

Mesa County

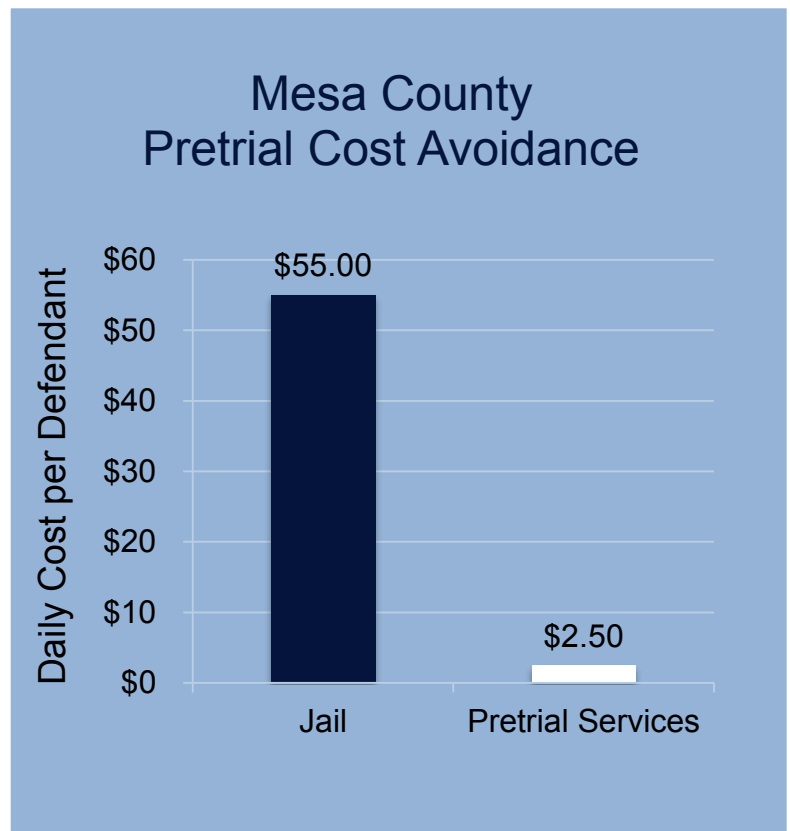
Pretrial Justice County Profile

Located on Colorado's western slope, Mesa County sits approximately 250 miles west of Denver, encompasses 3,300 square miles, and has an estimated population of 153,712. In 2012 the average daily population of the jail was 314, which is below its rated capacity of 392.

Implementation of Pretrial Reform

By implementing pretrial justice strategies proven to keep communities safe, Mesa County, avoided spending \$1.5 million in 2012. The forecast for 2013 looks even better, with projected cost avoidance to be \$2 million,¹ freeing up these funds for use by **County Commissioners** and executives to fund programs proven by research to be effective in reducing offender risk.

Jail crowding was the call to action for local criminal justice leaders. To address this challenge, Mesa County formed a governing collaborative, the Criminal Justice Leadership Group (CJLG), composed of **County Commissioners**, judges, the sheriff, the private and public bar and other stakeholders authorized to make policy changes to improve the criminal justice system. The CJLC has pursued a variety of system improvements using the National Institute of Corrections' Evidence-Based Decision Making model research findings to inform and guide decisions across the justice system. **Predictable challenges have surfaced in the past, however Mesa County's strong collaborative policy environment has been the establishment through which 95,630 jail beds were saved in 2012.**



¹ Mesa County General Ledger Expenditures and Revenues Report, 2012.

Implementation of multiple pretrial justice strategies by the CJLG led to a significant decrease in the unnecessary use of jail beds for low risk defendants. This chart summarizes the essential elements of best practices in pretrial justice and illustrates the comprehensive nature of Mesa County's pretrial improvements.

PRETRIAL JUSTICE IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO

Leadership Council	The Mesa County Criminal Justice Leadership Group (CJLG) collaboratively makes system changes to address jail crowding and other system improvements. Membership includes criminal justice leaders.	X
EBDM	The CJLG adopted Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM) - the practice of using research findings to inform or guide decisions across the justice system.	X
Measuring Progress	Mesa County measures pretrial appearance and safety rates and reports outcomes to the CJLG. Results show that jail reductions have been made safely without compromising public safety.	X
Pretrial Risk Assessment	The Colorado Pretrial Assessment Tool (CPAT) is an empirically-based tool that provides judges with defendants' risk profiles.	X
Pretrial Release	Mesa pretrial services recommends a range of release options including unsupervised release on personal recognizance, supervised release and special conditions. These are outlined in a summary of Mesa County bond practices .	X
Pretrial Supervision	The SMART Praxis and the Pretrial Services Response to Violations Guide (PSRVG) are tools used to assess and to respond to a defendant's risks and violations of pretrial release. These tools ensure that defendants are treated fairly and consistently. In addition, the PSRVG saves court time by reducing the number of cases on dockets, and addresses public safety by providing an immediate, structured response to violation behavior.	X
Citation Release	Law enforcement is using a proxy to help inform decisions on whether to take someone accused of a crime to jail. The proxy includes three questions that guide an informed decision.	X
Early Assignment of Counsel/ Early Screening by DA	The private and public bar work together to ensure that case processing is expedited. Arrest reports are reviewed early to save the court time and counsel is assigned at arraignment to assist in mitigating unnecessary pretrial detention resulting from unattainable money bonds.	X
Bail Guidelines	Guidelines are used by judicial decision-makers to set appropriate conditions, ensuring that the release of defendants is based upon public safety risk and not the ability to pay.	X

Helpful Resources

National Institute of Corrections: www.nicic.gov/ebdm

Mesa County: www.mesacounty.us

National Association of Counties: www.naco.org/pretrial

Pretrial Justice Institute: www.pretrial.org