

Problem-Solving Courts Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 20, 2025

Time: 12:30 p.m. (Eastern)

Location: Zoom

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Judge Chris Buckley called the meeting to order.

Persons in attendance were as follows:

Committee Members: Judge Chris Buckley, Judge Kit Crane, Magistrate Christopher Doran, Tammy O'Neill, Magistrate Sherry Hartzler, Judge Adam Squiller, Magistrate John Christ, Judge Jeffrey Thorne, Judge D.J. Davis, and Brad Barnes

Staff: Shelby Bear, Jamie Bergacs, Chris Biehn, Maja Grgic, Heather Falks, Zach Johnson, Lora Moeller, Catheryne Pully, Rose Walker, Jennifer Weaver and Nicole Wesling

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the March 7, 2025, meeting were presented and approved.

3. PSC Research Project Update

Chris Biehn provided an update on the research project in collaboration with Dr. Brad Ray. The project, funded by Opioid Settlement funds, began in July 2024 and aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Indiana Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) using data and performance measures. Twelve key stakeholders have been selected to be interviewed to provide additional insight into Indiana PSC. A dashboard was suggested for tracking progress. The project is on schedule and now includes line-level data analysis.

4. Prosecutor Waivers

General Counsel provided the Committee with a waiver form that may be used when a prosecutor team member is absent from PSC team staffing meetings. The Committee was in agreement to offer the waiver for use only when a judge brings the issue forward to IOCS. Education on the importance of team member attendance at team staffing meetings, including prosecutors, was encouraged.

5. Ex Parte Communications

General Counsel proposed clarifying the language on ex parte communications in the Problem-Solving Court Rules (PSCR). Concerns were raised about relationships and activities (e.g., rafting or softball teams) with participants. The Committee has no objection to language being drafted to include examples and clearer guidance on ex parte communications in the PSCR and provided to the Committee for consideration.

6. 2025 Legislative Session Update

Jamie Bergacs reported no legislation directly affecting PSC was passed. Judge Squiller mentioned SEA 1605 regarding DCS and its potential impact on Family Recovery Courts (FRCs). Chris Biehn noted ongoing discussions about permanency and sobriety timelines. He indicated the changes are not expected to significantly impact FRC.

7. Safe Baby Courts

Jamie Bergacs shared updates from the Safe Baby Court (SBC) rules workgroup. Jamie indicated the workgroup has met over the last several months to review the current PSCR and add provisions specific to SBC without being overly restrictive. The workgroup has completed their portion of the PSCR revision. The PSCR will now move to the next workgroup that will review the rules as a whole and incorporate the revised All Rise Best Practice Standards. Judge Buckley thanked Jamie and others involved for their contributions.

8. Education Report

Jennifer Weaver reported new staff orientation was held on March 11, 2025, with 26 attendees. New coordinator orientation will take place on August 5, 2025, one participant is currently registered and new staff orientation will take place on September 23, 2025, 15 participants are currently registered. Also, it was reported that new PSC judge orientation will take place on August 8, 2025. The 2025 Justice Services Conference (JSC) was held April 15–17, 2025, with a total of 1,198 attendees. Planning is underway for the 2026 JSC which will tentatively take place April 28–30, 2026.

Judge Buckley encouraged seasoned judges to assist with new PSC judge orientation. Jamie Bergacs confirmed the need and welcomed volunteers.

9. Certification

Shelby Bear reported that there are currently 142 certified Problem-Solving Courts, with 19 additional courts in the planning stage. Since December 2024,

IOCS has certified or recertified 21 courts. Judge Buckley praised the certification numbers. Jamie Bergacs introduced a new online portal for certification application submissions. The system now sends automated reminders for certification renewals.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Judge Buckley, seconded by Tammy O'Neill.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- September 5, 2025 – via Zoom
- December 12, 2025 – via Zoom

Problem-Solving Courts Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: December 12, 2025

Time: 12:30 p.m. (EDT)

Location: Zoom

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Judge Chris Buckley called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM

Persons in attendance were as follows:

Committee Members: Judge Chris Buckley, Judge Jeffrey Thorne, Tammy O'Neill, Judge Crystal Kocher, Judge N. Lisa Glickfield, Judge Leslie Shively, Magistrate John Christ, Judge Elizabeth Bellin, Judge Natalie Bokota, Judge Adam Squiller, and Magistrate Sherry Hartzler.

Staff: Shelby Bear, Reilly Sommers, Jessica Morris, Senior Judge Tom Felts, Catheryne Pully, Diane Mains, Chris Biehn, Zach Johnson, Rose Walker, Lora Moeller, and Maja Grgic.

Guests: Lisa Thompson and Brendan O'Connor.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from September 5, 2025, were presented and approved.

3. Rule 2.2. Presence of Prosecutor

The Committee discussed a proposed amendment to Criminal Rule 2.2 that was raised in response to some counties experiencing difficulty securing prosecutor attendance at staffing sessions. The proposal would permit a written waiver allowing prosecutors to be absent; however, several members expressed concern that such language could allow prosecutors to broadly opt out, which conflicts with research indicating that prosecutor participation improves participant outcomes. It was clarified during the discussion that the issue pertains specifically to Criminal Rule 2.2 and not to a Problem-Solving Court Rule. Members raised additional concerns about potential unintended consequences, including the possibility that public defenders might also seek similar waivers, which could reduce team-based decision making and weaken adherence to best practice standards. It was noted that certain counties already conduct non-liberty sanction hearings without attorneys present, but this practice is inconsistent with recommended best practice standards. Following extensive discussion, the Committee reached consensus in opposition to the rule change as written. Judge Thorne proposed a response expressing the Committee's opposition and citing research supporting the

necessity of prosecutor involvement in problem-solving courts and the risk of negative impacts on participant outcomes. Magistrate Christ seconded the motion, and after an opportunity for further discussion, the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The Committee affirmed that its position reflects universal opposition to the amendment as it applies to problem-solving courts and later clarified that members did not support adding qualifiers that would permit prosecutor absence when no liberty interests are implicated.

4. PSC Dashboard Demonstration

Lisa Thompson and Brendan O'Connor presented an internal prototype dashboard to display problem-solving court data using Power BI. The dashboard includes statewide and county-level information such as participant counts, court types, demographic breakdowns, offense types, treatment utilization, drug screen results, and graduation/termination outcomes. They emphasized that the prototype is based on partial 2022 data and is intended only to show capabilities, not final content. Access to this dashboard will be limited to authorized Office of Judicial Administration and county staff based on a request for access, with strict role-based security and no ability to extract underlying data. Counties would see only their own data; statewide views would be restricted to state-level staff. Lisa and Brendan sought Committee support and ongoing feedback as the project develops. No objections or concerns were raised.

5. Performance Measures Workgroup Update

Chris Biehn reported that the Performance Measures Workgroup has convened and is reviewing current Indiana performance measures against recently updated All Rise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The workgroup aims to identify data gaps, determine feasibility of collecting additional metrics, and engage judges and coordinators in refining measures. A scheduling poll will be conducted next week to schedule January meetings.

6. PSC Rule Review Update

Diane Mains provided an update on the ongoing rules-revision project. The workgroup is progressing well, having reached approximately the halfway point in reviewing the rules. It is expected that the final rule revision proposal will be ready for presentation at the Committee's March 13, 2026, meeting.

7. Education Report

Jessica Morris reported on recent training activities and upcoming educational programs. In 2025, 33 individuals attended new staff orientation, and 11 judges attended new judge orientation. Registration is open for 2026 orientations: New Staff Orientation (March 24), New Judge Orientation (February 13), and Coordinator

Orientation (February 10). The Justice Services Conference will be held April 29–30, with All Rise offering four sessions despite budget limitations. Additional best-practice sessions, interpersonal violence and veteran-focused programming were confirmed. Additionally, it was reported that the online New Judge Orientation is also being redesigned with updated, Indiana-specific content.

8. Certification Report

Reilly Sommers reported a high volume of certification activity since September 5, 2025, with 21 certifications issued (18 full three-year certifications and 3 provisional certifications). Three courts received provisional status: Johnson County Veterans Court, Lake County Juvenile Mental Health Court, and Hancock County Mental Health Court. Lawrence County Domestic Violence Court closed in early October. The statewide total now stands at 160 problem-solving courts, including 144 certified programs and 16 in planning.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

2026 Meeting Dates:

All meetings are conducted via Zoom beginning at 12:30 p.m. EDT

- March 13, 2026
- June 12, 2026
- September 18, 2026
- December 4, 2026