

Maximizing Pretrial Release

Background

About 75% of the Allegheny County Jail population is awaiting action on new criminal charges or probation violations. Over the past decade, stakeholders have worked towards the goal of preventing low risk individuals who are awaiting trial from spending time in the jail.

Three-Pronged Approach

- Implemented locally validated risk assessment in 2007
- Started second look bail review hearings in 2009
- Expanded representation at first appearance by the Public Defender's Office through the Safety and Justice Challenge in 2019.



Collaboration

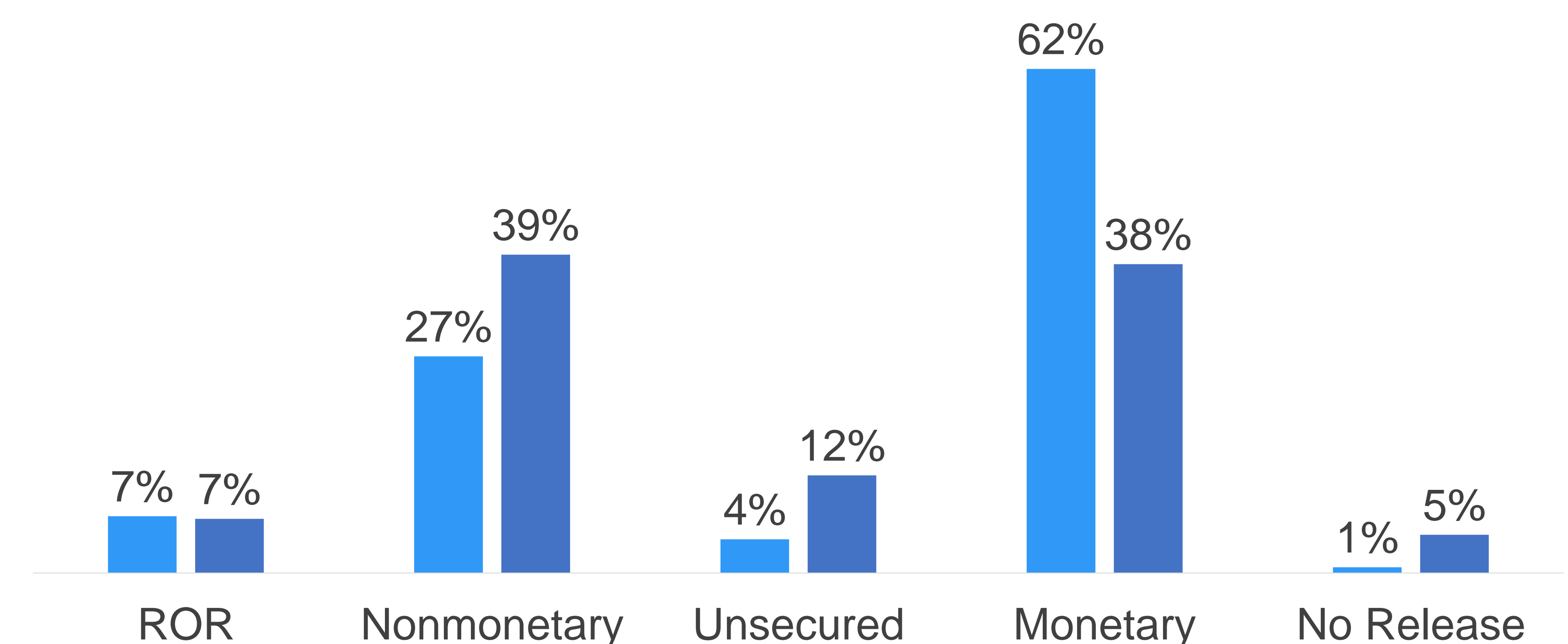
- Pretrial Services conducts trainings with Magisterial District Judges to explain how the Pretrial assessment works and how it can be a tool for decision making.
- The jail shares data with Pretrial Services about individuals held in the jail on monetary bond so that they can be brought to a bail review hearing.

Outcomes

Pretrial Services never recommends monetary bond, and Magisterial District Judges agree with Pretrial recommendations 61% of the time. When monetary bond is given to an individual who had a release recommendation, Pretrial brings the case to a second look bail hearing within approximately 3 days and bond is modified about 90% of the time. During the first quarter of providing PD representation during first appearances that take place overnight, monetary bond usage decreased by 39%.

Evening and Overnight Bail Decisions

■ Comparison Group (N=1,697) ■ PD-Represented (N=770)



Next Steps

- Revalidating local assessment with particular attention to outcomes by race.
- Evaluating impact of PD representation through randomized controlled trial.