

Court Appearance Notification System: Evaluation Highlights

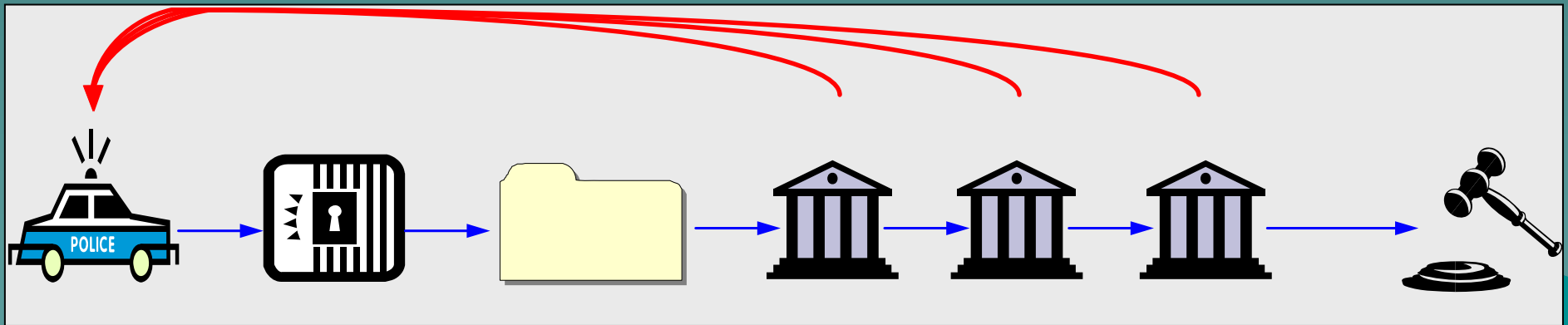
Reducing Failures to Appear

A Report to the Board of County Commissioners
April 20, 2006

Presented by Matt Nice, Budget Office Evaluation

What is FTA

- ◆ *Failure to Appear* (FTA) occurs when a defendant doesn't show at their scheduled court hearing
- ◆ Most FTAs are for low-level offenses
- ◆ Backs up the justice system; often leads to issuing new warrants




Why Does FTA Matter

- ◆ Warrants lead to subsequent arrest, booking and jailing of low-level offenders unnecessarily using jail beds
- ◆ An estimated 30% of all County cases have at least one FTA; some have multiple
- ◆ Research has found that those with FTA's are twice as likely to go to jail compared to those with the same charges who show up; and they spend twice as much time in jail

What is *CANS*

- ◆ *CANS* is an innovative pilot program that began operating in May 2005
- ◆ Designed to reduce the failures to appear (FTA) at court hearings
- ◆ Based on proven King County model
- ◆ Cross-jurisdictional oversight committee

How it Works

- ◆ Just like your doctor's office— it calls people to remind them of upcoming appointments
- ◆ Computer system reminds defendants of the time, date, and location of their hearing 
- ◆ Up to three telephone reminder calls are attempted before each hearing

What was Done

- ◆ In the first 6 months 2,391 defendants were called
- ◆ This was approximately 21% of all eligible cases
- ◆ Contact was made in 75% of cases
- ◆ The *CANS* program was not fully implemented as initially designed

What was Done

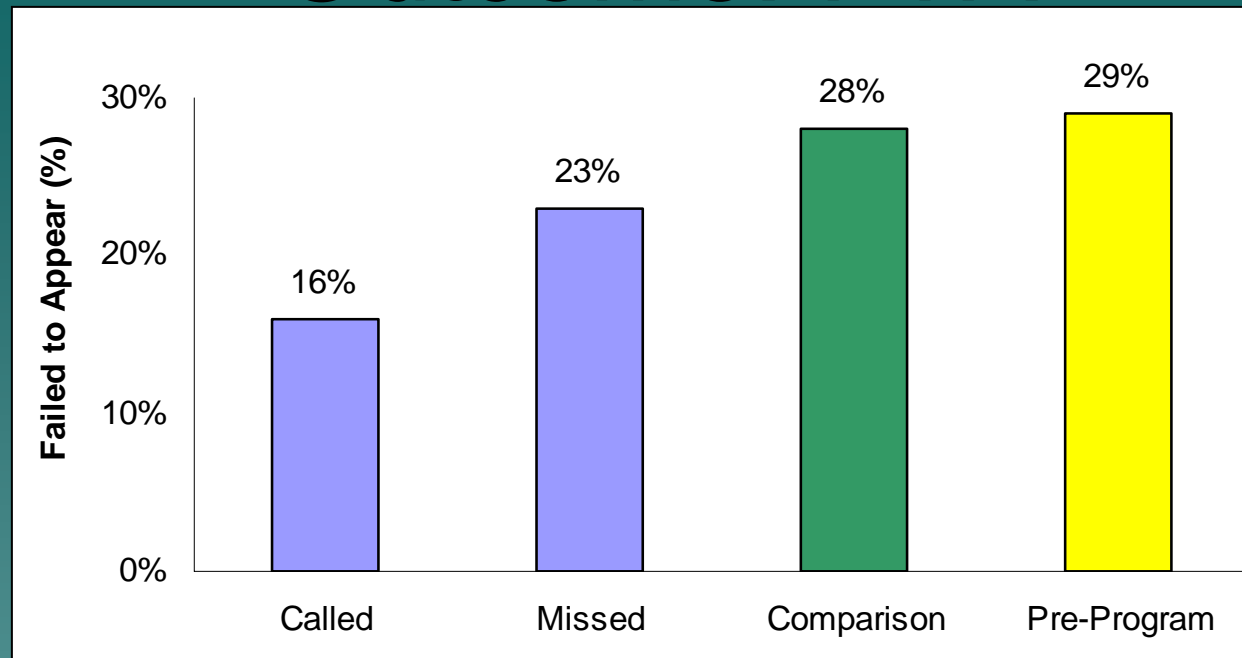
	Missed Notification	Successful Notification	Total	Successful (%)
May-05	7	25	32	78%
June-05	143	261	404	65%
July-05	103	294	397	74%
August-05	109	310	419	74%
September-05	105	371	476	78%
October-05	70	320	390	82%
November-05	54	219	273	80%
Total	591	1,800	2,391	75%

- ◆ Successful notification increased over time
- ◆ Monthly cases peaked in September and then declined

What We Achieved

- ◆ Examined outcomes of FTA, minority over-representation, and overall cost-benefit
- ◆ Compared four groups to identify program specific results
 - The group that was called and successfully contacted (*Called*)
 - The group that was called, but missed the call (*Missed*)
 - The group that would have been called, but no phone number was on file (*Comparison*)
 - A group from the previous year who would have been called if program had existed (*Pre-Program*)

Outcome: FTA



- ◆ Those notified (*Called*) FTA'd only 16% of the time—a 43 to 45% decrease over comparison defendants that were never contacted
- ◆ *Spill-over effects* were observed—those that *missed* their reminder calls still saw decreases of 18% to 21% over defendants that were never contacted

Outcome: Over-Representation

- ◆ Previous Local Public Safety Coordinating Council work identified minority over-representation in FTA rates
- ◆ What was *CANS* effect on minority over-representation

Outcome: Over-Representation

Group	Race	FTA Rate (%)
Called	Person Of Color	14%
	White	18%
	Total	16%
Missed	Person Of Color	30%
	White	19%
	Total	23%
Comparison	Person Of Color	23%
	White	32%
	Total	28%
Pre-Program Comparison	Person Of Color	40%
	White	23%
	Total	29%

- ◆ Persons of color that were notified had FTA rates of 14%—a 39% to 65% decrease over comparison defendants of color, who were never contacted

Outcome: Overall Cost-Benefit

Function/ Component	Cost of an FTA Only	Cost if a New Warrant's Issued
Issuing/ clearing warrants		\$26
Police apprehension		\$198
Booking in jail		\$291
Jail holding (1 day)		\$110
Court hearing (loaded)	\$695	\$695
Total	\$695	\$1,320

- ◆ Based on the reduced number of FTAs and subsequent warrants that were not issued, the costs avoided for the first year netted more than \$520,000
- ◆ That's \$14 saved for each \$1 spent

Recommendation Highlights

- ◆ Increasing the number of available phone numbers is paramount. Only 21% of eligible hearings were called
- ◆ Add Gresham court cases to the call system as soon as possible
- ◆ Add multiple language options to the call notification system, beginning with Spanish
- ◆ Increase the number of calls and change call times to increase the chance of successful notification
- ◆ Add a part-time temporary position to assure full program implementation occurs

Conclusions

- ◆ Investment in innovations can significantly improve services and reduce costs
- ◆ For those notified:
 - FTAs were reduced 43%-45%
 - Minority over-representation was reduced
 - Savings in the first year are estimated at \$520,000– a 14:1 savings

CANS Work Group

- ◆ Judy Shiprack, Local Public Coordinating Council (LPSCC)
- ◆ Doug Bray, State Circuit Court
- ◆ Fred Lenzser, District Attorney's Office
- ◆ John Conners, Metropolitan Public Defender's Office
- ◆ Matt Nice, Budget Office Evaluation

Copies of the full report and its highlights can be found on-line at:

<http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dbcs/budget/performance/index.shtml>