DCJS Supplemental Pretrial Release Data File Source Notes

The DCJS Supplemental Pretrial Release Data File provides information about arraignments of individuals who were 18 and older at time of crime and arrested on charges requiring fingerprints. These arraignments occurred between Jan. 1, 2019, and Dec. 31, 2024. This data file and accompanying summary data tables provide information to the public on pretrial release outcomes before and after the state's bail reform law took effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

The agency developed this data file by matching top charge arrests reported to DCJS to the statutorily required Pretrial Release Data compiled by the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and DCJS. The statutorily required data file contains information about arraignments that occurred from Jan. 1, 2020, forward.

Both files contain information reported by New York City Criminal Courts; City, District, Town, and Village Courts outside of New York City; and Superior Courts.

There are several paths a case can follow to arraignment in Superior Court. They may be transferred from New York City Criminal Courts, and District, City, Town, and Village Courts (also referred to as lower courts); or the case may originate in Superior Court.

Please note the following data limitations:

Superior Courts

Superior Courts began reporting information to OCA at different times throughout 2021 and information reported by these courts for 2020-2021 may be incomplete. Given these limitations, caution should be used when analyzing and interpreting Superior Court data prior to 2022. Additional details on when Superior Courts began reporting data are included in the Data Dictionary.

Town and Village Justice Courts

Pretrial release data for Town and Village Justice Courts are available from July 2023 onwards. These data are available as a standalone extract from OCA. Town and Village Courts pretrial release data have a higher percentage of arraignments with unknown release decisions (10% vs. 1.5% for City and District Courts in 2023-2024) and lack detail on bail setting that is available for the other court types (i.e., bail set types, bail set amounts, bail paid types, and days between arraignment and bail paid). Bench warrants variables are not available for Town and Village Justice Courts arraignments.

Pre-2020 Pretrial Release Information

State law that required detailed reporting of pretrial release information took effect on July 2, 2020. Pretrial release information maintained by OCA prior to 2020 was limited so caution should be used when comparing pretrial release information pre- and post-bail reform.

Differences between the DCJS Supplemental Data File and Statutorily Required Data File

Criminal Cycle vs. Docket Counts

The supplemental data file combines all top charge arrest, arraignment, and disposition information into a single "criminal cycle" that presents case activity from arrest through final case disposition. Each line in the supplemental data file represents one criminal cycle, which may include multiple offenses and/or multiple dockets.

As noted, the supplemental data file contains cases involving adults (18 and older) and only charges that require fingerprints upon arrest are reported to DCJS. This requirement is defined in state Criminal Procedure Law Section 160.10. Top charge is defined as the most serious offense at arrest, arraignment, and disposition.

The statutorily required data file presents case activity at the docket level. Dockets represent all arrests that are arraigned in court. A docket may contain:

- An arraignment involving an arrest that required fingerprints;
- An arraignment involving an arrest that did not require fingerprints;
- An arraignment that occurred in Superior Court after a case was transferred from a lower court, which results in a new docket (lower and upper court dockets are counted separately in the data file); or
- An arraignment that originated in Superior Court.

Given these factors, the statutorily required docket-based file will contain more data than the supplemental criminal cycle-based file for 2020 onwards.

Case Activity

The supplemental data file contains case activity, such as rearrests and bench warrants issued, that occurred between first arraignment and final disposition of the criminal cycle. Final disposition is the final outcome of a case, for example: conviction and sentencing, dismissal, or acquittal.

The statutorily required data file contains case activity, such as rearrests and bench warrants issued, that occurred between first arraignment and docket disposition. Disposition of a docket may not be the final case disposition. For example, a docket is disposed when it is transferred from a lower court to Superior Court, or when the final case outcome occurs.

Arrest, Arraignment and Conviction Charges

As noted, the supplemental data file is compiled by top charge: the most serious charge at arrest, arraignment, and conviction. For example, if there are felony and misdemeanor charges at arrest, arraignment, or conviction, the felony charge is shown.

Supplemental Pretrial Release Data Dictionary

The data dictionary contains data definitions, variable values, the source of each variable in the file (OCA or DCJS), and if 2019 information is available for a given variable.