DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SENTENCING COMMISSION

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

DECEMBER 1, 2023

GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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1 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SENTENCING COMMISSION

Mission: The mission of the District of Columbia Sentencing Commission is to implement, monitor, and support the Districts 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.

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.

2 2024 OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective
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.
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.
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 2024 OPERATIONS

Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
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.		
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service
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.		
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service

(continued)

Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service

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.

Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service
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.	Daily Service
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.	Key Project

4   2024 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Title	Description	Proposed Completion Date
Evaluate What Data Is Currently Available and Unavailable to Analyze and Test Potential Guidelines Rule Changes	Review the Agency's Data Analysis Capabilities based on the data we currently have access to and what data other sentencing commissions and sentencing policy makers use that we currently don't have access to. The Commission will produce a white paper that reviews the data available and what data is needed by 9/30/24. This will allow the Commission to determine what additional data types/elements we need to pursue to increase our ability to analyze potential Guidelines modifications.	7/31/2024
Evaluate Publishing Materials in Multiple Languages	SCDC will produce a report for the full Commission to review that analyzes the need, benefit, cost, and feasibility of publishing new editions of the Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines Manual in Spanish and/or other languages. This report will identify any applicable standard for translating legal materials, determine how appropriate translation services could be acquired or contracted for, and what the initial, on-going costs to the agency would be and if the measure would enhance racial equity by making materials available for more individuals who do not speak english. The report will also address the cost, needed, and benefit for translating other Commission materials such as the agency's Annual Report. This report will be completed by March 1, 2024 and presented to the Commission by July 1, 2024.	7/1/2024
Training on the Historic Effect of Race on Sentencing Policies and Practices	Provide Sentencing Commission Staff with a training that reviews the historic effect of race on sentencing practices and polices so that they can consider these effects as they perform their jobs and develop future sentencing polices.	9/30/2024
Develop Training Aid Decision Trees	Design, produce, and publish new Guidelines training materials that are decision trees for practitioners and judges. These decisions trees will address unique Guidelines application issues, focusing on specific Guidelines rules or sub-rules. They will walk users through how to apply the rule in a basic and straightforward manner. These publications will be no more than 1-2 pages. The Commission will design a template for the decision trees by 5/31/24 and publish at least two decision trees by 9/30/24.	9/30/2024

5   2024 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 Target
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.					
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.	Up is Better	92.1%	58.4%	68.9%	55%
Percent of all counts sentenced that are deemed compliant with the Guidelines.	Up is Better	97%	95.1%	98.1%	93%
Percent of all counts sentenced that are within the recommended Sentencing Guidelines range/options.	Up is Better	90.9%	88.4%	93.7%	85%
Percent of all sentences for weapon offenses that are compliant with the Sentencing Guidelines.	Up is Better	83%	95%	98.1%	90%
Percent of all sentences for violent offenses that are compliant with the Sentencing Guidelines.	Up is Better	89.4%	95.2%	97.9%	90%
Percent of all judicial compliance letters sent that judges responded to.	Up is Better	90%	73.6%	94.3%	85%
Percent of all Guidelines compliant sentences that were the result of an accepted Rule 11(c)(1)(C) plea bargain.	Up is Better	15.6%	14%	14.9%	13%
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.					
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.	Up is Better	98.9%	98.8%	99.3%	98.5%
Percent of post-training surveys that gave the Commission an 80% or higher satisfaction rating.	Up is Better	94.4%	100%	100%	85%
Number of Social Media Postings.	Up is Better	264	790	1,000	200
Percent of all Commission website hits on web pages related to outreach and education material.	Up is Better	46%	13.8%	32.7%	13%
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.					
Percent of data request responses delivered within 20 days or by the requested response date.	Up is Better	95.2%	100%	100%	85%

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 Target
Percent of Unique Arrests from MPD that are verified and processed by the Commission's data system.	Up is Better	83.7%	100%	100%	85%
Percent of MPD Arrest Charges received that are verified and processed by the Commission's data system.	Up is Better	93.2%	100%	100%	76%
Percent of Commission data system error tickets resolved within 45 days.	Up is Better	84.8%	0%	31.8%	70%

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Identify Irregularities and Inconsistencies in Felony Sentences Imposed			
Number of Sealed Cases	3,596	1,826	2,276
Number of Data Quality Assurance (DQA) Issues Identified and Submitted to the Appropriate Agency	54	24	52
Review and Verify All Felony Sentences			
Number of Felony Counts Sentenced	913	1,538	1,524
Number of Felony Cases Sentenced	673	1,227	1,110
Number of Departure Letters Sent	16	73	53
Number of Probation Revocations Sentenced	117	165	176
Number of sentences imposed as the result of an accepted Rule 11(C)(1)(c) plea bargain	97	249	210
Number of Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) Criminal History Scores Submitted to the Commission	728	1,093	1,118
Review and Verify all Criminal History Scores			
Number of Requests for Missing Criminal History Scores Made to the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)	64	171	28
Maintain and Update Agency Website			
Number of Agency Website Hits	25,554	35,350	34,147
Provide Sentencing Guideline Training			
Number of individuals receiving Sentencing Guideline Training	123	335	123
Number of Sentencing Guideline Trainings Provided	8	27	20
Number of Agency Website Updates Completed	414	97	107
MPD Arrest Data Processing			
Number of Unique MPD Arrests Received	19,483	70,061	44,372
Number of MPD Arrest Charges Received by Commission's Data System	35,602	79,115	64,815
Monitor and Maintain the Guideline Reporting Information Data (GRID) System			
Number of Commission Data System Tickets Entered	33	19	22

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Number of new charge codes mapped in the Commission's data system	31	0	0
Number of Critical Commission Data System Tickets Submitted	12	0	No Applicable Incidents
Number of hours required to complete data requests	677	370	793
Respond to Data Requests			
Number of Data Requests Received	42	11	11
Number of Data Sets Distributed or Published by the Commission	14	2	5