

Charleston County: 2024 Pretrial Trends

Formally established in 2015, the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) proactively strengthens the local criminal justice system and public safety through data sharing and analysis. The CJCC remains committed to accountability and transparency.

In comparing 2023 and 2024 pretrial trendsⁱ:

- The number of bonds that required a financial payment (Financial Effective Bondⁱⁱ) increased by 9.4% (3,442 in 2023, 3,827 in 2024). **2024 Financial Effective Bonds comprised 73% of General Sessions bondsⁱⁱⁱ.**
- The average Effective Bond amount in General Sessions dropped to \$31,689, down from \$41,454 in 2023. In Summary Court, the Effective Bond amount decreased from \$3,639 to \$2,748.

During a Bond hearing, Judges review the factors required by law, input from both the State and Defense, and a Pretrial Services Report (PSR) before making a decision based on the individual case. The PSR provides key information about defendants and includes a score indicating how likely a person is to succeed, defined as making required court appearances and avoiding new arrests, based on past outcomes of previous cases with similar characteristics. The score ranges from Level 1 (most likely to succeed) to Level 4 (least likely).

In 2024:

- 90.9% of cases with General Session charges had a PSR completed.
- Individuals scored as Level 1 were most likely to receive a Personal Recognizance bond (no money required). Those rated at Levels 2, 3, or 4 were more likely to have a bond that required payment.
- Individuals rated as Level 4 were more likely to fail pretrial (55.9%) than to succeed.
- Most bond failures occurred within the first six months after a person is released.

ⁱ All data presented in this document is drawn from the CJCC 2024 Annual Report found here: <https://cjcc.charlestoncounty.org/files/publications/2024-CJCC-Annual-Report.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The combination of all bonds set on an individual at the bond hearing. An Effective Financial Bond could indicate a combination of Personal Recognizance Bonds and Financial Bonds or only Financial Bonds.

ⁱⁱⁱ This includes charges arising within the jurisdiction of General Sessions, County of Charleston, and smaller municipalities within Charleston County, who have their bonds set at Centralized Bond Court.