

**Transcript: “A Message from IG Horowitz: Pretrial Diversion and Diversion-Based Court Programs as Alternatives to Incarceration” July 2016**

Hello. I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today our office issued a report looking at the Justice Department's efforts to use diversionary programs, which offer alternatives to prison, to help achieve some of the criminal justice reforms that the Department announced in its 2013 Smart on Crime Initiative.

We focused on two kinds of diversion programs in particular: pretrial diversion programs, and court-based diversion programs.

Our report found that, while the Department has taken some steps to make greater use of pretrial diversion programs, they remain underutilized by the Department, with their use varying widely among U.S. Attorneys across the country. In fact, we found nearly half of the districts rarely used pretrial diversion. We also determined that there were a significant number of additional low-level and non-violent offenders potentially suitable for pretrial diversion. By diverting those offenders from traditional court proceedings, the Department could have potentially saved millions of tax dollars in prison costs.

Similarly, we found that diversion-based court programs, such as Drug Courts, were not offered to low-level drug offenders in 78 of the 94 federal districts.

Of particular concern, the Department has few, if any, accurate metrics to properly evaluate whether these diversion programs are effective in reducing prosecution and incarceration costs, or reducing recidivism.

Our report made 5 recommendations to the Department's leadership on how it might expand the use of both kinds of diversion programs. And both the Office of the Deputy Attorney General and the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys agreed with all of our recommendations.

To learn more, please visit our website, [oig.justice.gov](http://oig.justice.gov), where you can read the full report.

Thank you for joining us.