

DISTRICT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The District of South Dakota's Probation and Pretrial Services Office (hereafter Office), is a combined district with headquarters in Sioux Falls. There are divisional offices in Rapid City, Pierre, and Aberdeen, with five smaller offices in Kyle (on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation), Mission (on the Rosebud Indian Reservation), Timber Lake and Eagle Butte (on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation), and McLaughlin (on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation).

Demographics

There are nine (9) Indian Reservations in South Dakota. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 estimate, 9% of the population in South Dakota is American Indian/Alaska Native; however, 62% of the post-conviction cases supervised by the Office at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 were Native American. This is by far the highest percentage of Native Americans in any district court in the country (the second and third highest are 34% and 31%, respectively).

Many persons under supervision in the district reside in remote areas, moderately distant from the divisional offices. In FY2017, staff traveled more than 420,000 miles in government vehicles, which does not account for occasional use of personal vehicles.

Economic Status

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division, the Small Area Income Poverty Estimates for 2015 indicate South Dakota has four of the top eight counties with the highest percentage of persons in poverty. The poorest South Dakota counties and their national rank are: Corson (1), Ziebach (2), Oglala Lakota (7), and Todd (8).

Initiatives

A 2014 study by the Administrative Office indicated Native Americans had the greatest number of barriers for successful completion of supervision. A lack of transportation and the personal motivation to make pro-social changes are two of the most frequent barriers in federal supervision cases in the District of South Dakota.

Regarding transportation, in FY2017 more than 50% of the individual assistance the Office spent in Second Chance Act funds involved transportation. Additionally, contract treatment services such as sex offender, substance abuse, and mental health include project codes to reimburse persons under supervision for their transportation costs to and from treatment facilities. For FY2017 the Office reimbursed approximately 116,000 miles traveled.

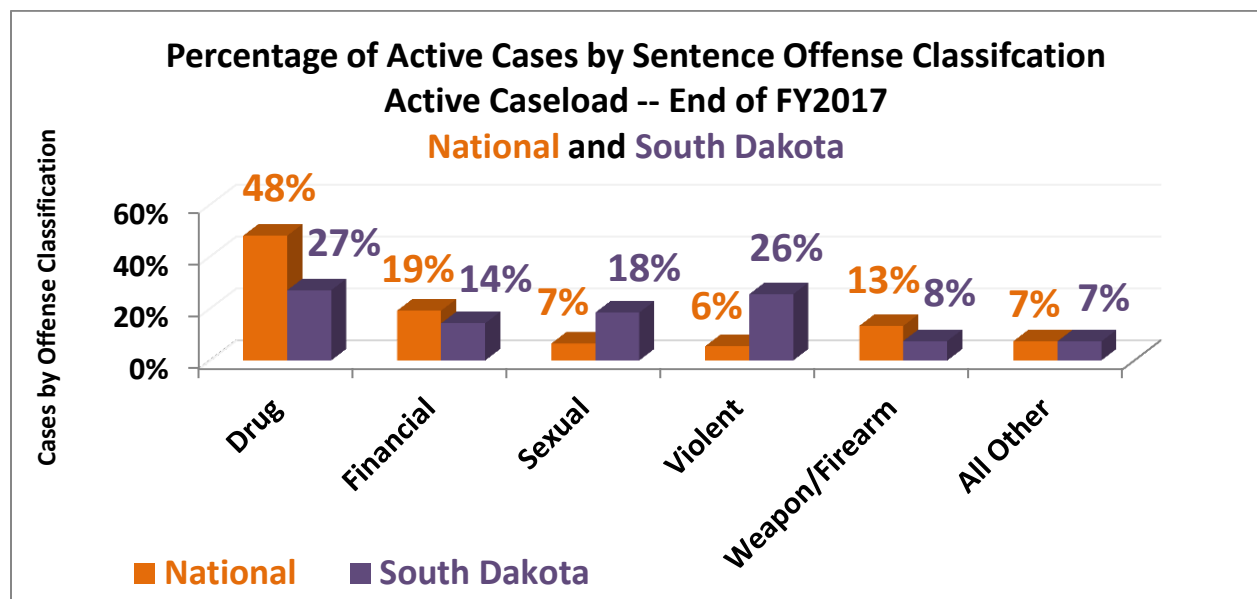
Regarding motivation to make pro-social changes, national regulations allow contracting for treatment readiness intervention services. The Office developed stand-alone treatment readiness contracts for FY2017 and spent more than \$240,000 on that specific intervention service while the other 93 districts spent a combined total of just over \$63,000. The Office has been able to establish treatment readiness services directly on seven of the nine reservations the Office serves in South Dakota.

In February 2017, the Office started recruiting mentors (referred to as community coaches) who were subsequently paired with individuals under supervision to assist with basic life skills; overcoming reentry barriers, such as obtaining employment; connecting with resources and other supportive community members; effective problem solving skills; and guidance on setting and achieving pro-social goals. Early results are promising.

In conjunction with research by university partners, in June 2017 the Office initiated a multi-faceted intervention program on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation for individuals assessed as high risk. The 11-month program includes an intense cognitive-behavioral training component, the juxtaposition of traditional Native American values with criminal behavior, pairing of participants with community coaches who immerse the participant in traditional values and activities, and judicial support for a contingency management component which includes multiple layers of incentives.

Factors Affecting Caseload

In percentage of total cases being supervised, the District of South Dakota ranks first in the country for persons under supervision whose most severe offense was either a sex offense or a violent offense. Displayed below is an offense type comparison between National data and the District of South Dakota data on the active cases in post-conviction supervision.



Post-Conviction Risk Assessment

Most instructive for the effective work with persons under supervision are the results of the federal probation system's risk assessment, i.e., Post-Conviction Risk Assessment. This validated actuarial instrument measures the risk to reoffend for each person under supervision. The percentage of cases assessed as high risk in the District of South Dakota is 26%, which is the highest in the country. The next highest district is 14% and the national average is 5%.