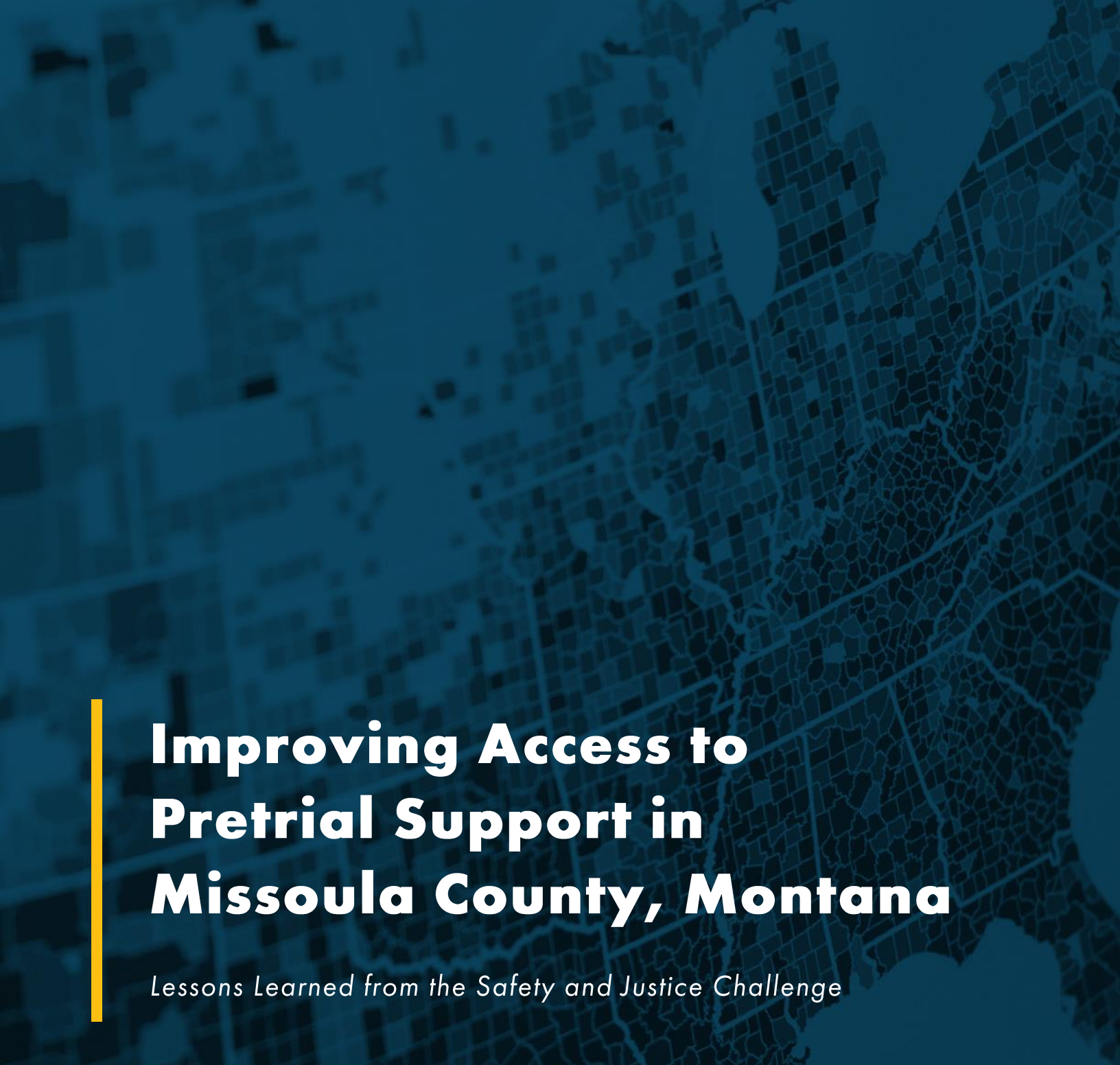




Improving Access to Pretrial Support in Missoula County, Montana

Lessons Learned from the Safety and Justice Challenge

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RESEARCH REPORT

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Improving Access to Pretrial Support in Missoula County, Montana

Of the nearly 665,000 people being held in local jails across the country at midyear 2023, more than 65 percent were being held pretrial, meaning they had not been convicted of a crime (Sawyer and Wagner 2025).¹ Pretrial detention is primarily intended for people awaiting trial who are deemed a flight risk or a danger to community safety, yet many who remain in jail before their cases are resolved are there because they cannot afford to pay the monetary bail (also called cash bail) required for their release. Monetary bail is an amount, usually set by a judge, that a defendant is required to pay to be released from jail while awaiting their court date. Moreover, nearly 75 percent of people held in jail have been accused of nonviolent traffic, property, drug, or public order offenses.² And the impact of jail incarceration is disproportionately felt: in 2022, Black people faced a jail incarceration rate of 558 per 100,000, compared with 162 per 100,000 among white people.³

Many communities' jail populations reflect gaps in social services for vulnerable populations, especially people experiencing poverty, mental illness, substance use disorder, and housing insecurity. Although data on the prevalence of mental and behavioral health conditions in jails are limited, the latest DOJ estimates suggest 44 percent of people in local jails have a history of mental illness (Bronson and Berzofsky 2017). And an estimated 63 percent of the sentenced jail population meets the criteria for drug dependence or abuse (Bronson et al. 2017). Unhoused people are more likely to be jailed for offenses associated with survival behaviors, have higher rebooking rates, and be held in jail longer.⁴

A defendant missing a scheduled court date is known as failure to appear (FTA). For individuals, FTAs can result in bench warrants and additional legal consequences, and for courts, they contribute to longer case processing and reduced efficiency.⁵ Because of this, ensuring people appear in court is often used as justification for imposing monetary bail or pretrial detention. Bail amounts are typically based on the type and severity of pending charges and on the defendant's contextual risk factors, such as criminal history, ties to the community, financial resources, and mental or behavioral health conditions (IML 2020; Scheadler et al. 2025).

Although proponents of cash bail contend that it provides a financial incentive for people to attend court hearings, research suggests that the use of cash bail does not improve court appearance rates (Ouss and Stevenson 2023; Scheadler et al. 2025). One reason for this is that assigning cash bail fails to address the main drivers of FTA: forgetfulness, financial barriers, work, and logistical challenges such as a lack of child care or transportation.⁶ And securing monetary bail does not improve public safety, with some studies even finding that being assigned cash bail is associated with higher rearrest rates (Adams and Baumer 2019; Copp et al. 2022; Scheadler et al. 2025; Zottola and Desmarais 2022). Pretrial release, on the other hand, has been associated with reduced rearrest rates (Silver et al. 2023).⁷

Furthermore, the inability to afford cash bail has contributed to high jail incarceration rates, jail overcrowding, and disparities in pretrial detention (Rabuy and Kopf 2016; Reaves 2013; Scheadler et al. 2025). Several studies suggest Black people are more often assigned monetary bail rather than being released pretrial than white people accused of similar crimes (Monaghan et al. 2022; Preston and Eisenberg 2022). These disparities contribute to higher pretrial detention rates and longer lengths of stay for Black people and people with fewer financial resources to post bail.

When a defendant is released during the pretrial period, the court often imposes conditions intended to ensure they comply with court obligations and preserve community safety. Many states have laws that require courts to impose the least restrictive conditions necessary to meet these goals. Imposing excessive or unnecessary conditions can disrupt the positive activities in people's lives and undermine due process.⁸

Pretrial conditions are often enforced through pretrial supervision programs, which in many jurisdictions have become intensive and punitive, mirroring probation requirements despite a person's pretrial status. Many people struggle to comply with these intensive pretrial supervision programs. For example, these programs often involve frequent reporting requirements, mandatory drug testing, electronic monitoring, and mandatory classes, all of which can hinder one's ability to work and fulfill family obligations. Rather than improving compliance, excessive restrictions can lead to technical violations and greater entanglement in the court system (Cohen and Hicks 2023). To minimize unnecessary burdens on defendants during the pretrial period, courts should tailor these programs' requirements to people's risk profiles and pending cases.⁹

To reduce failures to appear and court involvement by offering supportive services to people awaiting trial in Missoula Municipal Court, Missoula County and the City of Missoula in Montana have partnered to implement the Pretrial Assistance to Support Success (PASS) program. PASS

operates as an alternative to pretrial detention or pretrial supervision that helps people navigate the court process and receive holistic services that address barriers to court appearance and compliance. In this case study, part of a series examining work supported by the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC; box 1), we begin with an overview of the case study's methodology, followed by an overview of Missoula and the local criminal legal system reform context in which the PASS program is situated. We describe the PASS program and its development and implementation approach. We then discuss challenges observed during implementation and the successes and impacts that program staff, criminal legal system stakeholders, and program participants have perceived. We conclude with recommendations and lessons learned from the implementation of PASS that may be helpful for other jurisdictions wanting to design and implement similar programming and services for pretrial defendants.

BOX 1

The Safety and Justice Challenge Implementation Case Studies

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) in 2015 to address the misuse and overuse of jails, a main driver of incarceration in America. The network of cities, counties, and states participating in the SJC are working to rethink local justice systems with strategies that are intended to be data-driven, equity-focused, and community-informed, and that safely reduce jail populations, eliminate ineffective and unfair practices, and reduce racial disparities. This case study is part of a series that examines how SJC network jurisdictions that received significant, sustained grant investment in comprehensive system reform worked to change the way that they use jails, in order to provide practical insights to other localities seeking to realize similar reform ambitions.

Methodology

We relied on four primary data sources in developing this case study: semistructured interviews with City of Missoula and Missoula County stakeholders involved with PASS and SJC efforts and semistructured interviews with PASS program participants; documentation, program materials, and summary programmatic data from PASS stakeholders; and jail population data collected from SJC sites by the Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG).

Stakeholder Interviews

Between December 2024 and April 2025, the research team conducted one-hour virtual interviews with 29 City of Missoula and Missoula County stakeholders involved with the PASS program or Missoula County's Safety and Justice Challenge efforts more broadly. These stakeholders represented a range of agencies including municipal and district courts, the public defender's office, local government offices, and nonprofit organizations. Within these offices, interviewees held various positions including judges, case workers, public defenders, court support specialists, program managers, and a number of elected positions. Their tenure in these positions ranged from less than a year to over 20 years.

These interviews collected information about stakeholders' professional backgrounds and roles related to PASS and pretrial services; local context and priorities for reducing the jail population; the design and implementation of PASS; perceptions of the program and perceived challenges, successes, and impacts; and sustainability efforts and recommendations for improvement. After data collection, we transcribed and uploaded the interviews to NVivo, a qualitative analysis software, which we used to conduct a thematic analysis of trends in stakeholders' responses.

Participant Interviews

We conducted 30-minute interviews with seven PASS participants about their perceptions of Missoula's criminal legal system and their experiences with the program. We provided each participant with a \$40 gift card to thank them for their time. We asked interviewees about their perceptions of jail use and the fairness of the local criminal legal system; their involvement with PASS; services they had been referred to and received; benefits and challenges of participating in the program; their understanding of release conditions; and suggestions for improving the program.

Document Review

We requested documentation related to the PASS program and Missoula's SJC efforts from the stakeholders we interviewed. The documentation included brochures and information sheets for clients describing the program and its services; a program description with information about its goals and objectives, eligibility and the target population, and details of participation and supportive services; a program referral form from Missoula Municipal Court; documentation about the program's tiers; and slideshow presentations summarizing the program's services, participants' characteristics, and the program's impact. We also received summary data from the program on clients'

demographics and characteristics, client volume and caseloads, service receipt, material support provided, and FTA rates.

Institute for State and Local Governance Data Analysis

The Institute for State and Local Governance provided cleaned and processed jail trends data from Missoula County. We used descriptive statistics to analyze trends in the county jail population using these data. All jail trends data in this case study were provided by ISLG unless indicated otherwise.

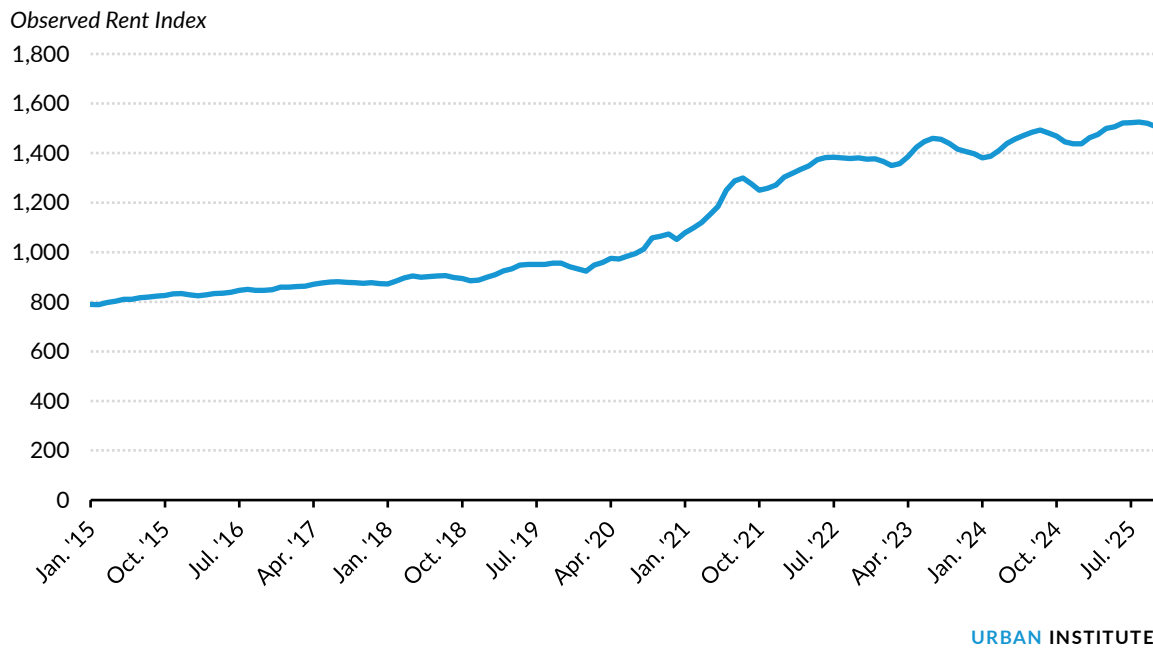
Background on Missoula County

Missoula County is the third most populous county in Montana, with a population of over 119,000. The county encompasses the City of Missoula, which has its own government structure, along with a number of surrounding unincorporated communities.¹⁰ About 88 percent of the county's population identifies as white (non-Hispanic or Latine), 2 percent as American Indian and Alaska Native, 2 percent as Asian, and less than 1 percent as Black.¹¹

Local Context

From January 2015 to October 2025, Missoula saw a massive increase in housing costs. Zillow's Observed Rent Index, a measure of typical monthly rent in a region, for Missoula rose from \$788 to \$1,507, an increase of 91 percent over the 10-year period (figure 1). From 2015 to 2023, Missoula's population increased 7 percent.¹²

FIGURE 1
Missoula County's Observed Rent Index Increased 91 Percent from January 2015 to October 2025



Source: "Housing Data," Zillow Group, accessed February 12, 2026, <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>.

In 2022, 44 percent of Missoula County residents were rent burdened, meaning they were spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent (Harrison et al. 2024). Research suggests houselessness¹³ rates spike in cities and regions where typical rent costs exceed this threshold (Glynn et al. 2021).

These factors, and Missoula County's limited public resources for people with mental and behavioral health issues, have contributed to the housing crisis the county now faces. Point-in-time estimates from the Missoula Coordinated Entry System show that in October 2024 more than 600 households were experiencing houselessness. There are significant racial disparities in the county's unhoused population: despite representing less than 3 percent of the county population in 2022, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Indigenous people represented 14 percent of its unhoused population.¹⁴

The stakeholders we spoke with repeatedly identified Missoula's rapidly rising housing costs and growing unhoused population as primary upstream drivers of people entering and cycling through the criminal legal system. Stakeholders linked housing affordability and a lack of transportation to failures to appear, the inability to access services, and "crimes of necessity" that lead to pretrial detention.

Several interviewees framed changes in recent ordinances related to unsheltered camping as directly worsening the ability to locate and support defendants and increasing the criminalization of survival behaviors.

“It has prevented success. I think that that’s a major barrier to pretrial success is just the legislation, the recent Supreme Court decisions regarding criminality of homelessness and then the city of Missoula’s city council taking advantage of that ruling to push out our most vulnerable clients who are I would say at a higher rate engaged in the PASS program or conditioned to the PASS program for release.” –Missoula stakeholder

Furthermore, multiple stakeholders described the state psychiatric hospital as underresourced, with long queues that result in people who need treatment being held in jail pretrial while they wait for it to become available. The absence of local short-term crisis and residential options (group homes, a crisis receiving center, detox facilities with medical oversight) compounds the issue. Stakeholders view jail as an inappropriate fallback that neither stabilizes people nor protects their health, while consuming public resources. Several interviewees linked this problem directly to longer pretrial stays and delays in fitness-for-trial evaluations. One stakeholder we spoke with summarized this challenge:

“We have a backlog of folks in the community who really do need some kind of mental health assistance that the community can’t provide. When that happens, some of those folks end up charged based on behavior that is caused by a treatable mental illness but they’re not able to get the treatment and then they’re placed into jail.”

Overall, stakeholders highlighted a lack of local detox facilities and rehabilitation capacity, insufficient medication-assisted treatment options, and reductions in case management capacity as barriers to stable exits from criminal legal system involvement. These are systemic issues that can undermine what services are available to pretrial defendants and may contribute to recidivism and repeated jail bookings.

Jail Population Characteristics

Below we present key characteristics of the Missoula County jail population, including demographics, the average daily population (ADP), and the pretrial population. This information provides important context for the reforms examined in this case study.

Since Missoula County began its Safety and Justice Challenge work in 2017, white people have made up a smaller share, and Native American / Indigenous people a larger share, of its jail population (table 1).

TABLE 1

Trends in Missoula County's Jail Population Highlight Ongoing Disparities

Racial and ethnic composition of Missoula's jail population, from the start of the county's Safety and Justice Challenge work to 2025

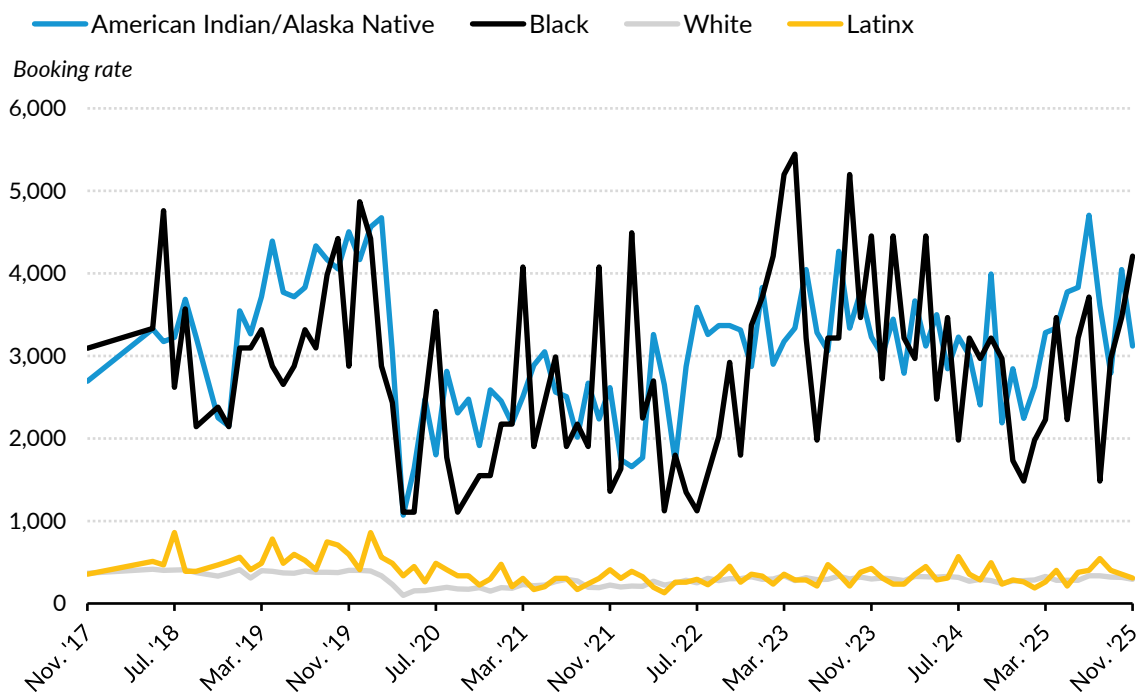
Race/ethnicity	2017	2025
White	75%	68%
Native American / Indigenous	17%	21%
Black / African American	5%	5%
Latinx	2%	2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1%	1%

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

The jail booking rates for Native American and Indigenous people, Black people, and Latinx people have fluctuated significantly during the county's SJC work (figure 2) and illustrate the need for continued intervention, particularly for the Indigenous and Black communities.

FIGURE 2

Missoula Has Seen High Fluctuation in Jail Booking Rates for Non-White Groups Since November 2017



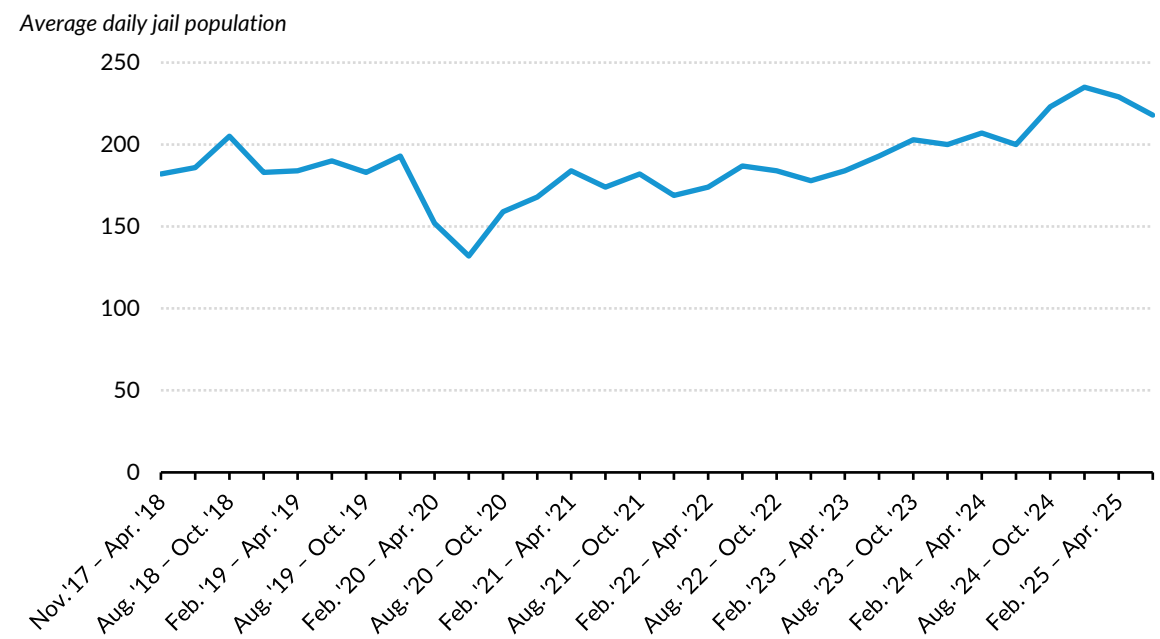
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Source: Analysis by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance. Data were shared by ISLG with the Urban research team in January 2025; not publicly available.

Note: Booking rate is per 100,000 adults, by race.

Missoula’s average daily jail population has also fluctuated (figure 3). In 2017, the county’s ADP was 182. During its SJC participation, its lowest ADP occurred in Q3 2020, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, at 132. Since then the ADP has consistently increased; as of Q3 2025 it had reached 218, a 19.6 percent increase from 2017.

FIGURE 3
Missoula’s Average Daily Jail Population Has Fluctuated, Dropping to a Low in 2020 and Increasing Since



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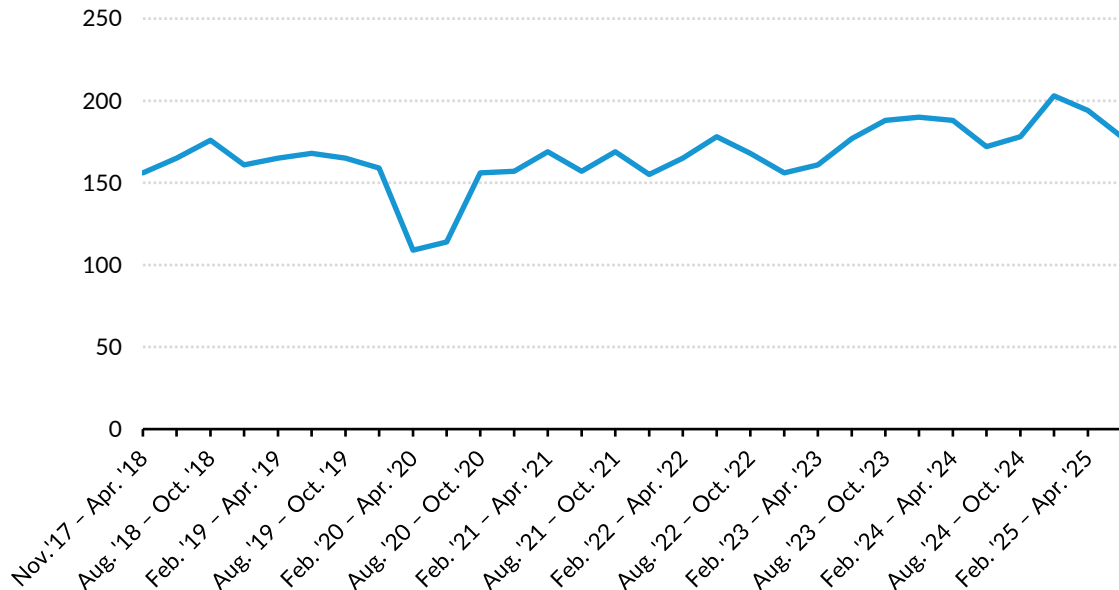
Source: Analysis by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance. Data were shared by ISLG with the Urban research team in January 2025; not publicly available.

The most recent data from ISLG (for Q3 2025) show that 82 percent of Missoula County’s jail population is held pretrial (figure 4). Trends in the county’s pretrial jail population have largely mirrored those of its average daily population. In 2017, the average daily pretrial population was 156, and as of Q3 2025 it had increased to 178, a 14 percent increase.

FIGURE 4

Missoula's Average Daily Pretrial Jail Population Decreased Between 2017 and 2020, But Then Steadily Increased

Average daily pretrial jail population



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Source: Analysis by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance. Data were shared by ISLG with the Urban research team in January 2025; not publicly available.

Local Jail Reform Efforts

Since 2018, Missoula County has received three MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge grants to support its efforts to safely reduce the county jail population, address injustices in the local criminal legal system, and improve coordination among stakeholders and community members. The county created a criminal justice coordinating council, a committee composed of criminal legal system stakeholders who play important roles in local criminal legal policymaking and practices. These stakeholders meet regularly to discuss key local justice issues.

In 2019, the county created Calibrate, a prosecutor-led pretrial diversion program under the county attorney's office which works to reduce the number of people involved in the criminal legal system by diverting first-time offenders.¹⁵ During the SJC, Missoula hired two chemical dependency evaluators to expedite the process for getting people who were awaiting trial and those who had

been convicted into chemical dependency treatment. It also hired a Native American support specialist who offered culturally specific case management services in the Office of the Public Defender for a number of years.¹⁶ With SJC funds, the county also funded a data analyst to create reports and data dashboards and evaluate criminal legal policy and program initiatives in Missoula. In addition, stakeholders collaborated to make case processing in the justice and district courts more efficient and adopt a pretrial risk assessment tool to make release decisions prompter and more equitable.

The PASS Program

Pretrial Assistance to Support Success is a pretrial program in Missoula Municipal Court that offers supportive services to defendants in Missoula awaiting trial. It was created by municipal court judges to provide alternatives to pretrial supervision that would help people navigate the court process and receive services with the goal of reducing failures to appear and recidivism. In addition to the Municipal Court, where the PASS program is housed, Missoula has two other court systems that feed into the Missoula County jail. Missoula Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction that handles misdemeanor offenses, city ordinance violations, and traffic offenses that occur within the city limits of Missoula. The Justice Court addresses misdemeanors, small claims, and similar offenses that fall within the county's jurisdiction. The District Court in Missoula County covers felonies, family law, and appeals for lower-level courts.

History and Development

When the SJC began in 2017, criminal legal system leaders and stakeholders in Missoula observed high rates of pretrial jail incarceration, much of which was for low-level nonviolent offenses or violations of release conditions. Stakeholders in Missoula wanted an evidence-based program that would safely keep people awaiting trial in the community while supporting them to appear in court and reducing rearrest and reincarceration. Early work began as a small pilot with the Community Support Reentry Program, which operated under the Missoula County Sheriff's Office and focused on intensive support with caseloads of 10 to 15 people. That program later informed the design of the PASS program. In 2020 Missoula changed its jail population reduction strategy because of the pandemic, releasing people charged with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses from the jail.

Shortly after, three newly elected Missoula Municipal Court judges who were formerly public defenders began the process of designing a program that would reform the current model of pretrial

services and supervision by providing supportive services to defendants awaiting trial. The goal was to reduce pretrial incarceration for low-level offenses and failures to appear while implementing a program that addressed gaps in pretrial services. Missoula Municipal Court previously contracted with Missoula Correctional Services (MCS) for court-ordered pretrial monitoring, which defendants were required to pay for. At that time, no supportive services were offered to pretrial defendants to address the underlying issues that contribute to criminal legal system involvement and make it difficult to comply with release conditions, including appearing in court. PASS was created to address this gap in supports for people awaiting trial on misdemeanor charges.

“There was absolutely nothing in the pretrial space.... A big part of our goal was to decrease misdemeanor incarceration rates, in particular, pretrial, especially through bond practices and things like that.”

—Missoula stakeholder

The program’s development was highly collaborative and involved Missoula Municipal Court judges, county officials, court personnel, the sheriff’s office, and others working in the criminal legal system. Stakeholders we spoke with shared that the design process was iterative and involved regular meetings, policy drafting, and continuous refinement. Those involved in the design process emphasized the importance of a shared philosophy about what pretrial support should look like based on national best practices. The design of the PASS program was grounded in extensive research on the evidence base of pretrial practices, and the team consulted scholarly articles, organizations including Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Center for Justice Innovation, and existing models like the Bronx Defenders’ Holistic Defense Model. Stakeholders also attended conferences and participated in peer learning opportunities through the SJC, which were instrumental in shaping the program’s structure and philosophy.

Missoula funded the launch of PASS by reallocating funds from a discontinued private misdemeanor probation contract. This allowed for immediate implementation without new budget proposals or requests. The development team leveraged existing infrastructure and partnerships, such as county facilities and staffing support, to stand up the program. PASS officially launched on October 11, 2022.

The Program’s Reach

From October 2022 to June 2025, the PASS program served 2,878 clients (table 2). The majority identified as white, followed by Native American / Indigenous, with smaller shares identifying as

Black / African American and Asian / Pacific Islander. Most participants were male, while 34.5 percent were female and less than 1 percent identified as nonbinary. Clients were primarily adults 18 or older, with the largest age groups in their thirties, twenties, and forties. Participants' housing stability differed, with about a fifth housing insecure. These demographics indicate that the program primarily serves white and Native American adults, particularly men, who may face housing challenges.

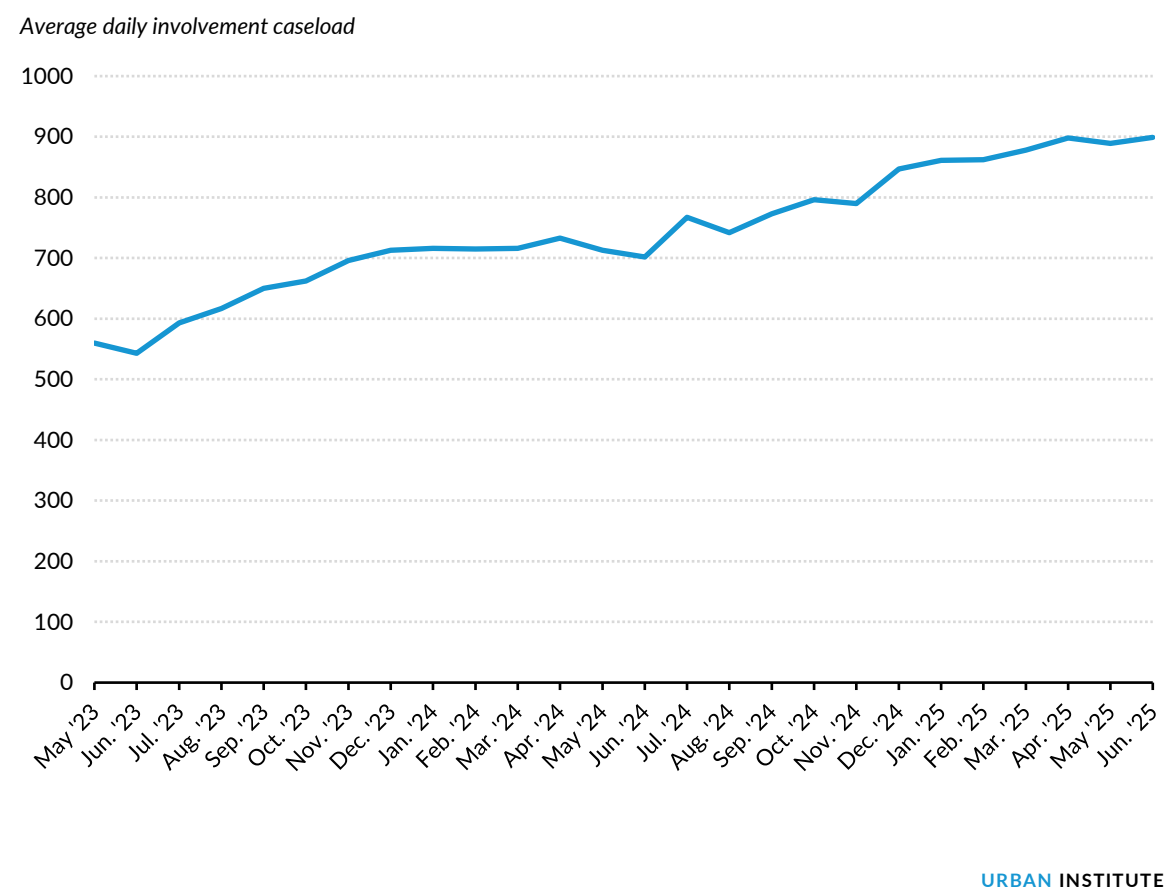
TABLE 2
PASS Client Demographics, October 2022 to June 2025

Characteristic	Number of clients	Percentage of total clients
<i>Race</i>		
White	2,290	79.6%
Native American / Indigenous	480	16.7%
Black / African American	94	3.3%
Asian / Pacific Islander	15	0.5%
<i>Gender/sex</i>		
Male	1,884	65.5%
Female	993	34.5%
Nonbinary	1	0.0%
<i>Age group</i>		
17–19	61	2.1%
20–29	742	25.8%
30–39	880	30.6%
40–49	664	23.1%
50–59	318	11.0%
60–69	153	5.3%
70–79	54	1.9%
80–89	6	0.2%
<i>Housing status</i>		
Housed	2,244	77.9%
Housing insecure	635	22.1%

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

Since it was launched the PASS program has served more and more Missoula residents (figure 5). From May 2023 to June 2025, the average daily involvement caseload—a measure of the average number of people a day in a given month with an open Municipal Court case served by PASS—increased from 560 to 899, a 61 percent increase in client volume.

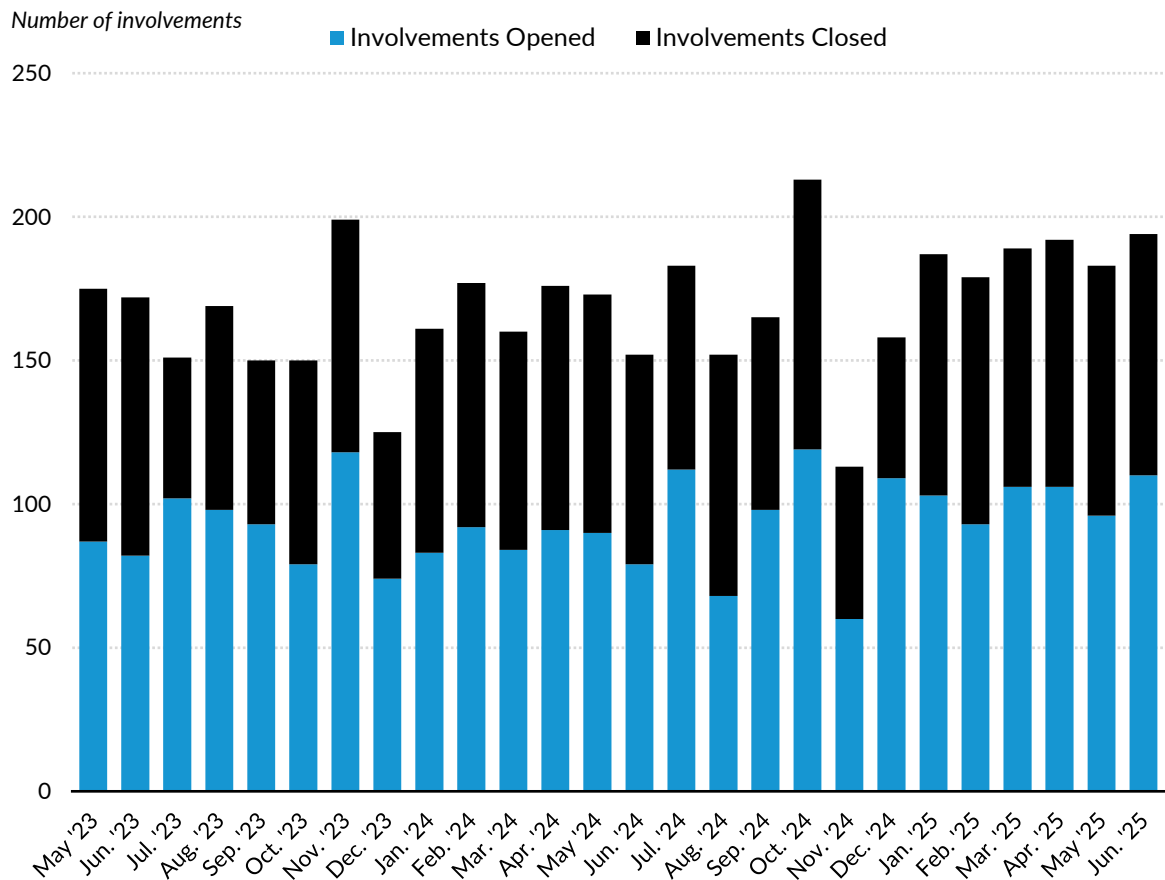
FIGURE 5
PASS's Average Daily Involvement Caseload Has Steadily Increased Since May 2023



Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.
Note: PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

Figure 6 shows the number of client involvements opened and closed each month during the same period, highlighting month-to-month variation in client volume.

FIGURE 6
Missoula Has Seen Month-to-Month Variation in PASS Client Involvements
Opened and Closed Since May 2023



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Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

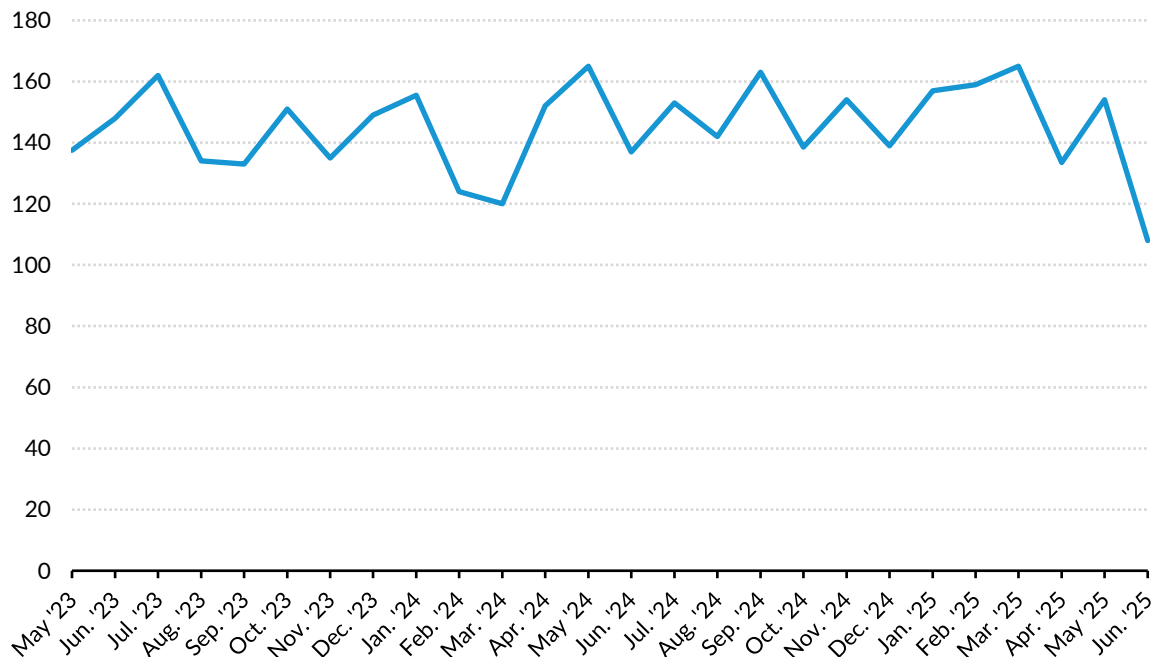
Note: PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

Since May 2023, the median duration of PASS program involvement has fluctuated, with participants spending 108 to 165 days engaging with PASS staff and services (figure 7).

FIGURE 7

The Median Duration of PASS Participation Has Fluctuated Since May 2023

Median length of participation (days)



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Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

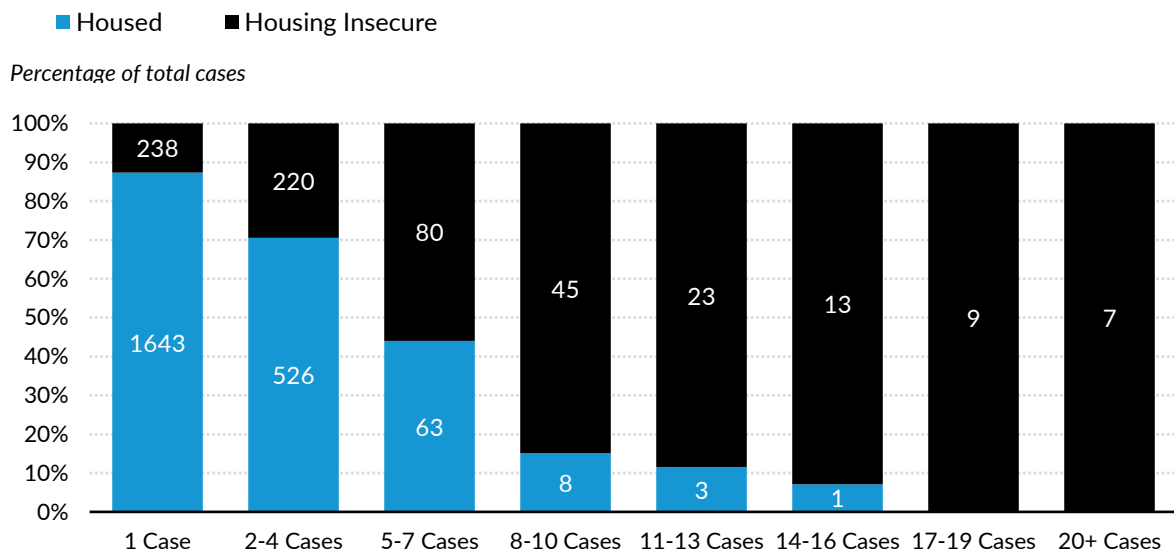
Note: PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

Analysis of case distribution by housing status from October 2022 to May 2024 shows that participants with fewer cases are predominantly housed, while those with more cases are overwhelmingly housing insecure (figure 8). Eighty-eight percent of participants with only one case and 76 percent of those with two to four cases are housed. Nearly half of participants with five to seven cases are housing insecure, on the other hand, and the majority of participants eight cases or more are housing insecure. Notably, all participants with 15 or more cases are housing insecure, underscoring a correlation between housing instability and the number of cases people have in Missoula Municipal Court. This finding highlights the importance of providing targeted supports and services for housing-insecure people.

FIGURE 8

PASS Participants with More Cases in Missoula Municipal Court Are More Likely to Be Housing Insecure

Housing status and number of cases in Missoula Municipal Court, October 2022 to May 2024



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Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

Note: PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

The PASS Program's Goals and Philosophy

The PASS program has six goals: provide supportive services to all defendants assigned to the program, provide the least restrictive support necessary to ensure compliance with conditions of release, provide court reminders, reduce the frequency of court nonappearance, safely reduce the jail population while maintaining public safety, and follow evidence-based best practices.

PASS's philosophy is to offer support, not supervision, to participants. PASS assists and guides participants through the pretrial period rather than monitoring them to enforce compliance with release conditions. PASS staff explicitly do not perform supervision functions such as drug testing or electronic monitoring and do not report participant behavior or engagement with services back to the court. While referrals to the program are made by municipal court judges, the program encourages voluntary engagement and supports participants based on their preferences and circumstances. The focus of PASS is on identifying and removing practical obstacles that contribute to failure to appear and recidivism. The belief is that addressing these obstacles will increase participants' likelihood of returning to court and reduce recidivism.

Individuals assigned to participate in the PASS program are contacted by PASS to schedule a brief intake meeting with a PASS support specialist, which generally occurs within five business days. During this meeting, PASS staff outline program expectations, explain court date notifications, review pretrial release conditions, and discuss the frequency of subsequent check-ins depending on the client's assigned tier.

The PASS Governance Structure, Staff Roles, and Partnerships

The PASS program is a collaboration between the City of Missoula and Missoula County. Missoula County contracts with the City of Missoula for some PASS staff positions. The Missoula County Community Justice Department oversees the county positions in PASS, and the two organizations share caseworkers. Staff positions in the PASS program include a program manager, a court support coordinator, and court support specialists. The staff positions housed in the Municipal Court are the court program administrator and the court support specialist. Funding for the program comes from the City of Missoula, but Missoula County, the entity that receives SJC funding, does fund some of the program's resources, such as phones, bus cards, and other transportation assistance.

PASS staff help clients navigate the court system, fulfill their court obligations, access resources, and maintain stability postrelease. PASS staff members' strong relationships with both municipal court staff and criminal legal system partners outside the municipal court have strengthened the program and increased coordination in the local criminal legal system. Jail facility leadership, youth detention facility leadership, stakeholders from other Missoula courts, and public defenders are all vital to the program's day-to-day operations. For example, public defenders and jail staff help coordinators connect with program participants while they are still in custody, allowing them to begin building relationships with clients and connecting them to resources (e.g., housing, court-ordered mental health or substance use treatment, cell phones) that support stability after release. Community and city/county service providers emphasized their ongoing close coordination with the PASS program, including regular meetings to discuss program updates and resource capacity, collaborating through resource access days and ComMUNItY Court, and working together to troubleshoot care and resource coordination challenges. Resource access days are monthly events hosted by these mental health, behavioral health, legal services, and housing providers and the Missoula Public Library where PASS participants and other community members can access vaccinations, haircuts, and other resources. Together, these stakeholders form a network of support that strengthens the program's reach.

Referrals and Service Tiers

Defendants in Missoula Municipal Court who are identified by a judge as needing additional support and services to reduce the likelihood of nonappearance and recidivism are referred to PASS by court order and assigned to one of three tiers depending on individual factors. The program is available to anyone charged with a misdemeanor in the Municipal Court. But because the program's tier model prioritizes more frequent engagement and service connection for people at higher risk of nonappearance and recidivism, it primarily emphasizes people without stable housing, a focus reflected in its community outreach and engagement efforts.

The PASS program's three-tier system is designed to provide graduated levels of support to participants based on their needs and risk factors. Tier 1 offers minimal support, providing court date reminders via text, email, or phone. Tier 2 adds monthly check-ins with a PASS court support specialist, creating opportunities for voluntary service referrals. Tier 3 provides the most intensive support: biweekly check-ins, court reminders, assistance with pretrial conditions, and light-touch case management after the participant has completed an intake with a PASS court support specialist. PASS previously had a fourth tier intended for those who needed more hands-on case management, but the intensive case management requirements were unrealistic for a population that was already difficult to reach and resulted in lost staff time. When PASS eliminated that fourth tier, those clients were put in tier three and supported on a more informal and case-by-case basis. All tiers of participants are encouraged to reach out to PASS staff if they have questions or are seeking additional support.

Missoula Municipal Court assigns participants to tiers at their initial appearance based on factors including criminal history, history of failure to appear, offense severity, and housing status. Certain offenses, such as assault against partners or family members or a third DUI, are automatically assigned to tier 3 because of their seriousness and implications for public safety. For all other offenses, PASS staff have discretion to change a participant's tier if they need more support or make the request.

Services

The PASS program serves participants in five core areas: court reminders; check-in contacts, and weekly office hours; outreach through ComMUNItY Court and resource access days; case management, connection to community resources, and service referrals; and basic needs assistance, communication support, and transportation support.

Court Reminders

Court reminders are one of the PASS program's main supports for helping people stay involved in their cases and avoid failures to appear. Court reminders are sent via text, email, and phone and provided on physical reminder cards, and contain information about upcoming court dates and hearing types so participants know when to appear and what will happen at their hearing. These court reminders are two-way communication channels for participants and PASS; if someone has a question about their court date or PASS, they can reply to the reminder for clarification.

Check-In Contacts and Weekly Office Hours

PASS staff perform regular check-ins described as light-touch case management and navigation, where they review participants' needs, answer questions about upcoming court hearings, and provide referrals and resources. They also hold weekly office hours at a local shelter during lunch every Thursday to ensure services are accessible and there is a low barrier for participants who may be unable to travel or uncomfortable traveling to the PASS office to meet with a support specialist. Previously, the PASS program partnered with two local shelters, the Poverello Center and the Johnson Street Shelter, for office hours and ComMUNity Court. The Johnson Street Shelter closed in August 2025, after which all PASS-related activities for people in shelters occurred at the Poverello Center.

Outreach Through ComMUNity Court and Resource Access Days

ComMUNity Court and resource access days are the two primary ways the PASS program conducts outreach to participants in the community to encourage them to engage with the program's supports and services.

ComMUNity Court is held on the second and last Fridays of each month at community locations including the Poverello Center, the Missoula Public Library, and the Watershed Navigation Center. The Watershed Navigation Center is a day center where individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity can access essential resources such as food, laundry, mail, and WiFi. It also provides on-site access to a rotating schedule of partner organizations that assist with housing, health care, employment, and other services. The purpose of ComMUNity Court is to make Municipal Court more accessible to defendants by enabling them to address court matters in the community instead of traveling to court, which reduces failures to appear. Court sessions are conducted via Zoom and participants are provided with public defenders either in person or via Zoom. PASS staff attend the hearings and do same-day intake and service referrals for new PASS participants. One stakeholder explained,

“Especially if you’re houseless, the last thing you want to do ... is go to court because you have much more pressing things.... We definitely understand that it’s not because people don’t want to go to court, it’s just they just can’t sometimes.”

The main benefits of ComMUNity Court are that it lowers barriers to attending court, allows PASS staff to build rapport and trust with participants by meeting them where they are and providing services that address their needs, and enables immediate problem solving related to participants’ court cases.

During ComMUNity Court, PASS participants and other Municipal Court defendants can quash outstanding warrants and appear on new charges without the risk of being arrested on-site. They can also meet with a public defender and PASS staff, receive assistance getting their driver’s license reinstated, speak to a Municipal Court judge, and connect with community resources on-site.

ComMUNity Court collaborates with a diverse network of community partners that provide holistic support for Municipal Court defendants. Key partners include the public defender’s office, attorneys who provide legal assistance on-site, and case managers. The Missoula Public Library contributes by issuing library cards, settling overdue fines, and distributing free books; the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center offers SNAP and Medicaid application assistance; the Human Resource Council helps people procure IDs and birth certificates; Montana Women Vote promotes civic engagement through voter registration and by providing information about elections; and Partnership Health Center provides civil legal aid through a medical legal partnership and medication assistance and other medical support through a community outreach team.

Resource access days are monthly drop-in outreach events where community service providers offer free services to people experiencing houselessness or resource insecurity. They are typically held on the second Thursday of the month in the afternoon at the public library. These services typically include vaccinations and basic medical care, behavioral and mental health services and referrals, substance use resources, housing supports, support accessing benefits and identification (Medicaid/SNAP, veteran’s services, birth certificates, IDs), haircuts and basic hygiene supplies, clothing, and free lunch made possible by local donations. PASS tables at resource access days, does outreach and referrals on-site, and provides warm handoffs to service organizations that participate in the events. A larger version of resource access days called Project Community Connect is held annually.

Case Management, Connection to Community Resources, and Service Referrals

PASS provides voluntary, targeted case management and makes referrals based on participants' needs for additional supportive services. For example, PASS provides assistance with applying for public benefits; accessing substance use treatment, mental health services, and primary health care; applying for identification documents such as birth certificates and driver's licenses; accessing legal aid; and connecting to housing and employment supportive services.

Basic Needs Assistance, Communication Support, and Transportation Support

PASS provides basic needs assistance that helps stabilize participants and supports their engagement with services and the court. Material support includes gift cards for food, gas, and laundromats; bus tickets; hygiene products; winter clothing, boots, and handwarmers; and camping supplies such as sleeping bags and tents. PASS also offers rides to appointments and can coordinate with participants' attorneys for transportation to court hearings.

PASS also supplies phones, phone chargers, and phone cards to ensure participants receive court reminders and can communicate with their support specialist about needs that arise during their court case. The program also replaces lost or stolen devices, when possible, to ensure participants continue receiving court reminders, which help reduce the likelihood of a failure to appear. One stakeholder underscored the importance of ensuring participants have reliable communication:

"If you don't have a phone or any way to get the notification, then it's a moot point. That's one of the main things that PASS does as well is help people get phones."

Implementation Challenges

Stakeholders in Missoula shared challenges they encountered implementing the PASS program, including differing philosophies about pretrial reform, early messaging and communication barriers, difficulty maintaining contact with participants, limited visibility and staffing, a need for more collaboration between various criminal legal system agencies, and the program's sustainability.

Ideological Differences About Pretrial Reform

Interview participants described **ideological differences** in Missoula about criminal legal system reform that made it difficult to collaborate and gain buy-in from system stakeholders. The Municipal Court and its pretrial approach emphasize reducing barriers to court appearances and increasing

compliance through supportive services in the community while imposing minimal costs on defendants. As one person described,

“It's a paradigm shift. SJC has brought in pretrial experts to talk to the county and city governments ... about evidence-based practices. We spent two days with an expert in pretrial practices ... where he talked extensively about how alcohol monitoring and electronic monitoring not only don't improve pretrial outcomes, but in certain situations can make them worse. Not imposing cost to the defendant is a huge thing to us.”

Although many people we spoke with expressed positive views of the PASS program, some stakeholders disagreed with the Municipal Court's overall approach to pretrial, including its use of the PASS program, arguing that reporting pretrial program participants' progress back to the court, testing them for drug and alcohol use, and electronically monitoring them are necessary to ensure accountability and court appearances. Some saw the lack of reporting back to the courts associated with the PASS program as a missed opportunity to incentivize long-term behavior change. One person suggested that the Municipal Court's reduced pretrial restrictions for misdemeanors might lead to defendants committing more serious offenses.

Early Messaging and Communication Barriers

Stakeholders described PASS's **initial messaging strategy** as a factor that contributed to hesitancy and confusion among the Missoula community, program participants, and system stakeholders.

“I think the big cautionary thing here would be to be communicating really clearly to people outside of the system what you're doing and why. Because there's a knee-jerk reaction.... If you're changing things at all, does that mean public safety is going to be compromised? Am I personally going to be in greater danger now if you're going to treat people in the justice system differently than you had before?”

—Missoula stakeholder

Judges, public defenders, and PASS support specialists explained that some people are skeptical of any program associated with the court. In addition, initially, many PASS participants heard “pretrial” and associated PASS with traditional pretrial monitoring programs or probation, which both have more restrictions, monitoring procedures, and reporting back to the court than PASS.

Another early challenge was building trust with participants and convincing them that PASS was meant to be a source of support, not punishment. Although PASS staff were eventually able to develop strong relationships with participants, using clearer messaging sooner could have made that process smoother. Over time, through resource access days, ComMUNity Court, office hours in the shelters, and other community outreach efforts, PASS has been able to build a strong reputation among community members for being helpful and focused on the needs of the individual rather than solely on court compliance.

“Now that PASS has been established as a partner in a program for two years, people are becoming familiar with that. There's more rapport that's being built through some of the more frequent utilizers of PASS and their support specialists.”

—Missoula stakeholder

Limited communication between the Municipal Court / PASS and system stakeholders in other courts, the jail, and the police department during early implementation led to uncertainty about the program's scope and potential impact.

Maintaining Contact with Participants

PASS staff explained that because many of the people the program serves have more serious mental and behavioral health needs or are unhoused, **maintaining consistent contact** with some participants is inherently difficult. In response, they worked with leadership to change their approach and prioritize being as accessible as possible in the community through ComMUNity Court, office hours in a local shelter, and resource access days.

Limited Visibility and Staffing

Multiple stakeholders shared that participants find it difficult to locate the current office because it is in a basement in a shared building. This poses a barrier for some people who have difficulty navigating directions to the office, do not have a phone or other means of communication to ask questions about the location, or are newly released from custody. **More visible signage or a more easily navigable location** for the PASS program would help reduce this barrier.

Stakeholders also noted that PASS staff are often out in the community doing outreach, leaving the office unattended. One recommendation was for the program to hire a receptionist or designate

support specialists to rotate attending the front desk for participants coming to the office for services, referrals, or questions about their court cases.

Insufficient Supportive Services in the Broader Community

Communitywide gaps in supportive services at the city and county levels, particularly case management beyond what PASS offers, housing navigation, mental and behavioral health, and posttrial support, can create significant barriers for people seeking assistance. These gaps, combined with the PASS program's limited funding, have contributed to staffing shortages, heavy workloads, and sometimes delays in assistance for PASS participants. Service providers in the community also noted that PASS could be better integrated with other systems, such as housing services, to reduce duplication and streamline access to services.

PASS participants we spoke with identified gaps in services in Missoula County more broadly. They noted that more widely available free or affordable noncriminal legal assistance, mental health counseling, and parenting programs would benefit Missoula residents. Some noted that although PASS staff did all they could to refer participants to these supportive services, those outside organizations' resources were sometimes stretched thin or difficult to obtain in practice.

Sustainability

Stakeholders we spoke with expressed concern about PASS's sustainability, which is deeply tied to the political landscape and judicial leadership. Although the program is currently financially sustainable, there is still widespread concern about its long-term funding if that funding shifts from the municipal court's discretionary budget to grant funding. Many stressed that increasing the program's visibility and community buy-in for it could help insulate it from political shifts.

There was also a desire for PASS to be institutionalized beyond Missoula and embedded in state legislation, which would allow for replication in other jurisdictions and reduce dependence on local ideological and financial support for the program.

Perceived Impacts and Success

Stakeholders had perceived a number of impacts and successes in the implementation of the PASS program, including improved court appearance rates, improved access to resources and services,

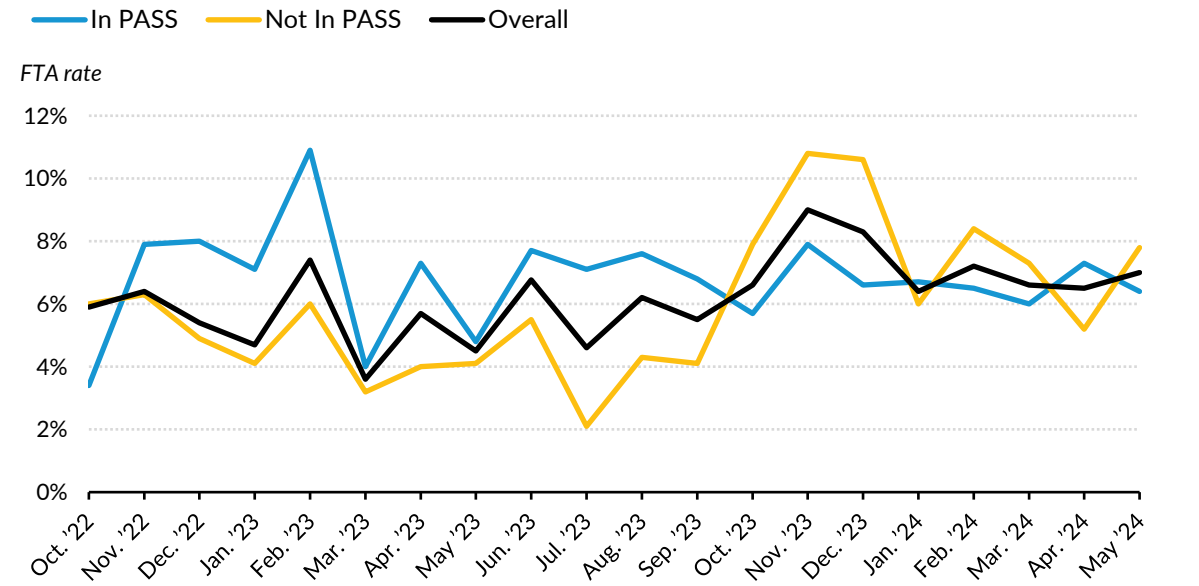
stronger support for people in the court system, and broader system-level changes and community impacts.

Improvements in Court Appearance Rates

A major goal of PASS is to improve court appearance rates for defendants with cases in the Missoula Municipal Court system, particularly among groups that face significant barriers to court compliance. Through **court reminders, community engagement efforts, and supportive staff**, PASS is designed to address challenges that disproportionately affect people with mental health and behavioral health issues.

Average FTA rates from the start of the program to 2024 were 6.9 percent among PASS participants, compared with 5.6 among nonparticipants. This began to change in the later months of 2023, however, with PASS participants' FTA rates falling below those of nonparticipants in the latter half of the time series (figure 9).

FIGURE 9
Starting in October 2023, PASS Participants Were Less Likely to Fail to Appear Than Nonparticipants
Average FTA rates among PASS participants and nonparticipants, October 2022–May 2024



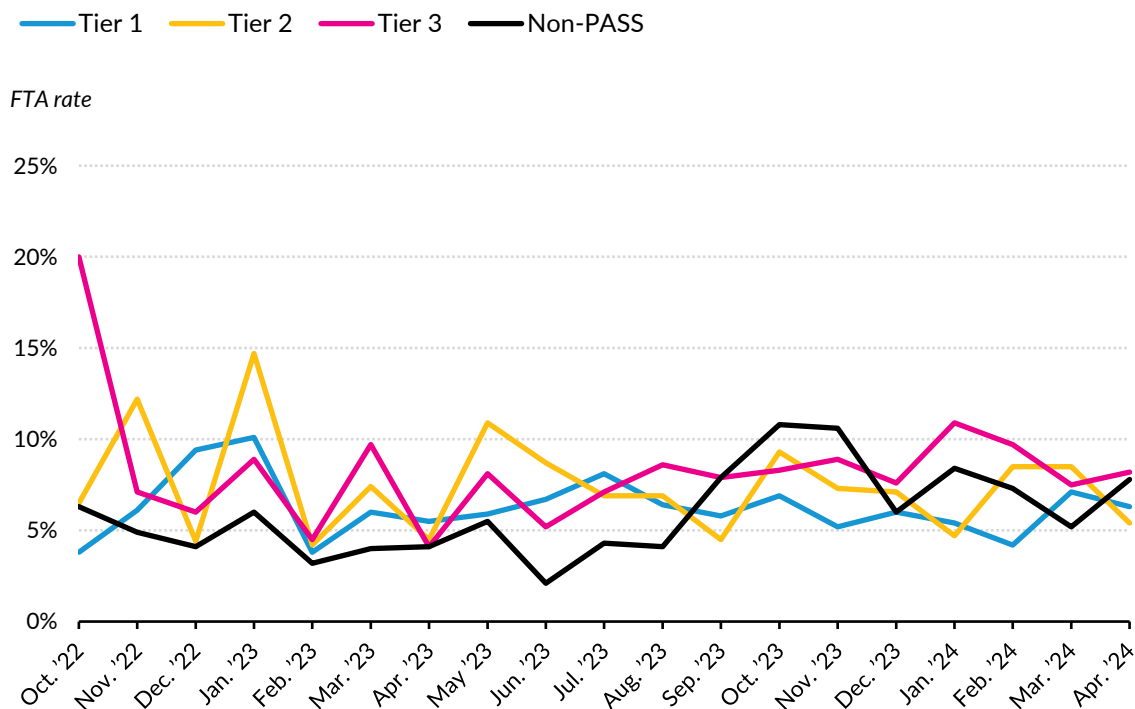
URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.
Notes: FTA = failure to appear. PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

FTA rates among PASS participants remain largely comparable to those of non-PASS participants, even as the program tiers represent populations with progressively higher needs (figure 10). Starting in October of 2023, PASS participants' FTA rate began to dip below the overall FTA rate and that of non-PASS participants. This suggests that the PASS program's interventions may be helping to reduce barriers that would otherwise be expected to lead to higher FTA rates for the higher-needs populations referred to the program.

FIGURE 10

PASS Tiers Tend to Maintain Comparable or Lower FTA Rates Than Non-PASS Participation



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

Notes: FTA = failure to appear. PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

Across most racial and ethnic groups, FTA rates were higher in the higher PASS tiers, reflecting the more severe needs of people assigned to those tiers (table 3). And within tiers, some racial and ethnic groups showed higher FTA rates. For instance, 16.1 percent of the program's clients identified as Native American, and across all levels, Native American participants tended to have higher FTA rates than other groups. This highlights the importance of culturally responsive services and

resources designed to address barriers Native American communities in particular may face related to court appearances in Missoula.

TABLE 3
Rates of Failure to Appear by Race/Ethnicity and PASS Tier, October 2022–May 2024

Race/ethnicity	FTA Rate by PASS Tier			Number of clients (May 2024)	Percentage of total PASS clients (May 2024)
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3		
African American or Black	3.8%	5.6%	9.2%	30	3.9%
Native American	8.7%	10.7%	11.2%	125	16.1%
White	5.5%	6.0%	6.8%	577	74.5%
Other	22.3%	3.6%	2.8%	42	5.4%
Overall	6.0%	7.2%	7.9%	774	100.0%

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.
Notes: FTA = failure to appear. PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

Access to Resources and Services

PASS’s community outreach efforts through office hours in a local shelter, ComMUNity Court, and resource access days have all helped strengthen relationships between participants and the program’s support specialists, ensure court appearances, quash warrants, and improve participants’ access to key services.

“I’m seeing some people who, through working with us, have connected with substance use providers and are now sober. I’ve seen some people who are working with case managers. I’ve seen people that we’re working with get housed.”
—Missoula stakeholder

Table 4 shows the number of times PASS staff provided key services to program participants and engaged with them at different community touchpoints. (These data were exported from the program’s case management system in June 2025, so totals represent the number of engagements in each service category that had been provided to clients who had an open municipal court case in that month.)

TABLE 4

Services That Had Been Provided to PASS Clients with Open Municipal Court Cases in June 2025

Service provided	Number of engagements	Percentage of total client engagements
Met in custody	392	29.8%
Office hours	267	21.8%
Office of public defender	155	11.8%
ComMUNItY Court	84	6.4%
Community partner referral	77	5.9%
Basic needs	50	3.8%
Municipal court	49	3.7%
Housing	45	3.4%
Mental health	40	3.0%
Substance use	39	3.0%
ID and driver's License	19	1.4%
Public assistance	17	1.3%
Supplemental Security Income / Social Security		
Disability Insurance	16	1.2%
Court accompaniment	14	1.1%
Transportation provided	12	0.9%
Resource access day	10	0.8%
Anger management	9	0.7%
Civil legal aid	8	0.6%
Birth certificate and social security card	7	0.5%
Employment	3	0.2%
Veterans services	2	0.2%
Total	1,315	100.0%

Source: Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program data.

Notes: PASS = Pretrial Assistance to Support Success.

In addition to these outreach efforts and services, PASS provides other tangible support that reduces immediate barriers to program participation and court compliance. From March 2023 to June 2025, PASS distributed **94 phones, 114 phone cards, 96 other gift cards** (grocery, laundry, and gas cards), and several **tents, sleeping bags, and portable chargers** to participants with support from SJC funding. These items help participants meet their basic needs, receive court reminders, stay connected, and access transportation.

Beyond immediate support, PASS helps participants connect to longer-term services in Missoula, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health care, and job and housing services.

Stronger Support for People in the Court System

Many stakeholders we spoke with defined the success of the PASS program in terms of positive outcomes for clients, such as **greater stability and access to support outside of the criminal legal**

system that goes beyond ensuring legal compliance and addresses social determinants of involvement with the system. For example, one stakeholder involved in the day-to-day operations of the PASS program shared,

"Whether that's shelter, or food, or support, or treatment, that we can transition those people from receiving those services through the criminal justice system ... and connect them to resources so that they are no longer part of our criminal justice system."

Stakeholders also consistently said PASS is a key player in preventing escalation of legal consequences by providing services that help disrupt the cycle of failures to appear in court. They also see it as a protective barrier against the cascading consequences of incarceration, such as loss of employment, housing, and child custody.

Stakeholders emphasized that the warm handoffs to service providers throughout the community, combined with supportive staff and outreach, have helped participants feel supported during difficult times. Many described people who had cycled in and out of the criminal legal system for years but were able to regain stability with support from the program. Some participants even ask to be placed in a higher tier of PASS support because they recognized the benefits available to them.

"I feel like PASS is giving people a lifeboat. It's giving them the opportunity. It is up to the client to seize that opportunity."

Some stakeholders believe the PASS program has helped community members see that unhoused people and people with mental illness are deserving of support and dignity, especially given recent harmful rhetoric in Missoula and across the country. One stakeholder involved with many court proceedings in Missoula shared,

"I think one thing we're struggling with in Missoula ... is just the rhetoric around homeless people and around those with mental illness. A lot of people are just angry, and I think forgetting that these are human beings and these aren't just pieces of paper with a criminal history ... PASS is one thing that helps to remind people that you have value and worth, and we're going to help you."

Participants who engaged with PASS staff directly overwhelmingly described them as kind, supportive, and attentive. Many felt staff went above and beyond their formal responsibilities, helping them fulfill their court-related obligations while also showing interest in their well-being outside of the criminal legal system and offering encouragement around pursuing voluntary services. One of the things participants valued most was consistent follow-up from case managers, who maintained regular contact with participants through check-ins, reminders, and informal

conversations. This steady presence helped participants feel supported during their Municipal Court involvement. The consistency and care demonstrated by PASS staff were especially meaningful for people navigating challenges related to mental health, behavioral health, and disability.

Participants said this kind of human connection was rare in the criminal legal system, helping them feel valued and respected in a setting where many feel overlooked. In some cases, the PASS program's support was so meaningful that participants expressed a desire to continue speaking with PASS staff even after their court cases had concluded.

System-Level Changes and Community Impacts

The PASS program has helped build relationships, improve communication, and reduce duplication of efforts among agencies serving similar populations. At a system level, stakeholders felt that the PASS program has helped to reduce reliance on jail for pretrial and served as proof of concept for less punitive approaches that prioritize supportive services. One stakeholder shared,

"I would say the program has absolutely developed using best practices, evidence-based practices, even some innovative, not yet tested, but likely to be evidence-based at some point practices. That is success in and of itself and I would say a first level of success."

Over time, the PASS program has been able to build a strong reputation among community members for being helpful and focused on the needs of the individual rather than solely on court compliance. Stakeholders had heard from many participants that they particularly appreciated the program's services being voluntary and the opportunities to connect with PASS in community spaces.

"It's now gotten to the point where when we do go, do those office hours in the shelters, we have individuals coming up to talk to us and seeking us out. I think we've built a good rapport in the community. Overall, once they get to working with us, there is trust there. Some people too, understandable, anything related to the court doesn't feel trustworthy. We just accept that and try to be there as appropriate."

—Missoula stakeholder

Lessons Learned

From developing and implementing the PASS program, Missoula County and the City of Missoula have learned many lessons about safely reducing the pretrial jail population, decreasing FTA rates, and providing holistic support for people awaiting trial that may be useful for other jurisdictions wanting to design and implement similar programming and services for pretrial defendants. We describe five key such lessons below.

Ground pretrial services in a supportive, least restrictive philosophy. Differing views on pretrial reform, particularly around supervision and surveillance versus supportive services, created friction among stakeholders and slowed buy-in for the program. Many jurisdictions may be hesitant to forgo traditional pretrial supervision practices, such as drug and alcohol testing and electronic monitoring, which are reported back to the court as accountability mechanisms. Yet providing services and support that address barriers to court appearance and compliance can better meet the needs of the pretrial population and address factors that may have contributed to their initial involvement with the system.

Messaging matters when garnering trust and support from people in the system and community. Initial messaging about PASS led to confusion among system stakeholders, the community, and participants, who conflated the program with pretrial supervision, slowing buy-in. Over time, PASS used consistent community outreach through ComMUNity Court and resource access days to establish PASS as a supportive, voluntary program that was distinct from pretrial supervision.

Prioritize community outreach and low-barrier access to services and information about court cases. Pretrial defendants facing severe behavioral health issues, substance use, and housing insecurity face practical barriers to accessing services to meet their needs and navigate their court cases. PASS launched initiatives and implemented strategies to address these barriers, including being present at ComMUNity Court, hosting resource access days, offering weekly office hours, and providing basic necessities. It also provided phones to participants to ensure they received court reminders and information about their court hearings. Together, these supportive services can help reduce FTA and better meet the needs of the pretrial population, especially for people facing obstacles like unstable housing, mental health challenges, behavioral health issues, and substance use.

Build collaborative, cross-system partnerships with sufficient capacity. PASS strengthened relationships among community-based service providers and facilitated warm handoffs to services for participants. Yet limited capacity and limited integration of systems in housing services, mental/behavioral health, and posttrial support and case management may have minimized the

program's long-term impact. Jurisdictions seeking to build similar networks of service providers could benefit from a formalized capacity-alert protocol, which provides partners with a coordinated way to manage their capacity, triage high-need participants, and help participants navigate waitlists for services.

Sustainability requires a shared philosophy, data on impact, and embeddedness. Although the PASS program currently has stable funding, it could face risk in the long term if funding shifts or political support for the program wanes. Collecting and publishing data on the program's impact, such as reductions in FTA rates and recidivism and service linkages, can demonstrate its positive reach and bolster the buy-in needed for sustainable funding streams and the legislative support needed to codify supportive pretrial practices. Missoula Municipal Court consistently collects and shares data, such as participant FTA rates and demographic characteristics, with local community and system partners to highlight PASS's reach and impact. Strengthening the capacity to gather and publish this information, particularly long-term outcomes related to recidivism and service completion, will further demonstrate the program's effectiveness and increase stakeholder buy-in for its philosophy. When possible, jurisdictions seeking to implement strategies similar to the PASS program should aim to institutionalize their programs within court policies and administrative processes so that they are less vulnerable to changes in elected leadership and turnover among key champions. When this is not feasible, building broad-based support among system partners, community stakeholders, and policymakers can help ensure continuity across political transitions.

Conclusion

The Pretrial Assistance to Support Success program implemented in Missoula, Montana, demonstrates that a minimally restrictive, *support-first* pretrial approach can reduce failures to appear and connect people awaiting trial to services that address underlying drivers of their criminal legal system involvement. Key successes of the PASS program include expanded community outreach through ComMUNItY Court and resource access days; tangible supports such as phones, bus cards, and basic necessities; strengthened cross-system and community partnerships; and increased stability and trust in the program among participants. Persistent challenges such as ideological resistance to less punitive pretrial models, early communication gaps, difficulties maintaining contact with difficult-to-reach participants, limited community service capacity, and staffing and resource constraints must be addressed to sustain and scale the program.

Moving forward, based on Missoula’s experience implementing the PASS program, we suggest three key priorities for the future: institutionalize and broaden buy-in through clearer messaging about the philosophy of the program and by demonstrating its impact through data; bolster the capacity of community service providers and make it easier for people to navigate to the office; and secure stable funding and legislative support to protect PASS from political shifts. By centering support instead of supervision, PASS offers a replicable example for jurisdictions seeking to reduce failure to appear and pretrial incarceration while preserving public safety.

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- ¹³ In alignment with local practices in Missoula, this report uses the terms unhoused and houseless rather than homeless. Missoula’s Coordinated Entry System policies specify that these terms more accurately describe the situation of unhoused residents, who may or may not identify their current shelter as their home, and reflect direct feedback on preferred language gathered from unhoused residents (Missoula Coordinated Entry System); “Missoula County CoC/At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC) Coordinated Entry Process Policies &

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