%	93.07%	92.92%	85%
<b>Percent of all judicial compliance letters sent that judges responded to</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	100%	52.38%	118.18%	114.29%	96.21%	85%
<b>Percent of all sentences for violent offenses that are compliant with the Sentencing Guidelines</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	97.44%	93.71%	92.65%	92.47%	94.06%	90%
<b>Percent of all sentences for weapon offenses that are compliant with the Sentencing Guidelines</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	99.07%	95.81%	94.74%	97.85%	96.87%	90%
<b>Percent of all sentences imposed that fall outside of the recommended Sentencing Guidelines range that are still compliant due to a departure factor or other rule</b>							
Outcome	Neutral	55.56%	52.08%	28.26%	37.14%	43.26%	Target not required
<b>Percent of all Guidelines compliant sentences that were the result of an accepted Rule 11(c)(1)(C) plea bargain</b>							
Efficiency	Neutral	6.09%	4.69%	4.06%	7.04%	5.47%	Target not required

### 4.2 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of Social Media Postings</b>							
Quantity	Up is Better	322	311	337	340	1,310	200
<b>Percent of all Commission website hits on web pages related to outreach and education material</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	30.34%	27.12%	31.26%	38.6%	31.83%	13%
<b>Percent of post-training surveys that gave the Commission an 80% or higher satisfaction rating</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	No incidents	No incidents	No incidents	No incidents	No incidents	85%
<b>Percent of all Guidelines questions submitted to the Commission that were answered within 24 hours/next business day (NBD) or by time response was requested</b>							
Efficiency	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%

### 4.3 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Percent of MPD Arrest Charges received that are verified and processed by the Commission's data system</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	99.9%	100%	100%	100%	99.98%	76%
<b>Percent of Unique Arrests from MPD that are verified and processed by the Commission's data system</b>							
Outcome	Up is Better	99.99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	85%
<b>Percent of Commission operational related data system error tickets resolved within 45 days</b>							
Efficiency	Up is Better	50%	33.33%	0%	0%	27.27%	70%
<b>Percent of data request responses delivered within 30 days or by the requested response date</b>							
Efficiency	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	85%

*Explanation of Missed Targets:*

1. Percent of Commission operational related data system error tickets resolved within 45 days: As the Commission's data system has aged (it is now more than ten years old), tickets have become more complex and take more time to address. Limited resources due to budget issues and competing priorities also impacted ticket time in FY25.

## 5 ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
Number of Agency Website Updates Completed							
Quantity	Neutral	26	34	39	30	129	Target not required
Number of Sentencing Guideline Trainings Provided							
Quantity	Neutral	2	4	7	1	14	Target not required
Number of individuals receiving Sentencing Guideline Training							
Quantity	Up is Better	22	60	93	20	195	Target not required

### 5.2 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
Number of Data Quality Assurance (DQA) Issues Identified and Submitted to the Appropriate Agency							
Quantity	Neutral	59	9	18	27	113	Target not required
Number of Sealed Cases							
Quantity	Neutral	755	435	443	545	2,178	Target not required

### 5.3 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
Number of Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) Criminal History Scores Submitted to the Commission							
Quantity	Neutral	583	526	556	514	2,179	Target not required
Number of Departure Letters Sent							
Quantity	Neutral	23	21	11	21	76	Target not required
Number of Felony Cases Sentenced							
Quantity	Neutral	427	398	447	370	1,642	Target not required
Number of Felony Counts Sentenced							

(continued)

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
Quantity	Neutral	615	563	631	541	2,350	Target not required
<b>Number of Probation Revocations Sentenced</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	149	128	182	137	596	Target not required
<b>Number of sentences imposed as the result of an accepted Rule 11(C)(1)(c) plea bargain</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	33	23	20	34	110	Target not required

## 5.4 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of Agency Website Hits</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	7,638	10,313	8,824	9,350	36,125	Target not required

## 5.5 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.

*No Related Measures*

## 5.6 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of Data Requests Received</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	5	7	7	3	22	Target not required
<b>Number of Data Sets Distributed or Published by the Commission</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	No incidents	0	1	No incidents	1	Target not required

## 5.7 MONITOR AND MAINTAIN THE GUIDELINE REPORTING INFORMATION DATA (GRID) SYSTEM

Monitor and maintain the data analysis module of the agency's GRID system 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.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of Critical Commission Data System Tickets Submitted</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	No incidents	0	No incidents	No incidents	0	Target not required
<b>Number of new charge codes mapped in the Commission's data system</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	3	0	No incidents	No incidents	3	Target not required
<b>Number of Commission Data System Tickets Entered</b>							
Efficiency	Down is Better	4	3	1	3	11	Target not required
<b>Number of hours required to complete data requests</b>							
Efficiency	Neutral	200	110	147	16	473	Target not required

## 5.8 REVIEW AND VERIFY ALL CRIMINAL HISTORY SCORES

A individual's prior convictions are provided by CSOSA and used to calculate a defendant's criminal history scores. If criminal history information is missing or inaccurate, CSOSA is contacted to provide the accurate information so that compliance can be calculated for each felony count sentenced.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of Requests for Missing Criminal History Scores Made to the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)</b>							
Quantity	Down is Better	50	38	66	27	181	Target not required

## 5.9 MPD ARREST DATA PROCESSING

In FY2021, the agency will begin receiving and integrating MPD arrest data into the agency's Guideline Information Reporting Data (GRID) system. On an hourly basis arrest data will be transferred to the GRID system where data will be stored, processed and integrated, allowing for analysis of felony cases from arrest through sentencing. Processing will include data validation and reliability checks to ensure the accuracy of the data for analysis purposes.

Measure Type	Directionality	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
<b>Number of MPD Arrest Charges Received by Commission's Data System</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	12,611	12,661	13,881	16,097	55,250	Target not required
<b>Number of Unique MPD Arrests Received</b>							
Quantity	Neutral	6,922	6,868	7,530	8,668	29,988	Target not required

## 5.10 INCREASE PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION REGARDING THE SENTENCING GUIDELINES

Prior Guideline training and outreach has previously been focused on criminal justice partners and professionals. An Guideline outreach and education strategy will be developed and implement targeting residents and community based organization to increase their understanding of the purpose, function, and impact of the Guidelines on felony sentences imposed in the District.

*No Related Measures*

## **5.11 PUBLIC ACCESS TO SENTENCING DATA**

In addition to providing a comprehensive yearly data set of all felony sentences imposed, multiple data sets will be placed on the agency's website to provide residents and researcher more detailed overview and a clearer understanding of felony sentencing trends for specific offense types in the District.

*No Related Measures*

## **5.12 EVALUATE POTENTIAL SENTENCING GUIDELINES RULE CHANGES.**

Gather and analyze data to evaluate the effect of potential changes to the Sentencing Guidelines rules to determine what effect the changes would have on individuals who will be sentenced.

*No Related Measures*

## 6 PROJECTS

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### 6.1 PUBLISH AN ISSUE PAPER COMPARING SENTENCING AND COURT DATA FROM BEFORE AND AFTER THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC TO DATA FROM DURING THE PANDEMIC

**Project Description:** The Commission will publish a data based issue paper analyzing court, conviction, and Guidelines compliance trends for time period covering before and after the pandemic and compare it to data from during the Pandemic. This will allow the Commission to analyze some of the effect the pandemic had on D.C.'s Court and criminal justice system. Amongst other factors, the paper will analyze race/ethnicity data to look for post-COVID changes in the race/ethnicity of defendants convicted and sentenced.

**Start Date:** February 3, 2025

**Date Completed:** September 30, 2025

**Current Project Phase:** Completed

**Project Status:** This Issue Paper was published on 9-30-25. It can be viewed here:

<https://scdc.dc.gov/node/1799766>. The scope of this paper was reduced due to staffing limitations following Mayoral Order 2025-053.

### 6.2 CREATE AN ISSUE PAPER ON PROBATION LENGTHS

**Project Description:** The Sentencing Commissions tracks and analyzes many different kinds of sentencing data related to sentencing outcomes. However, the Commission has never (or not recently) analyzed the length of probation terms imposed by judges in felony cases. The term of probation is not something currently addressed by the Sentencing Guidelines. Analyzing this issue and discussing the results will help the Commission determine if this is an area for further action that would help reduce disparities in sentencing. Amongst other factors, the paper will analyze probation lengths based race/ethnicity of the defendant.

**Start Date:** January 1, 2025

**Date Completed:** September 30, 2025

**Current Project Phase:** Completed

**Project Status:** This Issue Paper was published on 9-30-25. It can be viewed here:

<https://scdc.dc.gov/node/1799781>.

### 6.3 PUBLISH GUIDELINES MANUAL IN SPANISH

**Project Description:** The Sentencing Commission will translate and publish an electronic Sentencing Guidelines Manual in Spanish.

**Start Date:** January 1, 2025

**Date Completed:** September 8, 2025

**Current Project Phase:** Completed

**Project Status:** The translated Manual was finalized and published on 9-8-25. It can be accessed here:

<https://scdc.dc.gov/page/spanish-translation-dc-voluntary-sentencing-guidelines->.

### 6.4 REVISE THE HYPOTHETICALS IN THE VOLUNTARY SENTENCING GUIDELINES MANUAL

**Project Description:** The current D.C. Sentencing Guidelines Manual contains a series of hypothetical situations that are used to demonstrate how the Guidelines rules operate. These hypotheticals have never been significantly revised. In FY25, the Sentencing Commission will create new hypotheticals and revise some of the old hypotheticals to make the Guidelines Manual more up-to-date and user friendly.

**Start Date:** October 1, 2024  
**Date Completed:** NA  
**Current Project Phase:** Completed