

New law provides that primary objective of the 22nd Judicial District Court sentencing policy will be to maintain public safety, hold offenders accountable, reduce recidivism and criminal behavior, and improve potential outcomes for those offenders who are sentenced.

Provides that, after January 1, 2014, all criminal divisions within the court will use a single validated risk and needs assessment tool prior to sentencing an adult offender. Further provides that the assessment tool will be administered at the time of arraignment by trained and certified personnel within the court's misdemeanor probation office. The court may, on its own motion or motion of defense counsel, order the administration of a subsequent assessment, and further provides that an evaluation report shall be prepared based upon the findings of the assessment tool.

Provides that the evaluation report will be made available to the court and defense counsel prior to the initial pretrial conference but will otherwise remain confidential and kept as part of the record under court seal.

Provides that the district court shall develop policies and protocols no later than January 1, 2014, regarding the administration and use of the assessment tool and evaluation reports pursuant to new law. Further provides that such policies will include confidentiality periods, maintaining the integrity of the assessment tool, training, and data collection and sharing among affected entities.

Further authorizes the court to provide funding for any expenses related to the administration and use of the assessment tool and evaluation reports.

Provides that the validated risk and needs assessment tool and evaluation report will be utilized by the sentencing court at the pretrial stage when determining an appropriate sentence, in order to evaluate the defendant's risk of committing future offenses and the needs of the defendant. Further provides that, in determining an appropriate sentence, the sentencing court will consider the results of the defendant's risk and needs assessment included in the evaluation report, together with the likely impact of a possible sentence on the reduction of potential future criminal behavior of the defendant.

Provides that the assessment tool and evaluation report may also be used to determine eligibility or suitability of the defendant for any available specialty court.

Effective August 1, 2013.

(Adds R.S. 15:325-327)