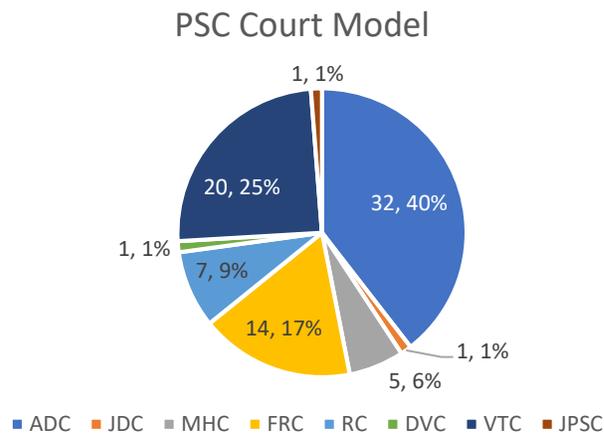


Indiana Problem-Solving Court Operations Survey— June 16, 2020

Introduction

Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS) in conjunction with the Problem-Solving Courts Committee sent out a survey to all Indiana Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) to share operations and innovative approaches taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses were collected between May 21, 2020 and June 4, 2020. IOCS received 57 responses representing 80 problem-solving courts as indicated below.

- 32 Adult Drug Courts (ADC) with approximately 918 participants
- 1 Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) with 5 participants
- 5 Mental Health Courts (MHC) with 121 participants
- 14 Family Recovery Courts (FRC) with 178 participants
- 7 Reentry Courts (RC) with approximately 228 participants
- 1 Domestic Violence Court (DVC) with 8 participants
- 19 Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) with 315 participants
- 1 Juvenile Problem-Solving Court (JPSC) with 11 participants



Participant Engagement

100% of respondents reported that most PSC participants have access to technology such as mobile phones, smart phones, internet, apps, etc. Considerations for in encouraging participant engagement:

- Maintain contact with participants through in-person, telephone, email and virtual platforms
- Offer additional online resources including connection to a multitude of services, telephone and in-person treatment and 12-step participation and use of social media to access recovery groups
- Conduct wellness checks and text participants regularly
- Mail cards to participants
- Share encouraging messages through the online drug screen call system
- Supply food or food assistance information to participants
- Ensure phone plans for all our participants are current as virtual meetings accelerate plan usage
- Remain mindful of the quality of participants' phones during treatment and court hearings as well as internet and cell phone coverage in rural areas

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Status Hearings

The majority of PSC (40 of 57 respondents) are holding PSC status hearings via virtual platforms. Of the ones using virtual platforms, 12 are also holding telephonic hearings and 10 are also conducting in-person status hearings. Considerations for conducting status hearings:

- Hold court via a virtual platform
- Deliver incentives during field visits for compliant weeks
- Be mindful of the impact of participants not meeting with the judge face to face
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) during in-person hearings
- Hold multiple sessions with a smaller number of participants to limit the number of people in the court room to maintain social distancing

Staffing

The majority of PSC (46 of 57 respondents) are conducting team meetings via virtual platforms. Of the ones using virtual platforms, three are also meeting telephonically, nine are meeting in-person and two are conducting team meetings via e-mail. Considerations for conducting team meetings:

- E-mail team weekly participant updates
- Prepare written reports to streamline team meetings
- Communicate via e-mail and telephone as much as possible
- Meet in courtroom, wear PPE and social distance
- Be mindful of potential negative impacts that virtual team meetings could have on the team

Intake

At the time the survey was completed, 76% of PSC were accepting new participants.

Considerations for accepting new participants:

- Meet with clients virtually or telephonically
- For those conducted in-person, complete intakes on designated days with limited number of intakes per day
- Utilize PPE and maintain social distance
- Delay acceptance of new participants until appropriate services are available

Chemical Testing

51% of PSC are testing participants at a rate of two or more times per week. Considerations for conducting chemical testing:

- Conduct “drive thru” chemical testing
- Conduct saliva testing at the participants’ home while the case manager is observing via cell phone or computer
- Utilize sweat patches for a longer detection window
- Ensure chemical testing collection practices are consistent CDC guidelines
- Be mindful of the limitations of the various testing methods, including the detection window

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Case Management

Virtual or telephonic case management appointments are occurring in 94% of the responding PSC. In-person only case management appointments are taking place in the remaining 6%.

Considerations for conducting case management appointments:

- Conduct case management appointments virtually, telephonically and only in-person when crucial
- Develop participant policy for engaging in virtual case management appointments
- Conduct in-person appointments outside while maintaining confidentiality, weather permitting
- Screen participants prior to in-person appointments
- Utilize PPE and social distancing

Treatment

Treatment is taking place virtually in 89% of PSC. Considerations for treatment:

- Assist participants with transitioning to a virtual group environment
- Understand that policies and available services will vary by provider

Mentors

During the COVID-19 pandemic 12 courts reported decreasing the use of mentors/recovery coaches, 22 courts reported an increase in utilizing mentors/recovery coaches, 29 courts reported no change, 11 courts do not use mentors/recovery coaches and 6 courts did not respond. Considerations for utilizing mentors/recovery coaches:

- Encourage the practice of social distancing and meeting virtually or telephonically
- Utilize recovery coaches to maintain additional contact with participants and to assist with services

Program Requirements (Phase Changes & Program Discharge)

Program requirements have been amended in 36 of the 80 responding PSC. Program requirement amendments included the following:

- Relaxed some obligations and sanctions
- Decreased standards or temporarily suspended urine screens, court appearances, self-help meetings and other face-to-face meetings
- Temporarily suspended requirement for full-time employment and collection of fees
- Temporarily stayed community service work requirements and jail sanctions

At the time the survey was completed, 89% of PSC were allowing phase advancements and 79% of PSC were graduating participants. Considerations for graduation:

- Hold graduation in-person, outside or in a larger facility/courtroom to allow for social distancing
- Conduct graduation during regularly scheduled court and give graduate a gift card for a cake, cookies or donuts to celebrate with their family and friends
- Hold a small in-person graduation and create a link for a virtual platform for other spectators to view the ceremony
- Conduct graduation through virtual platform
- Commemorate graduation by having field officer deliver certificate to the front porch and have participant come outside to take a picture and post it on the court's Facebook page
- Allow participants to graduate with a graduation ceremony to be held at a later date

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At the time the survey was completed, 76% of PSC were holding termination hearings for non-compliance.

Training

79% of respondents indicated that during 2020 the continuing education requirement for the coordinator and each case manager will be attainable. The IOCS education division shall provide training resources to the coordinators who indicated that the 2020 continuing education requirement will be difficult to attain.

Funding/Grants

37% of PSC receiving grants or funding from different sources have had to adjust their budgets due to COVID-19 considerations. Budget adjustments included the following:

- Transferred funds to chemical testing expenses
- Unused training, chemical testing, incentive and graduation ceremony funds transferred to other allowable expenses
- Several planned purchases and events have been put on hold because vendors and suppliers have been shut down or unable to process requests
- Transferred funds to enhance technology and connectivity to operate in a virtual environment

Challenges

Summary of PSC's biggest challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Maintaining participant motivation and engagement
- Awarding incentives and addressing violations
- Chemical testing
- Access to treatment, self-help groups and recovery houses/housing
- Re-engagement upon resuming PSC operations
- Loss of routine
- Modification of standard practices
- Technology accessibility and use
- Virtual supervision
- Participant isolation
- Participant unemployment
- Effective communication with participants

Innovative Approaches

Summary of innovative approaches taken by Indiana PSC during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Utilize technology to enhance participant communication
- Utilize alternative chemical tests and collection practices
- Utilize e-mail or mail to send homework to participants
- Increase contact with participants for added support
- Establish a book club using recovery-based books
- Establish a fitness program
- Hold self-help and case management meetings at alternative locations, such as local parks, 4H barns or unused offices, to allow for social distancing

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- Purchase activities for families with donations (puzzles, crosswords, etc.)
- Create a weekly report to keep team members current on each participant
- Purchase pre-paid phones to ensure access to services
- Utilize recovery apps
- Designate an “on-call phone” that allows participants access to a case manager

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Resources

Indiana Judicial Branch

- [Indiana Supreme Court - COVID-19 Resources](#)

Indiana Executive Branch

- [Governor's Back on Track Indiana plan](#)

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and Sanitation

- [State PPE Vendors](#)
- [Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment](#)
- [CDC](#)
- [CDC-Workplace Decision Tree](#)
- [FEMA](#)

Case Management and Supervision

- [Drug Testing Protocols](#)
- [Behavioral Health Treatment & Recovery \(state\)](#)
- [Mental Health Support](#)
- [Behavioral Health Treatment, Recovery, Support \(federal\)](#)
- [Treatment Courts](#)
- [Court Operations](#)
- [Child Services](#)
- [Correctional & Detention Facilities](#)
- [Unemployment Assistance](#)
- [Public Health Updates \(state\)](#)

Grant Opportunities

- [Indiana Criminal Justice Institute](#)
- [SAMHSA - https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus](#)
- [IDOC's Community Corrections Division Grant Procedural Bulletins](#)
- Indiana Office of Court Services – Current awardees may contact [IOCS](#) to request transfer of funds to other allowable grant budget categories (drug testing, PPE, treatment services, videoconferencing equipment/software, cell phones for remote check-ins for participants)