

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/alaska-moves-to-eliminate-cash-bail>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The [State of Alaska moved this year to eliminate cash bail](#) and implement a risk-based system for pretrial incarceration.

According to a new state law, which went into effect on January 1, people will no longer be held in jail simply because they're too poor to pay their bail. Instead, the newly created Pretrial Enforcement Division part of the Alaska Division of Corrections will develop a risk score assessment that helps to determine the likelihood that a person will show up to their court dates or commit a new crime if released.

People charged with violent crimes or who receive a high risk score will still have bail bonds set in their case, and will most likely remain incarcerated until trial. Others charged with lower-level crimes or who receive a low risk score will be released on recognizance, remaining under supervision by pretrial service officers.

Alaska's jail and prison population has boomed over the last several decades, with the number of incarcerated people increasing by 27 percent from 2005 to 2014. The number of people being held pretrial increased 81 percent in that same time period. It is a sign of the bail reform movement's momentum that a traditionally law-and-order red state like Alaska has taken real steps to reduce the over-use of bail and pretrial detention, said Insha Rahman, program director at Vera.

With these reforms, the state hopes to decrease its incarcerated population by at least 13 percent, and save \$380 million in corrections expenses in the process.

Learn more about Vera's work on [bail and pretrial detention](#).

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