

# **ALACHUA COUNTY LABOR COALITION**

ORGANIZING SOCIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL!

## **Alachua County Court Services: A Program in Despair**

*Prepared 10/12/2020*

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
Summary of proposed reforms	2-3
<b>Proposed Reforms</b>	<b>4-6</b>
<b>Brief History</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Investigations and Community Supervision</b>	<b>7</b>
Court Services Pretrial Services	7
Explanation of Pretrial, Pretrial Release Programs, and Services Provided by ACCS Pretrial Services	8-9
Pretrial Assessments	10
Pretrial Supervision	10-11
Centralized Screening Team	12
Probation	13
Day Reporting	13
Community Service	13
<b>Clinical and Therapeutic Programs</b>	<b>13</b>
Treatment Courts	13
Metamorphosis	13
OPUS Outpatient Treatment	14
Work Release	14
Staff and Supervision	14-15

# Executive Summary

The Alachua County Court Services is a broken system which for years has failed to live up to their goal of reducing incarceration and recidivism. This institution could be a powerful tool for progressive criminal justice reform in Alachua County, but, as it stands, has limited positive impact and often acts as a regressive ingredient in our broken criminal justice system. This is most evident by the shockingly high 78% of cases for whom this agency recommended monetary bonds. Furthermore, poor administration and a seemingly purposeful neglect of best practices has left Alachua County Court Services unable to implement their core missions of supervised release, drug rehabilitation, and decarceration.

## Summary of proposed reforms

The following are some necessary changes, however there are numerous changes that must be made if this institution is to fulfill its intended purpose.

- Court Services should build relationships with community organizations for support and courtroom advocacy. Community advocacy can influence the court to make more appropriate decisions on release options and sentencing, ultimately reducing incarceration and unnecessary supervision of our community members. (See more information on pg 4)
- The Centralized Screening Team (CST) needs to make an accurate and timely determination on how to safely release individuals pending trial instead of advocating in court for monetary bonds. (See more information on pg 3)
- CST should expedite jail releases of pretrial defendants by actively attending Bond Reduction Hearings and presenting release recommendations to defense attorneys for pretrial defendants. (See more information on pg 12)
- Court Services must stop using either the Florida or Ohio Risk Assessment System and implement and train staff to use a new valid risk/needs assessment tool to determine supervision levels for individuals in all divisions in accordance with their needs. (See more information on pgs. 8 -9)
- Pretrial defendants should be released with the least restrictive conditions necessary to ensure they return to court when necessary and remain safe and respected. (See more information on pgs. 10-11)
- Court Services should utilize and advocate wider utilization of diversionary courts and treatment services in order to decrease the jail population and provide community members with help and care as an alternative to incarceration. (See more information on pgs. 4 and 13-14)

- Court Services personnel at First Appearance should never act as advocates for monetary bail, the bail bond industry, or any other court order that makes a defendant's pretrial freedom dependent on their wealth.
- The Work Release program must be recreated into a re-entry program based on the Broward County Model. This would help integrate individuals who have been released from jail back into their community. (See more information on pg. 5)
- All staff should be fully trained to perform their duties effectively and properly. Staff who demonstrate behavior that goes against their standard operating procedures (SOPS) and training should be retrained and apprehended accordingly.
- An effective system of data management needs to be established and staff must be trained on data collection, management and storage. Data is a very important tool in establishing benchmarks, policies and assessments as well as ensuring that department programs are functioning properly to benefit the community. The outdated and inefficient Loryx/Monitor data management system needs to be replaced with a more updated system that allows staff to track cases, contacts, and data quickly and reliably. (See more on pg 5)

If these reforms are implemented the Alachua County Court Services will become a powerful tool in much needed criminal justice reform.

## Proposed Reforms

The Centralized Screening Team (CST) should work more closely with the Jail Population Manager to improve communications and expedite jail releases of pretrial defendants. CST needs to attend Bond Reduction Hearings and present release recommendations for pretrial defendants. Instead of merely suggesting a release plan, the CST should be responsible for recommending to the defense attorney for pretrial defendants a release plan that uses Court Services programs.

Court Services must implement and train staff to use a new valid risk/needs assessment tool to determine supervision levels for individuals in all divisions in accordance with their risk and needs. Currently the Department is using the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) to score probationers and Day Reporting clients however not all staff is trained and qualified to use ORAS. As previously mentioned, there is a need to create a new risk/need assessment tool. This tool should distance itself from ORAS, the Florida Risk Assessment or PSA, as these instruments have [potential biases](#) within them that disproportionately affect Black and brown communities, as well as queer and trans individuals. "The factors that the ORAS-PAT focuses on include drug use and abuse, housing stability, job access, and other issues correlated with poverty. It does

not account for ways that meeting an accused person's needs could reduce their risk of not coming to court or being re-arrested.”<sup>1</sup>

Defendants who have low-risk assessment scores should be released with the least restrictive conditions, as they are proven not to be a risk to the community, and increases in the supervision of this population increase the likelihood of an individual's failure to appear. Few clients are being served by Day Reporting. By increasing hours of operations, staff, and serving more clients this program could divert individuals from languishing in Jail.

There needs to be community advocacy in the courtroom. Court Services must encourage participatory defense. Participatory defense is a strategy to bring community advocacy into the courtroom in which families and community members partner with public defenders to provide improved defense strategies and outcomes. According to The Participatory Defense Organization family and community support can play a role in reducing or stopping incarceration. Through community organizing, and community-public defender partnership power can be used to change the status quo and bring reform to the courtroom. Court Services cannot be trusted as a community ally as it stands currently. Through the utilization of participatory defense, community advocacy can influence the courtroom to yield more appropriate decisions on release options and sentencing, ultimately reducing incarceration and unnecessary supervision of our community members.

There needs to be a mandate that establishes a framework for accepting clients in treatment courts as they continue to be underutilized and have high rejection rates. If individuals meet eligibility criteria, they should not be denied access to the court because of the staff's biased perceptions.

Metamorphosis is the only division of the Department of Court Services that does not require criminal justice involvement or a court order. This program should not be a function of Court Services, rather it should be transitioned to another Department or to a local community substance abuse and mental health provider.

Alachua County is one of four counties with Work Release facilities in Florida, along with Duval, Escambia, and Orange County. Escambia County is currently in the process of closing down its program. Work Release should be recreated into a re-entry program. This would help integrate individuals who have been released from jail back into their community. Modeling a program after the [Re-Entry Program](#) that Broward County has in place, would allow inmates a better chance to prepare for re-entry to their community. A plan is agreed upon with the individual

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<sup>1</sup> *An Organizer's Guide to Confronting Pretrial Risk Assessment Tools in Decarceration Campaigns*, Community Justice Exchange, 2019.

while they are still incarcerated, it includes a level of supervision, community service hours, job search, counseling, training, daily schedules, and any court-ordered conditions. The staff at the Re-Entry Program needs to be responsible for meeting their client's needs is dedicated to preparing those nearing the end of their sentence and based on the client's needs. The staff can aid with job searches, GED or skill-building to become employed, housing, transportation, driver's license applications, etc.

The Loryx/Monitor is an unreliable and inefficient tool for data management and storage. There is a need to enhance this system so that it can be used by staff to track cases, contacts, and data. Data collection is very important to measure the success of programs and methods of the department. There are currently no guidelines for data collection, there needs to be a determination of what data needs to be collected and the best way to collect it. Rigorous data collection standards must be set so that all staff is required to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their work/recommendations.

The Department has cycled through a number of directors which has contributed to the disorganization and inconsistency of work. Court Services would be best managed by a committed full-time ethical leader. This person should be knowledgeable in this field, have meaningful job experience, proper qualifications and certifications and most importantly dedicated to keeping the community's best interest at heart

The two Assistant Directors should be replaced with one. There is currently no need for two. Staff in supervisory and leadership positions should know what they are hired to do, follow procedures, aid staff as needed, and most important of all report to work. There is no need to have supervisors who are Assistant Directors that are unwilling and incapable of helping staff by making decisions. The current leadership is seen by staff as a barrier to progress within the Department. The relationship between staff and leadership needs to be a collaborative and helpful one. As it currently stands, Court Services is not meeting its vision, goals, or mission. It is essential that leadership be held accountable and changes be made.

Create a training program for all new hired leadership or supervisors. Make sure that there are Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for all tasks that the Department may need to complete. Every staff member and supervisor should have access to SOP's and they should be updated regularly.

Maintain a better relationship with advocates of pretrial defendants, including social workers, medical providers, and defense attorneys. Have leadership regularly meet with all leaders in the system, including the public defender's office and the judiciary. Collaborate with the Judiciary to have individuals released to Court Services for assessment and supervision.

Immediately before release, individuals should be assessed by staff who should determine their needs and risk. Court Services staff would place the client in the most appropriate program based on their needs and risk and not on staff's personal opinions. Court Services staff should increase or decrease an individual's level of supervision depending upon how well or how poorly they are doing.

## Brief History

The Department of Court Services was established by the Alachua Board of County Commissioners in 1983. Before then the Department was run by The Junior League. The Department has been providing a number of services including screening, supervision, and treatment for individuals under the jurisdiction of County and Circuit Courts within Alachua County. It is organized into two separate divisions. The first, Investigations and Community Supervision, is made up of Pretrial Investigations, Pretrial Release, Centralized Screening Team, Probation, Day Reporting, and Community Services. The second, The Clinical and Therapeutic Programs division, consists of Drug Court, Veteran's Court, Mental Health Court, Metamorphosis, OPUS Outpatient Treatment, and Work Release. The staff serves the community, clients of the Department, County, and Circuit Courts, and internal and external County staff.

The Court Services Vision statement is "Our services will be professional, compassionate, and consistently available to the community. Dignity and fairness will serve as our guiding principles. We will have a seamless continuum of treatment and social services readily available and tailored to the needs of the individual client. No one will be incarcerated who can be managed in the community."

The Court Services Mission Statement is "To reduce the need for incarceration by rendering timely and accurate information to the Court while providing a continuum of cost-effective, community-based supervision and therapeutic services to the citizens of Alachua County with emphasis on accountability and preserving public safety".

The Alachua County Court Services is failing to live up to its vision and is failing to achieve the goals of its mission statement.

## Investigations and Community Supervision

### Court Services Pretrial Services

One of the most significant roles played by Alachua County Court Services in the local criminal justice system is acting as a pretrial release program. Florida Statutes defines a pretrial release program as "an entity, public or private, that conducts investigations of pretrial detainees, makes pretrial release recommendations to a court, and electronically monitors and supervises pretrial defendants." [Fla. Stat. § 907.043\(2\)\(b\)](#). According to the Alachua County website



accessed on 7/23/2020, the division of Court Services dedicated to acting as a pretrial release program is referred to as “Pretrial Services.” Alachua County Court Services Pretrial Services is further divided into two programs, each headed by a Program Supervisor: (1) First Appearance & Centralized Screening Team, and (2) Pretrial Supervision.

## Explanation of Pretrial, Pretrial Release Programs, and Services Provided by ACCS Pretrial Services

“Pretrial” is used to refer to the period between initiation of a court case and its resolution. The term is rooted in the idea that trials of all criminal cases ultimately end in a trial but the reality is that very few criminal cases today result in a trial. In 2017 only 1.53% of criminal dispositions in Florida state courts resulted in Jury trials<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, we should think of pretrial as meaning pre-resolution of a criminal case.

Most cases actually end in defendants entering pleas of guilty to one or more charges, usually in anticipation of receiving a specific, agreed-upon sentence. Agreed-upon sentences, also known as “plea bargains” or “plea agreements”, result in most cases from discussions between prosecutors (known in Florida as Assistant State Attorneys) and defense attorneys (either private attorneys or Assistant Public Defenders). However agreed-upon sentences are becoming increasingly rare locally. Prosecutors often refuse to agree to sentences, and defendants are forced to “plead open” to the judges<sup>3</sup>. Pleading open means that the judge is then permitted to sentence a person up to the maximum, regardless of what either or both parties recommend or argue for.

In addition to trials and guilty pleas, criminal cases may also be resolved through a dismissal of criminal charges. The State Attorney’s Office is vested with the discretion to dismiss or drop one or more charges in any criminal case. A prosecutor may drop a case for any number of reasons, including making the determination that the charges are not provable at trial. This decision may be reached by the prosecutor on their own or after discussions with the defense

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<sup>2</sup> Gramlich, John. “Only 2% of Federal Criminal Defendants Go to Trial, and Most Who Do Are Found Guilty.” *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 30 May 2020, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/11/only-2-of-federal-criminal-defendants-go-to-trial-and-most-who-do-are-found-guilty/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/11/only-2-of-federal-criminal-defendants-go-to-trial-and-most-who-do-are-found-guilty/).

<sup>3</sup> The State Attorney’s Office has in recent years increased a practice of referring to its plea offers as “recommendations” or, when agreed to by the parties, as “joint recommendations.” In either scenario, the Assistant State Attorneys are instructed that they are permitted to refuse to participate in plea agreements and they may refer to their offers as “recommendations upon open plea.” Additionally, instead of agreeing to certain conditions that are favorable to a defendant, the State Attorney’s Office will note that they “stand silent” or “defer to the court” as to those conditions.

attorney. Cases may also be dropped for practical, empathetic, or other discretion-based reasons. For example, domestic violence cases are sometimes dropped when the alleged victim expresses a desire for the prosecution not to proceed. Sometimes charges are dropped even when provable because the State Attorney's Office decides it is not necessary to prosecute certain charges, such as a misdemeanor possession of marijuana. Charges are also dismissed after a defendant successfully completes a period of diversion from traditional prosecution, commonly referred to as deferred prosecution or pretrial intervention. These more lenient programs are usually reserved for first-time offenders or anyone the State Attorney decides to do a favor for.

Additionally, not every criminal case commences with a defendant being placed under arrest. This is due to somewhat progressive developments in criminal law in recent years, including police officers issuing "Notices to Appear," which order the defendant to appear at a specific court date to address their case. This often occurs with criminal traffic cases involving charges of driving on a suspended license. Another way a criminal case may be opened without an arrest is through an officer writing and submitting to the State Attorney's Office a "Sworn Complaint." If the prosecutor decides that the allegations warrant prosecution, he or she will file the sworn complaint and a criminal case will be opened.

Individuals who are not arrested are generally not considered to be on "pretrial release," at least as it pertains to the involvement of ACCS Pretrial Services.

Arrestees, on the other hand, are generally brought to First Appearance Hearing the morning after their arrest. First Appearance is supposed to be an opportunity for a defendant to appear before a judge and have several important issues addressed. The three main issues addressed at a First Appearance Hearing are: (1) the right to an attorney and appointment of the Public Defender's Office if the defendant qualifies and desires one, (2) whether or not there is probable cause for defendant's arrest on the crimes charged, and (3) the conditions of defendant's pretrial release (or pretrial detention).

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## Pretrial Assessments

Newly arrested individuals are interviewed before their First Appearance hearing. There are some exceptions: when an individual is too intoxicated, violent, or mentally unstable to be interviewed as well as if the individual's case is outside of the Alachua County Court's jurisdiction. In 2019, of the 6,176 defendants appealing their initial hearing, 73% were interviewed. Pretrial staff interview defendants to complete a risk assessment using the Florida

Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument as well as any other pertinent information the court may need to make an informed decision about release or retention. This information is reviewed by First Appearance staff through phone communication with contacts provided by the defendant during the interview. All Information is documented and saved into the Loryx Monitor Information Management System. First Appearance staff are responsible for making a release and detention recommendation to the Court.

Staff reports to the Jail at 10:00 PM to conduct interviews and exits the Jail at 6:00 AM. Anyone who is booked into Jail after 6:00 AM has to wait until the following day to attend First Appearance Hearing. Two staff roles perform these interviews, however only one Court Officer is currently assigned to conduct interviews and the other court officer position is vacant. A Records Technician has been working out of class for a long period of time to fill the second Court Officer position.

## Pretrial Supervision

Anyone in a pending criminal case in Alachua County is supposed to be assigned to pretrial supervision, either by Contact Supervision or Treatment Supervision. Defendants may be monitored through Electronic Monitoring (EM), Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) or Transdermal Alcohol Detection (TAD) depending on the court's instructions. Contact Supervision requires that defendants have weekly contact with a Pretrial Officer. Treatment Supervision also requires weekly contact with the Pretrial Officer and is also tasked with monitoring treatment conditions.

The Pretrial caseload in August 2019 was 154 people: 83 defendants with pending felony cases, 15 with pending misdemeanor cases, and 56 with pending traffic cases. Of this caseload, 73 defendants were released to Contact Supervision, and 81 released to Treatment Supervision. Of these defendants 65 scored Low; 61 scored Moderate, and 26 scored High on the Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument. Two defendants had no score. It has been well demonstrated by national research that individuals who obtain a low score on a pretrial risk assessment tool can be safely released on their own recognizance with no conditions of supervision. However, almost half of these individuals (42%) scored low on the risk assessment tool but were still selected to be monitored by officers. If industry's best practices were followed, this population would have been released on their own recognizance with limited or no contact with Pretrial staff as research indicates this is the best way to manage them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kilpatrick, Jeff. Department of Court Services, 2019, pp. 12, *Report on the Current State of the Alachua County Department of Court Services*.

Court Services does not regularly collect data to measure outcomes or performance. However, the department conducted a jail survey that includes data from February 15, 2018 through July 15, 2018. During this time, there were 2,721 arrestees presented at initial hearings, and 78% or 2,116 of these arrestees were issued bonds. From this population, 110 individuals scored Low or Moderate risk yet 102 were issued bonds. Of the remaining low or moderate risk individuals only five individuals were released on their own recognizance, two were released to a court services program and one case was dropped. The rate of the request for monetary bonds from this snapshot is 78%. Defendants are treated indiscriminately regardless of risk assessment score. An effective risk needs assessment tool is needed to better determine release options, especially for those with low scores. While Pretrial services continue to be underutilized, there is a need for the Department to recommend its services to low risk scorers instead of solely depending on monetary bonds as an indiscriminate release option. The Department has a number of services that it can and should recommend to individuals with low to moderate scores that don't involve languishing in jail nor bonds.

Pretrial Supervision should utilize a new risk assessment tool to make more appropriate decisions regarding release options for individuals who are released from Jail. Defendants who have low-risk assessment scores should be released with the least restrictive conditions, as they are proven not to be a risk to the community, and increases in the supervision of this population increase the likelihood of an individual's failure to appear.

As of August 28, 2019, the Community Control (EM/GPS) caseload was 53 individuals; 14 of these defendants were being held in jail due to significant money bonds and GPS monitoring. Usually, these 14 defendants would be assigned to the Centralized Screening Team caseload, but because of staff shortages, they were assigned to Electronic Monitoring Officers. The remaining 39 clients assigned to these officers had the following scores on the Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument: 12 scored Low; 15 scored Moderate, and 4 scored High. Out of these defendants, 29 were out on Pretrial GPS Supervision, 1 was out on Pretrial (TAD) Supervision, 2 were out on Pretrial Contact Supervision, 5 were out on Probation TAD Supervision and 2 were out on Probation GPS Supervision. Pretrial defendants given the highest and most restrictive supervision level should only be those defendants who are found to pose the highest risk to the community, however about half of these defendants scored low on the risk assessment instrument. These individuals who scored low on the risk assessment instrument are not being managed properly, as research published by the Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI) has demonstrated that the utilization of Electronic Monitoring on defendants that have low-risk scores results in a 112% increase in the probability of failure over release over release without EM<sup>5</sup>. The staff

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<sup>5</sup> VanNostrand, Marie, and Kimberly Weibrecht. "State of the Science of Pretrial Release Recommendations and Supervision." *Pretrial Justice Institute*, June 211AD, [university.pretrial.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=47063a15-8e11-461e-6ee5-cc109b053b08](http://university.pretrial.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=47063a15-8e11-461e-6ee5-cc109b053b08).

understands the consequences of overutilization of EM/GPS monitoring as it does significant harm to low-risk defendants. EM/GPS monitoring should never be given to low-risk defendants. The Pretrial Justice Institute emphasizes that “the intensity of the program should be modified to match the risk level of the defendant.

## Centralized Screening Team

The Centralized Screening Team (CST) is responsible for assessing and pre-screening defendants within 96 hours of the defendant’s First Appearance to determine eligibility for release options. CST creates and suggests release plans to the assigned defense attorney to manage low-risk individuals in the community, as well as screening individuals for placement in Work Release and Day Reporting. The staff of the CST does not make a recommendation for release options, rather they only indicate which programs the individual is eligible for, even programs with no eligibility requirements.

Over 60% of the jail population on any given day are in custody for one or more pending pretrial cases. On August 28, 2019, the Jail had 776 inmates, out of these 447 were individuals awaiting trial on felony charges and 82 were awaiting trial on misdemeanor charges. There is a need to determine how to safely release these individuals pending case disposition. National data illustrates that individuals released pending case disposition are able to work on their defense, receive shorter sentences, and are less likely to recidivate. The longer an individual remains in custody prior to case disposition the less likely they are to be successful. Most of the individuals who attain low to moderate scores on the Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument can be safely monitored in the community and The Department of Court Services would have the capacity to accept new clients. There is underutilization of Pretrial services, as in August 28, 2019 the program is at 68% capacity.

## Probation

When County Court Judges sentence individuals to probation, they are then assigned an Officer who they meet with regularly to monitor the conditions. The probation success rate has been over 60% over the past few years<sup>6</sup>.

## Day Reporting

This program provides the most intense supervision to Pretrial defendants as well as sentenced misdemeanor probationers. It provides the most intensive supervision for individuals. Day

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<sup>6</sup> Kilpatrick, Jeff. Department of Court Services, 2019, pp. 20, *Report on the Current State of the Alachua County Department of Court Services*.

Reporting requirements can include urinalysis and breathalyzer testing. Frequent contact and reporting on a client's daily life can also be mandated. Day Reporting clients are currently seen based upon their score on the Indiana 9 Risk Assessment Tool (I-9). All clients are asked nine questions and their number of required weekly contacts is dependent upon their score. Day Reporting clients can be referred to the department's treatment services. During 2018 Day Reporting referred 11 clients to OPUS Outpatient Treatment, only 5 were admitted and one successfully completed treatment. Only 61% of Day Reporting cases were closed and marked as successful.

## Community Service

Community Service provides direct supervision of Level 1 Probationers by monitoring payments of Court costs, completion of community service hours, and other special conditions. Work Crew provides a sentencing option for the Court as an alternative for short-term jail sentences. As of August 29, 2019, there were 172 individuals assigned to Level 1 probation, 475 individuals assigned to Community Service and Work Crew.

According to the Court Services Vision, individuals who are safe enough to be managed in the community should not be incarcerated. Pretrial Services are intended to be an instrument to divert these individuals from incarceration, yet they are extremely underutilized by the Department. These programs should be promoted by staff and encouraged in recommendations to the court so that individuals who can be safely released are not to languish in jail.

## Clinical and Therapeutic Programs

### Treatment Courts

Specialty courts include Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and Veteran's Court. These courts do not effectively and consistently use a risk/need assessment to determine levels of supervision. All clients, even if in different phases, are treated indiscriminately. Drug Court is extremely underutilized yet a lot of individuals are not accepted. Drug Court has a history and culture of "cherry-picking" clients they perceive to be successful, rather than utilizing the less discriminatory risk/need assessment.

### Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is a long-term residential treatment center for adults with chronic substance abuse disorder. It is licensed to provide intervention, treatment, and aftercare. Participants are

not limited to Alachua County residents and do not have criminal justice involvement. The capacity is very low; only 21 clients can be served at a time. Client stays range from 6 months to a year. There is always a waitlist, which is 30 days to 90 days, typically even longer during the colder months.

Many clients leave the program within a day or two of arrival because of the difficulties associated with residential arrangements within the facility. Clients are also expected to be self-sufficient by cooking and cleaning for themselves. The daily cost for housing at Metamorphosis is \$73 and \$26,681 annually. The only way to complete the program is by acquiring a job. There is only a 20% success rate for this program. Throughout 2019, 96 clients were admitted to intervention, 53 were admitted to residential and 39 aftercare clients were served.

## OPUS Outpatient Treatment

OPUS provides outpatient treatment to adults with substance abuse problems and mental health disorders. The criteria for acceptance is based on the American Society of Addiction Medicine's guidelines. There is only one OPUS staff member who has been responsible for all clients for more than a year. In 2019 a total of 26 individuals were using OPUS services. The cost of outpatient services is significantly less than Metamorphosis's long-term residential care. More individuals are provided care and services in this program than in Metamorphosis

## Work Release

Individuals must receive the court's approval to participate in Work Release and it is only available to those sentenced to jail. During 2019, 105 individuals participated in the program, with a 65.7% success rate. This means that these individuals did not return to jail. Participants in the work release program have 50% of their gross income taken from their paychecks to pay for the cost of their incarceration.

## Staff and Supervision

As of October 2019 there were 18 vacant positions within the Department.

According to a report on the Department of Court Services directed by the Alachua County Manager, "there are several ineffective and inefficient staff in leadership roles within Court Services whom, due to lack of knowledge, management and leadership skills have become a

detriment to the Department. Most divisions within Court Services are working well below capacity and have the ability to service additional clients”.<sup>7</sup>

Since the retirement of long-time Director Peria Duncan in 2018, two Directors have served and a number of interim Directors including Christine Curtis and Carl Smart have served during the period of 2018 to the present. Leadership fails time and time again to lead by example, ignoring emails and phone calls for weeks at a time, not reporting to the office for days, and failing to support staff in making administrative decisions. Moreover, senior leadership regularly fail to follow policy and procedures and are unable to help staff because they fail to learn about daily work and equipment so the staff has to help themselves. Senior leadership also missed the last two accreditation presentations, showing a lack of commitment and qualification for their positions.

There is no accountability by superiors and colleagues when errors are made, corners are cut, processes are overlooked and work is incomplete.

Report on the Current State of the County Department of Court Services [Court Services Final Report.docx](#)

An Organizer’s Guide to Confronting Pretrial Risk Assessment Tools in Decarceration Campaigns [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e1f966c45f53f254011b45a/t/5e35a639a96d977ad27f3ff0/1580574268825/CJE\\_PretrialRATGuide\\_FinalDec2019Version.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e1f966c45f53f254011b45a/t/5e35a639a96d977ad27f3ff0/1580574268825/CJE_PretrialRATGuide_FinalDec2019Version.pdf)

Broward Re-Entry Program

<https://www.sheriff.org/CP/Pages/Day-Reporting-and-Reentry-Division.aspx>

Alachua County Court Services

<https://alachuacounty.us/depts/courtservices/pages/courtservices.aspx>

The Participatory Defense Organization

<https://www.participatorydefense.org/>

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<sup>7</sup> Kilpatrick, Jeff. Department of Court Services, 2019, pp. 9, *Report on the Current State of the Alachua County Department of Court Services*.