
**COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS FOR JAIL
ALTERNATIVES AND JAIL**

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Since the significant crime increase of the 1980s, US incarceration populations have significantly increased (Blumstein and Piquero, 2007), the result of which has made the US among the world's leaders in incarceration (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2001). One by-product of this incarceration run-up has been the soaring costs associated with many long-term sentences that have taken their toll on state budgets—especially over the past few years as the US has faced a severe economic crisis. Toward that end, many states have reduced sentences as well as have turned to alternatives to incarceration to lessen costs of jails and prisons. In addition, these alternatives to incarceration have the potential to allow defendants the opportunity to keep their ties to the community, jobs to support their families, and so forth. In this regard, the BSO DOCC is mainly in line with other jurisdictions and correctional agencies in establishing alternatives to reduce jail costs.

This CBA compared the costs savings when shifting inmates away from jail and toward one of four alternatives, including two pretrial alternatives (pretrial services and drug court treatment) as well as two sentenced alternatives (probation and day reporting and reentry). Such an investigation is important not only because strained budgets continue to require agencies to make smart decisions with respect to programming—of which CBA can be instrumental—but also because Broward County's single largest expense from county tax dollars is the jail. The jail represents \$.25 of every tax dollar. From a public policy perspective, it is important to plan for this cost and to minimize it where possible.

First, we provide estimates on the average daily population. As seen in Table 1, jail populations tend to be relatively stable in the mid 5,000 range until 2009 when it dropped to below 5,000, a trend which has continued into the first part of 2010. The average daily population estimates vary quite a bit among the other programs over the 2005-2010 time period. For example, drug court ranged from close to 1,000 participants in the mid-2000s, to about a hundred less individuals in the past two years. The use of pretrial has more than doubled from 1,013 in 2005 to close to 3,000 in 2010. Additionally, the expansion of pretrial in 2008 has appeared to help realize a decrease of 1,000 inmates in jail and a reduction in the jail average length of stay to 26.79 days, the lowest in five years while pretrial ALOS has increased. This is one specific example of how an alternative to incarceration can directly reduce jail population. Probation continues to supervise many individuals (between 4,200-7,468). Finally, day reporting has seen increasing use from 203 individuals in 2005 to about 1,000 individuals in 2009 and 2010. This increase is a function of the program's creation in 2004.

Table 1: Average Daily Population

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jail	5481	5661	5305	5364	4888	4337
Drug Ct	919	971	924	789	822	823
Pretrial	1013	1410	1916	2203	2626	2802
Probation	5123	4205	4354	7247	7468	6397
DRR	203	439	831	878	1054	992

Note: 2010 are partial/projected only.

Table 2 provides an estimate of the total costs for each program over the 2005-2010 time period.¹ As can be seen, because the cost per day per inmate is rather high², total costs for jail hover around \$200 million year. This can be compared to the other four programs which entail much lower per-day/per-client costs. When calculated out, pretrial has the highest total costs over the time period, followed drug court and probation (which vary somewhat over time, due to the varying number of individuals in any given year).

Table 2: Cost Figures for all programs.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jail	\$176,949,974	\$188,588,006	\$201,222,894	\$208,825,347	\$205,120,276	\$170,505,468
Drug Ct	\$2,483,875	\$2,606,395	\$2,727,570	\$2,981,396	\$3,002,551	\$3,104,484
Pretrial	\$2,315,443	\$2,705,262	\$3,206,067	\$3,844,354	\$5,157,576	\$5,654,269
Probation	\$1,555,138	\$2,333,399	\$2,403,964	\$2,581,861	\$813,162	\$765,390
DRR	\$1,614,069	\$1,776,879	\$2,015,808	\$2,103,152	\$2,217,361	\$2,391,190

Note: 2010 are partial/projected only.

Note: The drop in cost figures for probation in 2009 and 2010 reflect significant decreases in the per day client cost as well as the increase in client fees.

Note: The cost for all the programs listed (not the jail) are actual costs with client fees subtracted from the total budget allocation for the programs.

¹ It is important to note that the costs of the program are after subtracting client fees collected and that pretrial is the highest because the majority of the clients are indigent and cannot generate client fees. Thus, while pretrial emerges as having the highest overall budget of \$5.6 million, its per day per client cost is lower than two other programs.

² The cost per day per inmate for Broward County jails was provided by Kristina Gulick April 19, 2010 in email correspondence. The costs per day have increased from \$88.45 in 2005 to \$107.71 in 2010.

For informational purposes, Table 3 displays the cost per day per client in each of the programs.

Table 3. Cost Per Day Per Client in Each of the Programs.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jail	\$88.45	\$91.27	\$103.92	\$106.66	\$114.97	\$107.71
Drug Court	\$7.40	\$7.35	\$8.09	\$10.35	\$10.01	\$10.33
DRRD*	NA	\$11.09	\$6.65	\$6.56	\$5.76	\$6.60
Pretrial**	NA	NA	NA	\$1.90	NA	\$1.48
Probation	\$0.83	\$1.52	\$1.51	\$0.98	\$0.30	\$0.33

Note: DRRD began in March 2004.

Note: Pretrial costs include staff who do not supervise clients and therefore cannot be included in costs per clients. Data was only available to calculate 2008 and 2010.

Table 4 contains the results of the main portion of the Cost-Benefit analysis. Here, we present the amount of dollars that have been saved by having those individuals who are in respective program stay/go into that program (vis-à-vis jail costs) compared to that respective program's costs. Another way to think about these figures is that they represent the amount of dollars that would be saved if you took the number of clients (average daily population) in that program by the jail costs less the costs of that program.³

³ The total savings in jail bed costs per year were arrived at using the following formula: ((# of individuals in that program in year y multiplied by per-day jail costs in year y multiplied by 365 days) subtracting from that figure the expenditure costs for that program). As an example, the 2005 pretrial cost-benefit estimate of \$30,388,502.25 is arrived at by taking the number of individuals on pretrial (1,013) multiplied by the per-day jail cost (\$88.45) multiplied by 365 days, and then subtracting from that figure the costs of pretrial program (\$2,314,443), which yields the \$30,388,502.25 estimate.

Table 4: Cost-Benefit estimates for four programs compared to jail.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total (Rows)
Drug Ct	\$27,185,350	\$29,741,062	\$32,320,489	\$27,735,084	\$31,491,898	\$29,251,061	\$177,724,945
Pretrial	\$30,388,502	\$44,266,843	\$69,469,345	\$81,920,418	\$105,040,019	\$104,503,979	\$435,589,108
Probation	\$163,837,074	\$137,750,078	\$162,746,739	\$279,550,371	\$312,574,363	\$250,727,227	\$1,307,185,854
DRR	\$4,939,633	\$12,847,769	\$29,504,686	\$32,078,178	\$42,012,747	\$36,608,446	\$157,991,462
Total (Columns)	\$226,350,561	\$224,605,753	\$294,041,261	\$421,284,052	\$491,119,028	\$421,090,715	

Note: 2010 are partial/projected only.

As can be seen, the cost savings of placing individuals in any of these four programs varies tremendously, but they all have in common the finding that Broward County would spend substantially less dollars to place individuals in these programs (for one year) than it would be to place these individuals in jail. For example, the savings for drug court are in the upper \$20 million to lower \$30 million, while for probation they average well over \$200 million, which is a function of the large number of individuals on probation. The savings for day reporting/reentry are much lower (in the neighborhood of \$30-40 million), which is due to the small number of individuals in this program. Cost savings via pretrial (in lieu of jail) are over \$100 million in both 2009 and 2010.

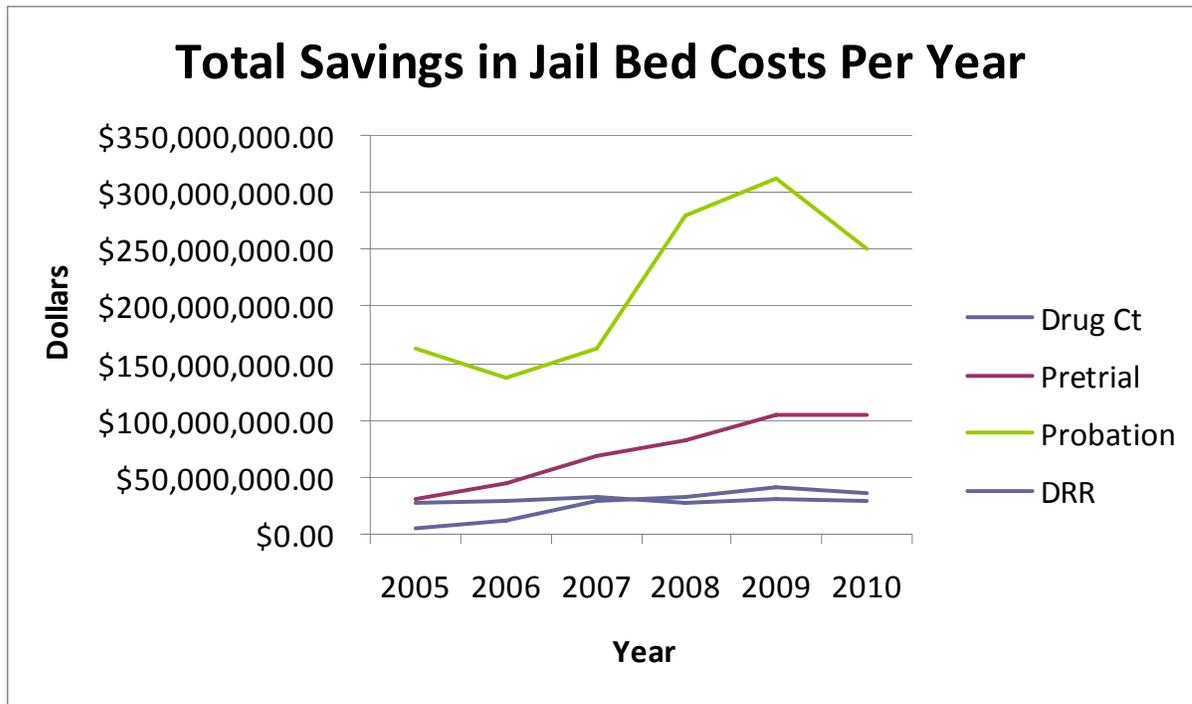
As a point of comparison, Table 5 presents scenarios of percentages of savings if only a certain percentage of clients actually ended being diverted from jail. As can be seen, as the percentage of clients who are diverted from jail increases (from 30% to 50% to 60%), the costs savings increases, and does so throughout the 2005-2010 time period.

Table 5. Cost Savings by Percentage of DOCC Clients Diverted from Jail.

% of Clients Diverted from Jail	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
30%	\$67,905,168	\$67,381,721	\$88,212,378	\$126,383,416	\$147,335,708	\$126,327,215
50%	\$113,175,281	\$112,302,868	\$147,020,631	\$210,639,026	\$245,559,513	\$210,545,358
60%	\$135,810,337	\$134,763,441	\$176,424,757	\$252,766,831	\$294,671,415	\$252,654,429

Figure 1 presents the total savings in jail bed costs per year from 2005-2010. As can be seen, probation evinces the largest savings ranging from \$150 to \$300 million over time, should all individuals be placed on probation in lieu of jail. (Clearly however, this is unlikely to happen as not all individuals are suitable for probation—some may require more supervision/services). Pretrial savings increase throughout the observation period such that the savings have tripled between 2005 and 2010 (from \$30 million in savings to \$104 million in savings).

Figure 1: Total Savings in Jail Bed Costs Per Year



The totality of the CBA analyses indicate that DOCC provides a good model for how to undertake alternatives to incarceration and also demonstrates that these alternatives realize significant public safety minded cost savings. As the costs of jail are high and are likely to increase for the foreseeable future, the CBA analyses shows how these costs can be minimized by utilizing best practices—including tools such as the COMPASS to safely manage offender risk to the community.

References

Blumstein, Alfred and Alex R. Piquero. 2007. Criminal careers research and rational sentencing policy. *Criminology & Public Policy* 6:679-688

Messner, Steven and Richard Rosenfeld. 2001. *Crime and the American Dream*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.