

Request for Applications

APPR Learning Sites

Contents

Introduction	2
About APPR	3
Pretrial Decision Making	3
About APPR Learning Sites.....	5
Site Expectations.....	6
Preparing an Application	7
Identify a Team Leader	7
Identify a Project Champion	7
Complete a PSA Data Elements Worksheet.....	8
Participate in a Pre-application Webinar.....	8
Application Instructions.....	9
Eligible Applicants	9
Contents of Application	9
Core Application Elements.....	10
Letters of Commitment.....	12
Deadline and Method to Submit	13
Selection Process	13
APPR Learning Sites: Application Checklist.....	14
Appendix A.....	15
Appendix B	16
Appendix C	17



Introduction

Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research (APPR) is an initiative dedicated to achieving fair, just, effective pretrial practices, every day throughout the nation. APPR is supported by Arnold Ventures (AV) and is a project of the National Partnership for Pretrial Justice.

Through this Request for Applications (RFA), APPR is seeking jurisdictions to participate in a 12-month pilot project and serve as **APPR Learning Sites**.

This innovative program provides technical assistance, peer support, and robust online learning resources to local jurisdictions interested in improving their pretrial practices and implementing the Public Safety Assessment (PSA). Selected sites will receive:

- limited on- and off-site technical assistance (TA) from peer consultants over the 12-month project period (approximately 60 hours of remote assistance from a lead TA provider, additional hours from peer practitioners as needed, and one on-site visit);
- access to a comprehensive online pretrial learning platform, which will house materials and resources to guide the sites through a reconsideration of their pretrial policies and practices and the implementation of the PSA; and
- membership in a broader national learning community of jurisdictions engaged in pretrial improvements and use of the PSA.

It is expected that, by the end of the 12-month pilot project period, each **APPR Learning Site** will have:

- a sustainable, high-functioning, collaborative team that brings a data-driven approach to their system of pretrial justice;
- implemented the PSA and put in place a process to ensure fidelity and ongoing performance measurement;
- begun to achieve their identified goals, such as maximizing pretrial release, maximizing community safety, maximizing pretrial court appearance, and maximizing equity; and
- positioned themselves to continue their work together, addressing additional, local-identified pretrial improvements.

This opportunity is open to applicants from county or municipal governments. The application can come from any agency or coordinating body within those governments. Applicants are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing the fairness and efficiency of their pretrial process as well as improving their community's pretrial outcomes. Identified policy team members must be ready to actively engage in the project's activities; willing to use

technology (i.e., the online learning platform); and ready to serve as a pilot site, providing feedback to APPR about the ways in which the TA model can be improved.

About APPR

APPR was launched in early 2019. Supported by Arnold Ventures, APPR works with criminal justice professionals and other leaders in their jurisdictions to improve their pretrial justice systems in ways that prioritize the safety of their communities, promote racial equity, and ensure that incarceration is reserved only for those whose release would jeopardize public safety. APPR employs research, training, technical assistance, and online learning to achieve its goals. In addition to the assistance to APPR Learning Sites described in this RFA, the project's activities include:

- intensive technical assistance to 10 Research-Action Sites, including implementation and evaluation of the PSA and other pretrial improvements;
- assistance to pretrial professionals across the country through trainings, presentations, and targeted support;
- broad dissemination of resources and research findings to advance understanding across the nation of research-based pretrial practices; and
- management of the PSA website (psapretrial.org), including the PSA Help Desk.

APPR is a consortium of organizations and consultants led by the Center for Effective Public Policy (CEPP). Project partners bring expertise across a variety of disciplines. (See **Appendix A** for a complete list of APPR partners.)

Pretrial Decision Making

Soon after someone is arrested and taken into custody, a judicial officer decides whether to release or detain the person pending case resolution and, if the decision is to release, what conditions, if any, should be imposed.

Pretrial decisions have enormous consequences for both the individual accused of a crime and the greater community. Those detained may incur enormous loss: spending just a few days in jail can cost a person their job, housing, and health care services, and significantly disrupt their family life. Studies show that people who are detained before trial are more likely to plead guilty, be convicted, and be arrested again at higher rates. However, pretrial release also has consequences: releasing people who pose a danger to public safety may put others in jeopardy.

In many jurisdictions, judicial officers must make these important pretrial decisions very quickly, and with limited information. And, with the continued use of financial conditions as the primary condition of release in many places, someone's wealth is often a determinant of their release. Studies demonstrate that many people are detained pretrial because they cannot afford a relatively modest financial bond. For example, a study conducted in New Jersey in 2012 found that nearly 40 percent of the state's jail population was incarcerated because of an inability to post money bond, including 12 percent who remained jailed due to an inability to pay \$2,500 or less.

In light of these issues, a growing number of jurisdictions are moving away from a reliance on financial conditions and providing their judicial officers with more comprehensive information to support their pretrial decisions. As part of a wider effort to improve their pretrial policies and practices, many jurisdictions incorporate an actuarial assessment into their pretrial decision-making processes.¹

The PSA was designed by Arnold Ventures to provide judicial officers with information to help them assess a person's likelihood of returning to court for future hearings and remaining crime-free while on pretrial release. Since its introduction in 2013, the PSA has been adopted by hundreds of counties, including the entire states of Arizona, Kentucky, and New Jersey, and some of the largest cities in the country, such as Chicago, Houston, and Phoenix. Dozens of jurisdictions located around the country have just started using or are currently in the process of implementing the PSA, including Shelby County, Tennessee; Spokane County, Washington; and St. Louis County, Missouri.

Independent evaluators are validating the PSA in jurisdictions across the country to maximize predictive accuracy and minimize disparities. The results of the studies completed to date demonstrate that the assessment is predictive across different jurisdictions and, in combination with additional system improvements, is often associated with decreases in the use of financial conditions of release and increases in pretrial release rates. Further, these studies indicate that in jurisdictions where pretrial release rates have increased, new criminal arrests and missed court appointments have not increased. All studies to date have shown the PSA does not exacerbate racial disparities.

¹ In the pretrial context, an actuarial assessment is a statistical method for estimating the likelihood that a future event—such as failure to appear in court or rearrest while on pretrial release—will occur. Actuarial assessments are developed by analyzing historical data to identify factors that are highly correlated with the specified future events.

About APPR Learning Sites

Ask any stakeholder from a jurisdiction that has implemented significant pretrial improvements, such as the PSA, and they will tell you it was a lengthy and challenging process. Improving a jurisdiction's pretrial system, including implementing a pretrial assessment, should not be undertaken lightly: it involves multiple agencies, requires extensive collaboration, and necessitates changes in systemwide processes, procedures, and policies. Many jurisdictions choose to alter their pretrial court processes, modify their case management system or adopt a new one, and/or create or modify a pretrial services program.

The majority of sites that have successfully implemented the PSA (along with other improvements) received extensive assistance from expert advisors and consultants, and most received private or public grants to do so. (Indeed, Arnold Ventures funded consultants to work with the initial set of PSA sites, and many sites currently moving to the PSA are assisted by the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge.) Unfortunately, such opportunities are limited and offered to a relatively small number of places.

Through this **Learning Sites pilot**, APPR is introducing a different model of technical assistance (TA) and support. Each APPR Learning Site will receive limited on- and off-site TA and gain access to a comprehensive team-based online learning process that delivers robust information to help a site undertake the complex business of change management. The purpose of this pilot effort, then, is to develop a scalable, sustainable TA model that will transform what was once a limited resource to one that is widely available.

For the 12-month **Learning Sites pilot**, APPR will assign selected jurisdictions a dedicated TA provider who will offer coaching and assistance as site teams engage with the online learning environment. TA providers will be available to make one site visit to the jurisdiction and provide up to 60 hours of off-site assistance over the 12-month period. The primary mode of assistance will be through an online learning platform, which will offer a team-based learning experience and guide site teams through their pretrial improvements process. Depending on their needs, teams will work through up to 20 sections of an online learning program. Each online learning section includes a virtual coaching session with the site's assigned TA provider; online instruction, templates, and examples; and a toolkit that helps teams facilitate live working sessions and discussions around key decision points. The topics covered in the online learning platform will include change management, system mapping, foundations in pretrial decision making, PSA implementation, communications, measurement and validation, and launching system change. (See **Appendix B** for a summary of the online learning sections.)

The online learning platform will enable all policy team members to connect, explore, and collaborate. Team Leaders will use the platform to help them facilitate team meetings, share relevant resources, display informational videos, and cite relevant examples. Additionally, the platform will seamlessly connect teams to a larger online community. This includes access to other sites undergoing pretrial improvements and implementing the PSA, as well as to a network of pretrial peer practitioners. In addition to the TA provider, these practitioners will be available to the **Learning Sites** and can be brought into the process as needed, whether to consult with a team member about data analysis and technology integration or to strategize around stakeholder support and buy-in.

By the end of the 12-month project period, each **APPR Learning Site** will have:

- a sustainable, high-functioning, collaborative team that brings a data-driven approach to their system of pretrial justice;
- implemented the PSA and put in place a process to ensure fidelity and ongoing performance measurement;
- started to achieve their identified system goals, such as maximizing pretrial release, maximizing community safety, maximizing pretrial court appearance, and maximizing equity; and
- positioned themselves to continue their work together, addressing additional, local-identified pretrial improvements.

Site Expectations

As indicated, the key element in a successful **Learning Site** effort is a collaborative, engaged policy team. That team will drive all of the analysis and policy and process changes needed to achieve the goal of an improved pretrial system in their jurisdiction. Policy team members are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing the fairness and efficiency of their pretrial process. They must also be ready to actively engage in the project, willing to use technology (i.e., the online learning platform), and ready to serve as a pilot site and provide feedback to APPR about the ways in which the TA model can be improved.

Specifically, team members should be prepared to:

- participate actively in a collaborative process that includes cooperative learning and decision making;
- commit to meet regularly, at least once per month for 2 to 3 hours;

- commit to work with the project's TA provider and other experts, including taking part in webinars and other online learning opportunities;
- use available data to analyze the impact of current policies and practices on a range of indicators, including public safety; racial, ethnic, and income disparities; timely case processing; budgets and spending; and the economic and physical health of individuals and communities;
- learn about evidence-based pretrial practices, including the PSA;
- adopt the PSA before the end of the 12-month project; and
- consider and possibly adopt other pretrial policies and practices that enhance the equity and success of their system.

Preparing an Application

The following pre-submission activities are designed to assist potential applicants in assessing their readiness for this project, in terms of individual, team, and technical capacity. APPR strongly recommends that each jurisdiction complete these activities in advance of preparing a full application.

Identify a Team Leader

Identify a team leader who will guide the effort onsite. Ideally, this will be a senior staff person in a relevant agency who has previous experience managing an implementation project and strong project management skills. The Team Leader should have the skills and ability to help define the concept, goals, approach, and reason for the project, and to assist the team in meeting its goals. Given the systemwide issues that can arise when implementing the PSA, the Team Leader should be someone who has sufficient authority to keep people at the table to press through normal business and tackle potential challenges, help negotiate funding concerns, and navigate interagency issues. The Team Leader must be able to devote several hours a week to the project in addition to their regular duties.

Identify a Project Champion

Identify a policymaker who will sponsor, promote, and guide the effort among the team of local policymakers. Ideally, this will be a justice system leader or executive who can play a critical role in promoting change by actively and visibly participating throughout the process, building a coalition of support among other leaders, and communicating directly with criminal justice staff.

The Project Champion will work closely with the Team Leader to decide on team membership, set work timetables and goals, create meeting schedules and agendas, and convene team meetings. The Project Champion will provide a consistent positive energy to the effort, motivating other team members by communicating a persuasive vision and path toward local pretrial improvements. When needed, the Project Champion will step in to make vital decisions and address the concerns of other stakeholders that may arise along the way. In most cases, the Project Champion will play an active role at critical junctures: at the beginning of the project, to inject enthusiasm and lend it credibility; when taking key steps that require funding or policy decisions; and at launch, to ensure full knowledge of, and support for, systemwide change. This may require a time commitment of three to six hours a month, depending on the site's eagerness to move ahead on its change initiatives.

Complete a PSA Data Elements Worksheet

Both the [Guide to PSA Readiness](#) and [Guide to PSA Technology Options](#) will help sites determine whether they have the data necessary to implement the PSA. The Data Elements Worksheet, which is included as part of the Guide to PSA Technology Options (and also included in this RFA as **Appendix C**), outlines the data necessary to score the PSA and report on its outcomes. It is critically important that potential applicants assess their data capacity in advance of preparing an application. A jurisdiction must have electronic access to each data element required to score the PSA. Without such access, a jurisdiction is not eligible to participate as an APPR Learning Site. *As noted below, a completed Data Elements Worksheet must be submitted as part of a jurisdiction's formal application.*

Participate in a Pre-application Webinar.

APPR will conduct a webinar on **November 20, 2019, at 2 p.m. EST** to further describe the pilot project and the assistance that is being offered. Participants will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the project and the application process. **It is strongly recommended that the identified Team Leader attend this webinar. Ideally, the Project Champion will attend as well.** (Other potential team members may, of course, attend.) [Pre-registration](#) for the webinar is required.

Application Instructions

Eligible Applicants

APPR's assistance is open to applicants from county or municipal governments. The application can come from any agency or coordinating body within those governments (e.g., court administration, district attorney's offices, defense, law enforcement, county executives, mayors, pretrial services, criminal justice coordinating councils, county planning departments, county or municipal legislative bodies).

Contents of Application

Each application must contain the following pieces of information:

1. A **cover sheet** with the jurisdiction's name, the Team Leader's name and contact information, and the Project Champion's name and contact information.
2. A **narrative** of up to 10 pages (single-spaced, 12-point font) that includes the following:
 - a. a description of the **site's goals and reasons** for wanting to participate and to implement the PSA;
 - b. an overview of the **jurisdiction's current pretrial process**, including a short summary of how pretrial release decisions are made in the jurisdiction (e.g., which officials make the pretrial release decision; whether the jurisdiction has delegated release authority and, if so, to whom authority is delegated; when the pretrial release decisions occur; whether a pretrial screening/assessment instrument is used and, if so, which one; whether the jurisdiction uses a bond/bail schedule; whether the jurisdiction has a pretrial services agency, and, if so, what pretrial services are available (e.g., appearance reminders, supervision, electronic monitoring, etc.); and
 - c. a discussion of the **core application elements** (described below).
3. **Letters of commitment** from all required team members, the Team Leader, and the Project Champion. (See below for further detail.)
4. A completed **Data Elements Worksheet** (attached as **Appendix C**).

Core Application Elements

Your application narrative must include a discussion of the following core application elements:

1. The Team

Applications must identify a cross-agency policy team or committee that will make relevant policy decisions and shepherd the overall implementation process. Applications must name the team's members, which must (at a minimum) include:

- the chief or presiding criminal court judge;
- a magistrate or commissioner with oversight of the pretrial process (if applicable);
- the district attorney, or senior prosecutor with responsibility for pretrial within the district attorney's office;
- the public defender (or representative from the defense bar in jurisdictions without a public defender's office) or senior defense attorney with responsibility for pretrial within the public defender's office;
- the director of pretrial services (if such an agency exists in the jurisdiction);
- the jail administrator; and
- the court administrator.

It is highly recommended that the team also include:

- a senior representative of a local police department;
- one or more community members who are impacted by the pretrial system; and
- one or more community service providers who provide pretrial services.

2. An Understanding of the Work Involved

The application should describe the team's understanding of the planning process involved in this project and the team's past experiences (if any) with a similar process. You should also include a description of any previous experiences working with TA providers.

This project's planning process will include: a discussion of the team's goals and purpose for their work; an assessment of current pretrial practices across multiple agencies; a mapping of the process from initial law enforcement contact through adjudication; a discussion of the insights gained through that work, especially the gaps or challenges that can be

addressed through the implementation of the PSA and other systemwide changes; and a plan for implementation.

3. The Availability of Necessary Data

To score the PSA, a jurisdiction must have access to certain information about the accused person—specifically, information to score the nine factors of the PSA, including the current charge, criminal history, and failure to appear history. As noted above, a jurisdiction must have electronic access to each data element required to score the PSA; without such access, a jurisdiction is not eligible to participate as an APPR Learning Site. Your application must include a completed Data Elements Worksheet, which will describe the sources of this information within the jurisdiction’s data systems.

Applications should also address previous discussions, if any, about integrating the PSA into an existing or new system; a jurisdiction’s initial plan for such integration, if previous discussions have not taken place; or whether the jurisdiction requires a standalone PSA software application.² This issue is discussed and explained in the Guide to PSA Technology Options.

Finally, to help APPR assess a jurisdiction’s data capacity, the application should describe the following:

- For each data system identified in the Data Elements Worksheet, identify the agency owner and the lead agency’s experience collaborating with that agency.
- A short explanation of how you would locate each data element in each system.
- Any concerns you have over historical data (e.g., access, quality [selected fields, selected time periods], over-written data fields).
- Any prior experience in accessing, extracting, and linking these data systems for a defined group of individuals.
- Whether the agency that is expected to score the PSA has direct query access to NCIC and, if not, how you will access federal criminal history data (which is required to score the PSA).

² APPR is in the process of developing a standalone PSA application and it will be made available to the public at no cost in the early spring of 2020.

4. Minimum Technology Requirements

Given the project's reliance on online activities, there are minimum technology requirements all applicants must meet. These requirements will ensure that all selected applicants have the capacity to participate in webinars and video conferences and engage in interactive learning opportunities and online discussions. Applicants should confirm in their application the availability of the following:

- access to a reliable internet connection, minimum of 3 Mbps, ideally 5 Mbps;
- access to Chrome, Safari, or Firefox browsers from a non-mobile device (laptop, desktop);
- ability to download and run Zoom conferencing software on a non-mobile device (laptop, desktop);
- access to a video camera and microphone for conferencing purposes, either directly in a laptop or as an external webcam; and
- ability to download and open standard document types, including PDF, .png, Word, and Excel documents, to a non-mobile device (laptop, desktop).

Note: If Internet Explorer is the preferred browser and/or if a tablet is the preferred work device in your jurisdiction, please contact us so we can evaluate compatibility with the online learning platform. Questions can be directed to Alison Shames, ashames@cepp.com.

Letters of Commitment

The application must include individual letters from each of the team members identified in the application narrative. The letters must make clear not just the individual's support for the effort but also their goals in participating and their explicit commitment to take part in regular meetings, to work with project staff and advisors, and to implement needed changes to pretrial practices, including the PSA.

Separate letters are required from the identified Project Champion and Team Leader. Each of these letters should explain why the jurisdiction is interested in participating as a Learning Site in the project and affirm the individual's understanding of their roles, their availability to take on the project, and their commitment to fulfilling the obligations of a Learning Site (that is, engaging in online learning, participating in the broader learning community, providing feedback on their experiences, and sharing their challenges and accomplishments).

Deadline and Method to Submit

Applications should be submitted to the Center for Effective Public Policy.

Email the completed application to Jenna Mackey, jmackey@cepp.com, by 11:59 p.m. E.S.T. on December 20, 2019.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by a team of partners from APPR. The reviewers may conduct follow-up calls if necessary. Applicants will be notified of the final decisions by **February 1, 2020**. It is expected that **the pilot project will commence on or about April 1, 2020**. Assistance will be provided for up to 12 months, and the jurisdiction is expected to implement the PSA within that time frame.

Key Dates: APPR Learning Sites	
Before November 20, 2019	Register for pre-application webinar
2 p.m. EST, November 20, 2019	Pre-application webinar
11:59 p.m. EST, December 20, 2019	Application due date
February 1, 2020	Final decisions regarding jurisdiction selection
April 1, 2020	Pilot project begins

Questions?

Direct all questions about APPR Learning Sites and this Request for Applications to Alison Shames, Co-Director, Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research, ashames@cepp.com.

APPR Learning Sites: Application Checklist

- ☐ Register for the pre-application webinar.
- ☐ Identify a Team Leader.
- ☐ Identify a Project Champion.
- ☐ Complete the Data Elements Worksheet.
- ☐ Obtain letters of support from all required team members, the Team Leader, and the Project Champion.
- ☐ Complete the application narrative, which must include:
 - ☐ A description of the site's goals and reasons for participating
 - ☐ An overview of the jurisdiction's current pretrial process
 - ☐ A discussion of the core application elements
- ☐ Prepare an application cover sheet.

Appendix A

APPR Project Partners

Applied Research Services, Inc.

Center for Court Innovation

Extension Engine

Exygy

Flint Springs Associates (Donna Reback)

FrameWorks Institute

National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies

National Association of State Courts

OpenLattice

Peggy McGarry, consultant

Pinnacle Justice Consulting (Dr. Michael Jones)

The Carey Group (Mark Carey)

RALLY

RTI International

Stanford Computational Policy Lab

3 Bridges (Jed Miller)



Appendix B

Online Learning Sections

The online learning sections will cover the following topics:

Onboarding: The first two sections ensure that the team and its leadership are set up to be successful in the project. The leadership team meets with the TA provider virtually and plans for a larger team kickoff. In the kickoff, the project team comes together to define a shared mission and vision and lay the groundwork for successful team collaboration.

System Mapping: Early in the project, the team will participate in a pretrial system mapping exercise. A system map depicts the steps in the criminal justice process beginning with police contact and ending with adjudication or dismissal. The TA provider will be on-site to help the team conduct the system mapping exercise. The online learning section will help prepare the team for the on-site visit and the system mapping exercise.

Foundations in Pretrial Decision Making: Early and later sections provide key foundational knowledge about the larger landscape of pretrial decision making, including pretrial history, legal principles, and relevant empirical research such as the nature and impacts of release and detention.

PSA Implementation: There are key decisions that sites need to make to successfully run the PSA. Online learning sections are designed specifically to help teams make those decisions and produce important project resources, such as creating a Violent Offense List and a Release Conditions Matrix.

Measurement and Validation: Alongside implementing the PSA, teams will need to develop quality assurance and continuous quality improvement protocols and processes. There are sections on measurement and validation that ensure sites understand what to measure and validate and the importance of ongoing evaluation.

Communications: Policy teams need to be prepared to speak publicly as well as with other agencies about pretrial improvements and the PSA. This section will: include a series of exercises to help jurisdictions develop a strategic communications plan; introduce the team to research-informed frames and messages; supply the site with a communications toolkit related to the PSA; and provide the team with introductory media training.

Launching Change: The final sections support teams in pre- and post-launch activities necessary for a successful PSA implementation. For example, there are sections that help teams train support staff to score the PSA and ensure that the project team is set up to continue its leadership and change efforts.

Appendix C

PSA Data Elements Worksheet

This is a fillable form that may be completed on your computer.

Data Sources

Identify the specific systems or databases in which each type of information is located.

Charge Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrest warrant – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Probable cause statement – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Criminal History Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> State – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> County – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Local – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Name of court case management system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Failure to Appear (FTA) Sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Criminal history records – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Court data – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor data – Name of system:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:



Using the names of the systems or databases identified above, list the sources you will use to obtain the data needed to respond to each PSA risk factor, pretrial outcome, and performance measure.

Data Sources for PSA Risk Factors

Age at Current Arrest	
Current Charge Violent	
Pending Charge	
Prior Misdemeanor Conviction	
Prior Felony Conviction	
Prior Violent Conviction	
History of Pretrial FTA	
Dates of Prior FTA	
Prior Sentence to Incarceration	
Sentence Length	

Data Sources for Pretrial Outcomes

New Failure to Appear (FTA)	
Date of FTA	
New Criminal Activity (NCA)	
Date of NCA	
New Violent Criminal Activity (NVCA)	
Date of NVCA	

Data Sources for Local System and PSA Performance Measures

Unique Defendant Identifiers	
Unique Case Identifiers	
Case Filing Date	
Case Disposition Date	
Case Disposition Type	
Detention Facility Booking Date	
Detention Facility Release Date	