

Sheriff: 52 participated in warrant program

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Fifty-two people took part in a warrant forgiveness program last week that the Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Office is calling "a huge success."

Held on June 23 at District Court in Annapolis, the program looked to cut a growing backlog of active warrants for nonviolent offenders, with 7,346 active warrants in Anne Arundel for nonviolent

misdemeanor charges.

The sheriff's office said in a statement about 70 active warrants were forgiven as the court rescheduled hearing dates for 52 people.

"The majority of warrants cleared through this operation were for minor traffic, theft, (controlled dangerous substance) and paraphernalia cases, where

defendants failed to appear in court," his



Bateman

office wrote.

On Tuesday, Sheriff Ron Bateman said the turnout surpassed his expectations as he considered 25 participants "a home run" and 50 participants "a grand slam."

A spokeswoman for Bateman's office said no arrests were made outside the courthouse during the program.

People who wanted to participate but whose warrant was related to a

violent or more serious crime would not be arrested, Bateman said. But he stipulated only those who spoke with the public defender's office would not then be handed over to police.

Had his office or the county police department received a tip of a wanted criminal's arrival at the courthouse, Bateman said they would still act on it.

The higher-than-expected turnout has prompted an additional operation in the coming months, the office said.