

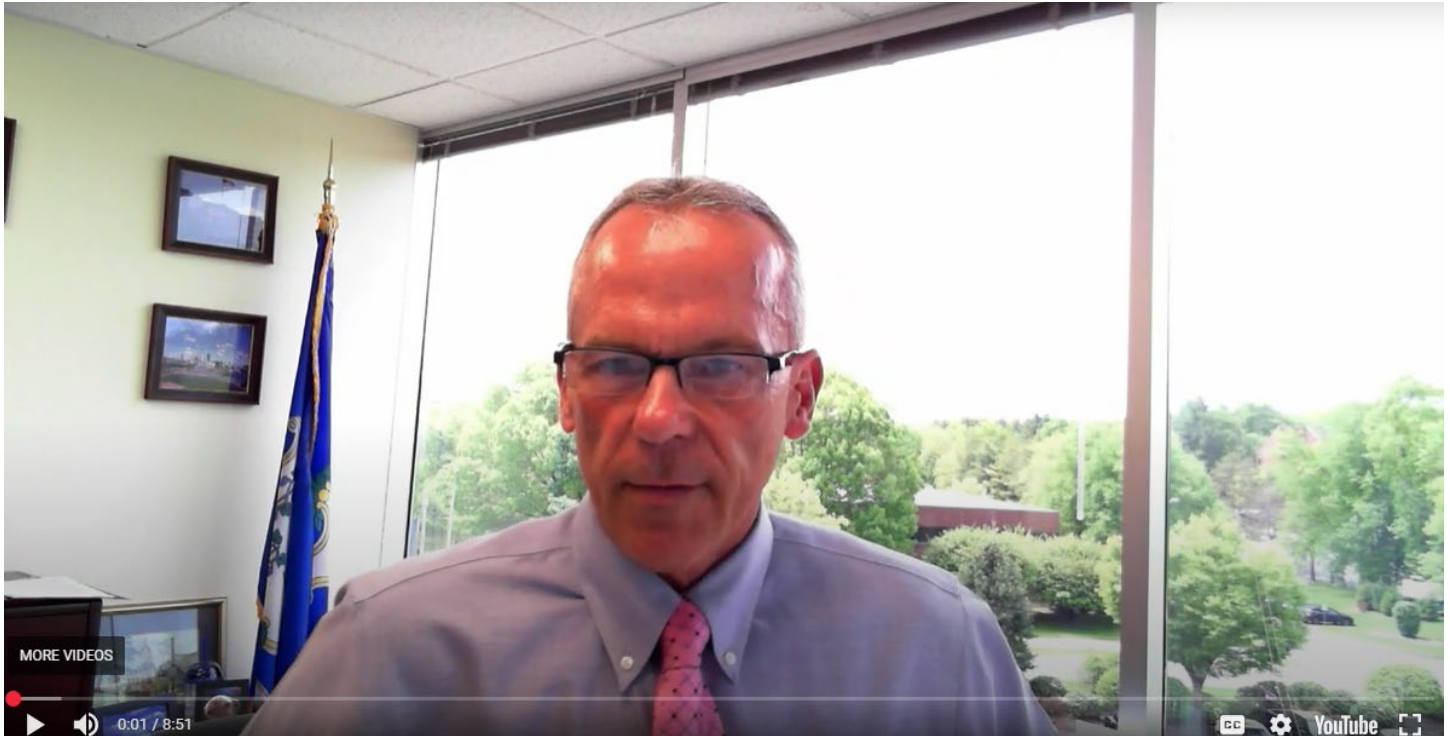
# JB-CSSD CHRONICLE

A publication of the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (JB CSSD)



**May 2025**

## Video Message from JB-CSSD's Executive Director Gary Roberge



## Getting it Done Honorees

The newest Getting it Done Honorees (May 2025) are Sara Barron, Program Manager I, Bridget Blake, Supervising IAR Specialist, and Nathaniel Cotton, Program Manager I, and Jennifer Panciera, Adult Probation Officer II. Please take a moment to read about these individuals who are going above and beyond and are getting it done for the Branch, our clients, their families, and the communities we serve. Feel free to congratulate them using the comments section below.



Pretrial Services has been fortunate to have a number of leaders who are dedicated to the mission of CSSD, supporting our Courts in decision-making, meeting client needs, and inspiring staff to continue the dedicated work done on behalf of our clients and communities.

Sara Barron, Bridget Blake, and Nathaniel Cotton are a few of these leaders. With almost 90 years of combined service to the Judicial Branch, they have gone above and beyond for Pretrial Services. In their respective roles within the Jail Re-Interview Program, Hartford Pretrial Services, and Night Operations, they have risen above challenges and molded their staff into the resourceful and highly functioning units whose overall goal is to help promote successful outcomes for our clients.



PO Jennifer Panciera recently marked 15 years with CSSD Adult Services, following prior state service with DCF. She supervises a client convicted of Manslaughter 2nd Degree with a history of heavy drug use. Initially noncompliant and resistant, the client faced violations for failing treatment and probation directives. PO Panciera held the client accountable while providing support, leading to a transformation in attitude, compliance, and sobriety.

At the Violation of Probation hearing, PO Panciera's insights helped Judge Stephanie Damani reach a fair outcome. The judge later commended her dedication, highlighting the impact of Adult Services' collaboration with the courts.

## Pretrial Services 2024 Award Recipients

Pretrial Services had the privilege of hosting their annual end of the year meeting on December 18th, 2024, at CSSD Central Office in Glastonbury. The attendees included JB-CSSD's executive director Gary Roberge and director of Pretrial Services Michael Hines, in addition to the regional and program management team and local office supervisors and leads from both night and court-based operations. The goal of the event was to share the accomplishments that Pretrial Services achieved throughout the year. Highlights of the meeting included the 2024 Pretrial Services' Week celebrations, the revalidation of our Risk Assessment, and the implementation of our Police Voice Mailbox System.

The meeting then transitioned to our Pretrial Services Awards Ceremony in which several guests of honor were nominated and selected by their peers for their outstanding work in Pretrial Services. The recipients included support staff, intake, assessment, and referral (IAR) staff, bail commissioners, and supervising IAR specialists for each region.

### 2024 Award Recipients:

Shannon Abate, Central Office - Support Staff of the Year

Amy Brennan, Danielson – IAR Specialist Region 1

Jenny Murphy, Torrington - IAR Specialist Region 2

Aiden Kiely, Night Operations - Bail Commissioner

DeAnna Cloutier, New Britain – Supervising IAR Specialist Region 1

Laura Patrignelli, Milford/Derby - Supervising IAR Specialist Region 2

In addition, the Ann McKenna Award was established in memory of Ann McKenna, who worked for the State of Connecticut for twenty-four years, largely with the Bail Commission, now Pretrial Services. Throughout her years of service, Ann quickly became someone people could rely on. She worked tirelessly for the benefit of the clients and her coworkers. Ann was well liked by everyone. Her positive attitude and smile were contagious. Ann had a generous spirit and genuinely cared for people. The award is given to those who embody similar qualities that Ann McKenna lived her life by, both in and out of work.

The 2024 Ann McKenna Award recipient was Oneal Smith, lead IAR specialist in Hartford.

Pretrial Services would like to congratulate all our 2024 award recipients and looks forward to this recognition ceremony for years to come!



Pictured: Michael Hines and DeAnna Cloutier



Pictured: Michael Hines and Laura Patrignelli



Pictured: Michael Hines and Jenny Murphy



Pictured: Michael Hines and Amy Brennan



Pictured: Michael Hines and Shannon Abate



Pictured: Michael Hines and Oneal Smith



## **A Historical Overview of the Success of the Jail Re-Interview Program**

Due to a perception of rising crime rates during the 1980's and early 1990's, there was a move to "get tough on crime." Arrests increased and sentences became longer. This had a significant impact on the Connecticut State Department of Correction (DOC) population. The DOC saw both its pretrial and sentenced populations rise dramatically. In 1980, the total incarcerated population in DOC was approximately 3,000. By 1996 it had reached 16,000, and in 2003 it surpassed 19,000 for the first time. Significant safety concerns in facilities were created, and the state saw a cost increase in the millions related to construction and operating expenses for DOC facilities and staffing. The "tough on crime" measures taken did not seem to adequately address the initial concern, and clients would continue to get arrested, cycling in and out of DOC.

While the Judicial Branch (JB) could not reduce someone's sentence, it was positioned to help reduce the population on the front end. In the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (JB-CSSD) Pretrial Services, then known as the Office of the Bail Commissioner, in collaboration with the DOC, an idea emerged: the Jail Re-interview Program (JRI). Initially staffed with one supervisor and two Pretrial Services staff, then bail commissioners, JRI's goal was to reinterview clients held on bond post arraignment and explain to them the bond process, often assisting them by contacting family and friends to help them post bond. Additionally, for those identified as struggling with substance use, mental health, or who were unable to post bond, the JRI staff would collaborate with the Public Defender's Office and their social workers to create community release plans which would include supervision and treatment. These plans would be presented at court for consideration and approval. Once approved, JRI and court-based Pretrial Services staff would work together to facilitate placement.

To ensure the success of the program and at the direction of the then Commissioner of Correction, John Armstrong, JRI staff met with the wardens at the local DOC facilities and created relationships, allowing them to enter the facilities weekly to screen clients who were recently admitted. Research at the time indicated that if a client appeared in court successfully after being released from DOC to the community, it was less likely they would receive a sentence that included incarceration at the time of the disposition of their case. As you can imagine, this had an immediate impact on DOC's pretrial population.

After many years of operation, unfortunately, the state faced a significant budget crisis in 2002-2003, and many employees were laid off. JRI staff were needed in local Pretrial Services offices to support daily court operations, and the program was suspended. Without the JRI program operating to assist in reducing the pretrial population in DOC, the numbers began to rise again. Commissioner Armstrong reached out to JB-CSSD to see what, if anything, could be done, including reinstating the JRI program. With a manager provided by JB-CSSD and DOC willing to fund three Pretrial Services staff, now intake assessment and referral specialists, the JB agreed to restart the program. Initially limited to three facilities, New Haven Correctional Center (CC), Hartford CC, and Bridgeport CC, the program resumed in late 2003.

In 2004, the JB, with the support of DOC, expanded the program to add an additional six JRI staff to cover all DOC facilities housing pretrial clients in the state. During that year, the JRI staff screened 5,973 clients held on bond, resulting in 3,520 releases.

Over the next years, the JRI program expanded to meet the need and was eventually staffed by one program manager and 12 staff. In 2019, the last year before the COVID pandemic, JRI staff interviewed 11,001 clients, assisting in the release of 3,839 clients.

During the early part of 2020, with the pandemic virtually shutting down the state, Connecticut courts had to continue operation. This included the JRI program. With the help of DOC and JB-CSSD's IT department, JRI began conducting virtual screenings of clients held. Initially done from JB-CSSD's Central Office in Glastonbury, technology was later facilitated from the field allowing JRI staff to conduct these virtual interviews from their respective offices. This significantly changed how JRI conducted its operations. With the pandemic over, JRI staff continue to conduct a combination of both in-person and virtual screenings.

In late 2021, JRI saw another change to its practice. With the implementation of the 1115 Substance Use Demonstration Waiver, the state was allowed to bill Medicaid for the cost of residential treatment, previously only funded with state dollars. This meant the JB would no longer purchase beds, but grant funding for priority access, additional service requirements beyond what Medicaid covers, and to cover the cost for those clients who were uninsured. With the help of the Chief Public Defender and Chief State's Attorney Offices, as well as the presiding criminal judge, JRI began requiring "full court agreement" before making any community-based referrals.

While a lot has changed over the years, JRI has adapted and continues to interview clients and create community release plans. In 2024, JRI interviewed 10,982 clients and assisted with the release of 3,103 clients. The JRI staff continue to work tirelessly to facilitate the release of clients in the safest possible manner, often working late to ensure that when a client is released to a program that their insurance is active, and their medications are in hand or their prescription has been provided to the to the local pharmacy. Dan Lead, residential director for the APT Foundation's RSD, notes that, "JRI staff are always assisting with placements. They make sure their insurance is active and if it isn't, or if a client comes without the appropriate medication, they work with DSS to activate it, and they are always working with DOC to get the prescription sent to our pharmacy immediately." The continued success of this program could not be achieved without the cooperation of the all the community-based programs JRI accesses. In addition to JRI staff working tirelessly the day of a placement, in collaboration with court-based staff, they track client progress and often aid with aftercare plans for clients.

A quote from the Warden at York Correctional Institute (CI), Trina Sexton, provides a concise description of how the JRI program impacts the lives of the clients:

"For York CI, the collaboration with JRI staff has been invaluable. JRI staff are dedicated professionals who understand the dynamic needs of incarcerated women. JRI staff has helped navigate complex cases while identifying alternative placements that are responsive to the needs of

the individual and make the best use of available resources. Their approach to pre-trial release plans is one that is centered on treatment while not compromising public safety. They value communication and our shared missions to facilitate quicker access to programs with the goal of improved outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.”

Today, JRI staff go beyond their in-office work with clients. Every year JRI staff collect toys and raise money for programs for women and children. Their success is aided by local court-based staff and our sister state agencies, all committed to produce the best outcomes for our clients. Their passion for what they do is obvious to us and hopefully appreciated by all.



Pictured: Current JRI Staff and Manager: Trevor Moye, Irma Olave, Katie DeHart, Ricard Dotson, Terry Hungerford, Dayle Totino, Alenni Rosado DeJesus, Sara Barron, Suellen Corrigan, Amy Reyes, Oneal Smith, Mollie Wittstein.



Pictured: Items collected by JRI staff for donation.

## **Adult Probation 2024 Employee Recognition**

In September Adult Probation Services recognized and celebrated the outstanding achievements of their adult probation staff statewide. It was a time to acknowledge the hard work, perseverance, and excellence that each awardee has demonstrated. Adult Probation wants to thank their dedicated support staff, probation officers, chief probation officers, and the organizers, whose hard work and commitment made this event possible. In addition to honoring staff, Adult Probation began recognizing outstanding clients last year. This year they proudly acknowledged three clients and they each received a gift certificate. This year's ceremony was a huge success, and everyone is looking forward to next year's celebration.

Congratulations to our Winners!

### Excellence and Mentoring Award

Bronwyn Schnitzler

Erini Orsaris

Jennifer Gonzalez

### The Award of Honor

Irena Stamilio

Rachel Seidel

Elizabeth Lukas

### Outstanding Support Staff Award

Dawn Williams

Jamie Foster

Josh Alves

Sandra Coelho

Venita Anderson

Leontine Lewis

### Outstanding Employee Recognition Award

Michelle Hill

Jorge Allende

### Coaching Champion Award

Julinda Kulla



Matthew Anzaldi

Matthew Morin

Ahadu Chernet

### Award for Collaboration and Teamwork

Gina Mital

Isabelle Dematteo

Thomas Buikus

Brandon Doolittle

### The Jonathan Coelho Award

Charles Santiago

### A Probation Success Story Award

This award is presented to current and/or former clients(s) who not only have been successful on probation, but who have persevered through challenges in their life and by doing so, have accomplished something of which they can be proud. Awards were presented to Joanna Kaminski, Kaci Cacciapuoti, and Sarah Kunz.



Pictured: ED Gary Roberge, Kaci Cacciapuoti, PO Rachel Seidel, and Director Mark White.



Pictured: ED Gary Roberge, PO Cristina Lopez, Sarah Kunz, and Director Mark White.



## Adult Probation Services Gives Back

Every year during the holiday season adult probation officers focus on families in need. It's a way that probation officers can give back to the communities they serve. Thanks to the efforts of the Bridgeport Adult Probation Services, 3 foster children were sponsored and provided with an abundance of gifts. In December 2024, the Bridgeport office partnered with the Department of Children and Family Services to sponsor foster children.



The Department of Children and Families staff were extremely grateful and sent the responses below to the probation office:

“Blown away by your generosity! ❤️ 🍀 Thank you to you and your team! Happy Holidays!”

“[Thank you so much!] You all are so amazing! Thank you all so much for your generosity, such a blessing! Take care and happy holidays to you all! ❤️ ”

Waterbury Adult Probation Services participated in a toy drive. They were able to support two programs at Family and Children’s Aid. In collaboration with Child Support Services, they bought and collected close to \$2,000 in gifts. They were able to purchase all the electronics and gift cards on the wish list of the foster care children. The Mental Health Program received “tons” of toys.



Pictured: Deanna Recchia, Meg Clifford, Colleen Bartkus, Dennis Motta, Charles Santiago, Greg Sullivan, Joe Karas, Clerical-Destiny Velez





Pictured: Support enforcement – Dawn Kowalski, Ryan Keiling, Carolyn Melycher.



Pictured: Staff from Family and Children Aid, Deanna Recchia, Charles Santiago, and Destiny.

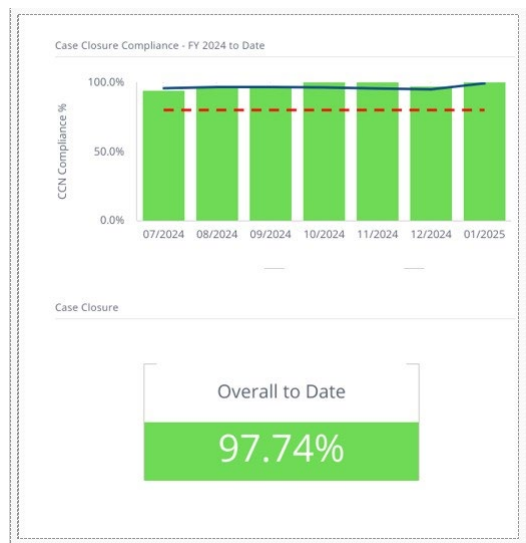


## Connecticut Interstate Compact

The Interstate Compact Unit manages the movement of adult probationers into and out of Connecticut in accordance with relevant Interstate Compacts, for the purpose of maintaining continuous and uninterrupted supervision in the interest of public safety. The Interstate Compact Unit processes transfer of probation supervision requests and related correspondence, monitors transfer activities as necessary, provides technical assistance to local probation staff in Connecticut, and serves as the liaison between our local jurisdictions and other State Compact Offices.

Please see the below 'Compliance to Date' report reflecting 7/1/24 – 6/30/25. CT's compliance rates remain well above the 80% threshold due to the units outstanding work!

Case closure compliance: 97.4%.

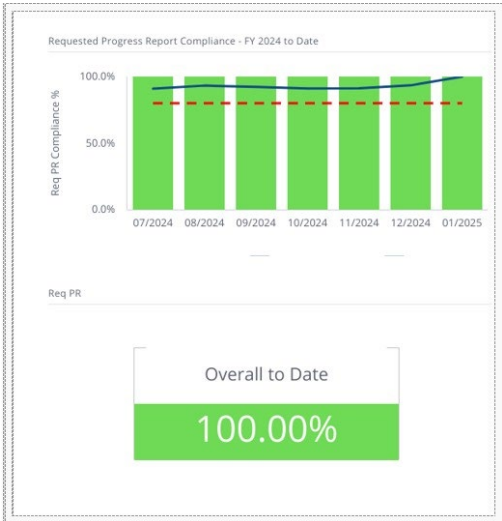


Case closure reply compliance: 98.64%

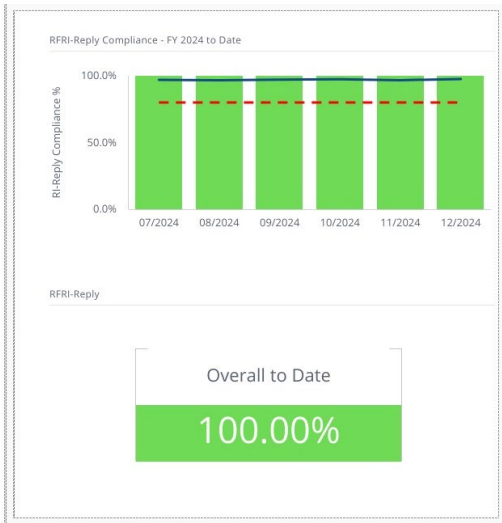




Requested progress report compliance: 100%



RFRI-reply compliance: 100%



Transfer reply compliance: 100%



Violation response compliance: 93.75%

