



State of Illinois  
Circuit Court of Cook County

Chambers of  
Timothy C. Evans  
Chief Judge

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**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
**@CookCntyCourt**

**Circuit Court of Cook County Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans responds to the “Circuit Court of Cook County Pretrial Operational Review” issued this morning by the Illinois Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts**

Chief Judge Evans is gratified that the Supreme Court shares his commitment to a free-standing, adequately funded, and independently administered pretrial services program. Chief Judge Evans, the judges and probation officers of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and all of the stakeholders in the criminal justice system have long recognized that effective pretrial services work is critical to the preservation of public safety and the administration of justice. Chief Judge Evans notes that unlike probation officers who are dealing with convicted felons, pretrial services officers seek to assist the court by providing judges with accurate background data regarding the pretrial release of persons charged with felonies and effective supervision of compliance with the terms and conditions imposed by the court on the release of those awaiting trial on the charges against them.

Chief Judge Evans has already completed one of the Supreme Court’s recommendations in that he recently name Lavone Haywood as the new head of Adult Probation and Sharon Hoffman, as Director of the Court’s Social Service Department. He has changed the managerial structure within these departments. He has conducted extensive training of the staff. He has also asked the County to issue a Request for Proposals for a complete re-design of the electronic case management system to replace outmoded and inefficient technology.

Chief Judge Evans said that the Circuit Court had virtually no pretrial services program in place when he took office as Chief Judge. Chief Judge Evans commissioned Dr. Marie Van Nostrand, a nationally recognized authority in the field of pretrial services whose expertise is acknowledged by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, to develop a plan for the creation of a pretrial services program for the Circuit Court. Since 2008, the Cook County Board of Commissioners has repeatedly refused Judge Evans’s requests to provide funding for a free-standing pretrial services program as designed by Dr. Van Nostrand. In addition, the County Board has cut funding for the Adult Probation Department while, at the same time, state

reimbursement for the Adult Probation Department has decreased 66% since 1998, currently funding only 60 non-supervisory probation officer positions.

Following the County Board's refusal to fund a free-standing Pretrial Services Department or allocate sufficient funds for training and salaries for additional probation officers to perform pretrial services functions, and in light of the inability of the State to increase reimbursements, Chief Judge Evans assigned probation officers to perform pretrial functions.

Chief Judge Evans notes that risk assessments performed by these probation officers in their pretrial services role has enabled judges in Central Bond Court to place significant numbers of defendants awaiting trial on electronic monitoring or set bail in the form of I-Bonds, diverting potential inmates from the County's jail.

Chief Judge Evans agrees with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts that improvement in the quality of information and services is a continual process. Chief Judge Evans expresses his hope that sufficient funding will be made available to the Circuit Court to implement the improvements called for by the AOIC report. He also believes, and sincerely hopes, that the report will serve as a blueprint for the Circuit Court and all of the stakeholders in the system to move forward. Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, the Cook County Board, and the sheriff all play roles in improving this vital component of the criminal justice system.

Chief Judge Evans welcomes Chief Justice Garman's and the Supreme Court's invitation to work with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and all the principals in the Cook County justice system to examine and begin implementing the recommendations proposed in the report. Chief Judge Evans and his staff will be studying the report over the next several days to determine how best to proceed.

To read the report on PreTrial Services issued by the Illinois Supreme Court and the Chief Judge's responses to it, please go to the court's website [www.cookcountycourt.org](http://www.cookcountycourt.org).

Chief Judge Timothy Evans thanks Chief Justice Rita Garman and the Illinois Supreme Court for providing him this morning with a copy of their report on the Cook County pretrial services program. He welcomes the participation of the Supreme Court as well as the other Cook County stakeholders in completing the process of establishing a preeminent pretrial services department that he began years ago.

1. Judge Evans has long been committed to a free-standing, adequately-funded, and independently administered pretrial services program. He is gratified that the AOIC endorses this idea.
2. Judge Evans recognizes that pretrial services work is critical. Unlike probation officers who are dealing with convicted felons, pretrial services officers deal with defendants awaiting trial.
3. Recognizing that only a very limited pretrial services program existed in Cook County when he took office (despite the requirements of the Pretrial Services Act), Judge Evans commissioned Dr. Marie Van Nostrand, whom the AOIC acknowledges is one of the pre-eminent national experts in the area of pretrial services, to devise a pretrial services program. In 2008, she submitted a detailed plan for the creation of such a program. She required a minimum of 117 positions and delineated the important functions various staff would perform.
4. Since Dr. Van Nostrand made her recommendations, Judge Evans has regularly sought funding from the County Board for a free-standing, adequately-funded pretrial services department and has been consistently denied each year.
5. While the state provided reimbursement for the County's Adult Probation Department, these funds have declined dramatically, so that while reimbursement was available for 179 probation positions in 1998, no more than 60 non-supervisory positions are reimbursed today. These funds are for probation and not pretrial services. In the face of this lack of financial support from the County or the State, Judge Evans nonetheless re-assigned probation officers to do pretrial services work to provide a minimum level of support for the pretrial services function, and thereby began the pretrial services work that continues today in Cook County.
6. Effective pretrial services require not merely the funding of adequate positions (and resources for training, cooperation and improved data sharing), but also implementation of the best practices in assessing the risk that the defendant will commit a violent crime while on bond or not appear for trial.
7. Judge Evans has been one of the nation's leaders in the use of risk assessment tools to assist the judges in making bond decisions. As of 2012, only 10% of the nation's jurisdictions used any form of risk assessment tool. Judge Evans implemented a risk

assessment tool designed by Dr. Van Nostrand in 2008. He is now working with her and other experts in the field (from the Arnold Foundation) to test the newest version of risk assessment and is planning to implement it in a pilot courtroom, with judges committed to using it.

8. Until adequate resources are committed to a pretrial services program, the program will always be imperfect.
9. Despite the limited resources available, Judge Evans is dedicated to improving the pretrial services program. Most recently, he named Lavone Haywood as the new head of Adult Probation and Sharon Hoffman, as Director of the Court's Social Service Department. He has changed the managerial structure within these departments. He has conducted extensive training of the staff. He has also asked the County to issue a Request for Proposals for a complete re-design of the electronic case management system to replace outmoded and inefficient technology.
10. Judge Evans recognizes the challenges of conducting meaningful bond hearings. Last fall he made a written proposal to the Supreme Court, seeking to expand the Central Bond Court call by extending the day and adding a second judge on the weekends.
11. Judge Evans has expanded from 5 to 20 the number of deferred prosecution and alternative sentencing programs available to arrestees in Cook County. These include the establishment of drug treatment courts, mental health treatment courts, veterans' treatment courts, prostitution deferred-prosecution programs, as well as drug and retail theft schools.