

# Meeting Summary

Task Force on Specialty Courts

Meeting #5

[Link](#) to Task Force on OLIS



**LPRO**  
LEGISLATIVE POLICY  
AND RESEARCH OFFICE

## Meeting Information

*Date/Time* September 6, 2024 ([recording](#))

*Attendees*

**Present**

Chair Clara Rigmaiden  
Shane Alderson  
Chris Behre  
Kathy Brazell Sévos  
Joseph Garcia  
John Haroldson  
Kimberly Keller  
Heidi Moawad  
Lisa Nichols  
Matt Phillips  
Ken Sanchagrin  
Jay Scroggin  
Anne Marie Simmons  
Jason Van Meter  
Chris Wig  
Caroline Wong

**Excused**

Heather Crow-Martinez  
Laura Ruggeri

**Absent**

AJ Gosney

## Member Discussion I

**Discussion Topic**

The Task Force members discussed the previous meeting, which focused on the appropriate accountability mechanisms to ensure that specialty courts are operating according to the Criminal Justice Commission's Specialty Court Standards.

**Discussion Summary**

**Measuring Adherence to Best Practices.** The members discussed how adherence to national best practices standards relates to positive outcomes for specialty courts. By measuring

adherence to the standards, courts can be assured of positive outcomes and identify areas that need improvement. A member identified a major question for the Task Force: whether the Task Force wants to recommend that best practices be the standard by which courts are measured.

**Potential Mechanisms.** The group discussed both peer reviews and process evaluations as mechanisms to ensure adherence to standards, and the pros and cons of each method. A member suggested a process evaluation for all programs within three years of receiving funding like the evaluations that NPC Research has conducted in the past. The members discussed a possible grading system, the amount of time and resources required for peer reviews, and the benefits of both types of evaluation.

**Potential “Cornerstone” Recommendation.** A member introduced a potential “cornerstone” recommendation to “fund treatment courts to align with evidence-based best practices” that the Task Force could build its other recommendations out of.

**Oversight Groups.** The members discussed the possibility of a system where treatment court officials are mentors and coaches to each other or where a council comprised of treatment court officials meets regularly to address needs. A member suggested a workgroup could develop specific recommendations for such a council, and the Task Force discussed the benefits of such groups in the past.

**Other Topics.** The members also discussed the need for consistent provision of urinalysis testing for treatment courts, especially early in a participant’s course. They also discussed how to incorporate an awareness of racial demographics and an awareness of disparities. And the members discussed the need for effective data sharing between the healthcare and specialty court systems.

## Informational Meeting

### Administrative Balance of Oregon Specialty Courts

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) and the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) presented on the current administrative balance between the two agencies for specialty courts and on possible changes to that balance.



Amy Miller, Assistant  
Deputy State Court  
Administrator,  
Oregon Judicial  
Department

Rachael Mark,  
Treatment Court  
Analyst, Oregon  
Judicial Department

Ken Sanchagrin,  
Director, Oregon  
Criminal Justice  
Commission

[Slides](#)

## **Presentation Summary**

### **Introduction**

CJC and OJD work collaboratively to administer Oregon specialty courts. CJC operates from a top-down perspective, monitoring courts, analyzing results, and administering the grant program. OJD has a more on-the-ground perspective, informing program operation, data collection, and quality improvement, for instance.

### **Criminal Justice Commission**

CJC operates as a clearinghouse for best practices and uses that information to work with OJD on creation and maintenance of the specialty court standards.

CJC overviewed the Specialty Court Grant Program process, provided a timeline of the process, and walked through the related administrative responsibilities both for the application process and for supporting grantees after granting funds. CJC has tried to tie grant funding to alignment to national and state standards as much as possible, but because of limitations, some standards must be prioritized over others.

CJC identified several areas with improvement opportunities:

#### *Grant Program*

- Adopt or expand guidelines to increase predictability, address barriers, and use of indirect costs
- Partner with OHA for efficient treatment billing and responsible stewardship of funds
- Consider statewide drug testing contract to address varying costs and testing quality

#### *Standards*

- Update to align with current research and guidance
- Expand guidance and nuance across program types

#### *Program Oversight*

- Continue recidivism study
- Expand program analysis from SCGP for all programs
- Data sharing and reporting
- Treatment fidelity monitoring specific to treatment courts

### **Oregon Judicial Department**



OJD outlined its statutory framework for specialty courts, mentioning that though the framework is not robust, its flexibility has allowed for a collaborative relationship between CJC and OJD that has been beneficial to specialty courts. OJD administers specialty courts on two parallel tracks: local and statewide.

The Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA) supports local work and creates partnerships statewide. OSCA provides the following types of training and technical assistance:

- Supporting grant applications, reporting, and collaboration
- Connecting courts with national resources
- Hosting and facilitating peer spaces
- Providing local and statewide training with individualized solution-finding
- Providing data analysis, program monitoring, and feedback

OJD also engages in statewide projects and resources to support growth and involvement, uses local operations data from the Specialty Courts Operating Profiles to guide support to where it is needed, and provides grant-funded trainings to specialty court personnel.

OJD identified several opportunities for improvement:

- Data-driven reviews for every program
- Robust, predictable, and accessible training
- Continued shared CJC–OJD responsibilities framework
- Addressing challenges of county-only grantee/grant administrator structure
- Considering statutory and regulatory changes to emphasize a team approach

**CJC and OJD jointly recommended several improvements:**

- Stable staffing and funding for CJC, OJD, and treatment court team members
- Maintaining the Specialty Court Grant Program
- Stable funding for SCMS
- Consistent use of SCMS by all team members
- Expanding in-state training
- Exploring multidisciplinary governance



## Questions

The presenters responded to Member questions on the following topics:

- The movement of court coordinator funding from the Specialty Court Grant Program to the OJD budget
- The historical separation of treatment courts from other wings of the criminal justice system
- The sufficiency of the current administrative balance

## Member Discussion II

### Additional Accountability Mechanisms

*Kathy Brazell Sévos*

Task Force member Kathy Brazell Sévos asked: **Does someone have more clarity about why the legislature wanted more accountability mechanisms? Do we need to change anything?**

The Task Force members discussed the need to recommend stabilizing the treatment court system and for recognizing the critical part they play in the criminal justice system, what to measure to ensure effectiveness, and the use of recidivism analyses.

### Adherence to Best Practices

*Matt Phillips*

Task Force member Matt Phillips asked: **How are we adhering to best practices in Oregon? Do we have a mountain to move or are we almost there?**

The Task Force members discussed the instability of funding and its effect on local courts, Oregon's overall adherence to specialty court standards, prosecutorial discretion for recommending a specialty court in a sentence, and the usefulness of recidivism as a metric and how it is measured.

Finally, the members discussed the need to account for the variability in treatment court types with respect to accountability and best practices, specifically mentioning juvenile and family courts. A member noted that although the best practices may vary by court, the 10 Key Components do not.

### Data Sharing

*Kathy Brazell Sévos*

Task Force member Kathy Brazell Sévos commented that it would be beneficial to have someone central at the state to ensure data from treatment providers can be transferred securely and in a central way.



## Meeting Materials

*Staff*

[Member Discussion Topics](#)  
[Recommendation Proposal Form](#)  
[TFSC Oregon Treatment Court Program Personnel Questionnaire 2024](#)  
[TFSC Oregon Treatment Court Program Survey 2024](#)  
[Aug 23 Timeline Overview - Tisha Pascone \(presentation\)](#)

*Oregon Judicial  
Department &  
Criminal Justice  
Commission*

[Administrative Balance of Oregon Specialty Courts - OJC - CJC \(presentation\)](#)

