

Judicial Administration Committee
Friday, January 17, 2025

Meeting Minutes

- A. Judge Sarber commenced the Teams meeting at 12:05 p.m.
Participants: Judge Sarber, Chair, Judge Brown, Judge Jones, Judge Kellerman, Mag. Olsen, Judge Thompson, and Ms. VanOsdol
- Guests: Ms. Catherine Haines, Court Administrator for the Hendricks County Courts, and Mr. Christopher Nancarrow, Circuit Court Clerk for Allen County
- Staff: Jim Diller and Diane Mains, Indiana Office of Court Services
- B. The November 1, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.
- C. Weighted Caseload Study wrap-up – Everyone is watching the General Assembly and the distribution of judicial officers compared with need and use. Counties that did not go through the standard process to request additional judicial officers were outright rejected, and these requests were understandably not received. Hamilton County is working to get the additional judicial staff requested. Members discussed the need for the judiciary to be open to collaboration and creative solutions among the Judicial Districts. This approach was accepted with the hope that the General Assembly would maintain the current judicial officer resources. Members discussed districts and the importance of using district resources across counties.
- D. 2025 Legislative Session – custody and pretrial issues were highlighted for this session.
- E. 2025 Project Ideas –
- Reviewing and refining committee responsibilities. The current Committee description is vague.
 - Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) – entitles a commitment order with court supervision. This is a national movement that the JAC should keep informed and ahead of. Marshall, Marion, and Lake all have programs in some stage of planning or operation. There may come a time when WCL for AOT may need to be studied or certification explored. Members suggested that statutory changes are needed to the Indiana Code to run an effective AOT program.
 - Staffing study - a time study for Clerks of the Court for future Weighted Caseload Studies based on duties rather than title (case tasks v. administrative tasks). Many judicial officers reported this as a concern during the 2024 weighted caseload study. Determine a way to measure how much of their (and their staff's) efforts are dedicated to case processing versus non-case related office duties. A survey could help determine available resources for a given county/district in the event judicial resources are shifted to manage caseloads.

Members discussed the suggestion and topic that some counties are 'Clerk heavy' with case processing duties while some counties are 'Court heavy' with case processing duties.

- Random spot checks on case filings to ensure filings are appropriate and address irregularities (like the work done on the MC case type). The Committee can also provide education and guidance to judicial officers (particularly when there is a transition on the bench).

F. 2025 Meeting Schedule

- April 11, 2025 @ Noon via Teams
- July 18, 2025 @ Noon via Teams
- October 17, 2025 @ Noon via Teams

G. Judge Sarber adjourned the meeting at 12:58 p.m.

Judicial Administration Committee
Friday, April 11, 2025

Meeting Minutes

- A. Judge Sarber commenced the Teams meeting at noon.

Participants: Judge Sarber, Chair, Judge Brown, Judge Jones, Judge Kellerman, Judge Martin, Mag. Olsen, Ref. Pulley, and Judge Thompson

Guests: Judge Campbell, Fountain Circuit Court, Ms. Brittany Kelly, State Behavioral Health Administrator, Office of Judicial Administration, and Mr. Christopher Nancarrow, Circuit Court Clerk for Allen County

Staff: Jim Diller, Tom Jones, Jeff Wiese, and Diane Mains, Indiana Office of Court Services

- B. The January 17, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

- C. Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Programs Overview

Ms. Kelly, Office of Behavioral Health, provided an overview of her role with the Supreme Court and the Behavioral Health Committee (BHC). AOT involves civil commitment cases in which participants are referred to outpatient treatment. AOT reduces recidivism and hospitalization, resulting in significant cost savings. The program establishes regular communication between the courts and treatment providers. Lake County was awarded a SAMHSA grant for AOT. Porter and Bartholomew Counties also have AOT programs. Judge Campbell and Judge Jones provided remarks. BHC is close to releasing a competency docket pilot project with a focus on L6 felons and misdemeanants to leave hospital bed space for more serious felons. Committee members asked Ms. Kelly questions regarding the similarities of AOT and the problem-solving court model. There is likely an overlap between the problem-solving court model and AOT programs that should be explored to utilize the existing model and PSC judicial talent in AOT programs.

The Judicial Administration Committee may have a future role in partnering and reviewing an AOT certification process for courts implementing the program. This includes the study of case-weight to AOT dockets if a certification process is finalized.

- D. Legislative Session Update

On April 10, 2025, the Senate Appropriations Committee amended HB 1144 to abolish superior courts and eliminate magistrate positions throughout the state – particularly in rural counties. The committee discussed the impact of this legislation and explored ways to address it. It is unclear what criteria were used by the Appropriations Committee to select the courts that will be abolished. There is still an opportunity in the current legislative session to alter this language. The committee also discussed using the 2026 (non-budget) legislative session to work on the concerns raised by this amendment.

E. Managing Cases with *Pro Se* Litigants Handbook Update

Judge Sarber introduced the handbook and inquired about the members' interest in updating it. Items requiring updating include pro se to self-represented litigants language and technology updates to reflect the use of Odyssey. The Chair and staff will define the scope of the handbook prior to the October meeting. Staff will contact staff for the Benchbook Committees and the Coalition for Court Access to ascertain their interest in working on this handbook with the JAC. The intent is to make the handbook a guide for engaging with self-represented litigations rather than a legal treatise.

F. Meeting Schedule

- July 18, 2025 @ Noon via Zoom
- October 17, 2025 @ Noon via Zoom

G. Judge Sarber adjourned the meeting at 1:08 pm.

Judicial Administration Committee
Friday, July 18, 2025
Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

- A. Judge Sarber opened the meeting and welcomed new members, Judge Shane Evans, Carroll Circuit Court, and Judge Fran Gull, Allen Superior Court.

Participants: Judge Sarber, Chair, Judge Brown, Judge Evans, Judge Martin, Magistrate Olsen, Referee Pulley, and Judge Thompson

Guest: Judge Campbell, Fountain Circuit Court/IJA Representative

Staff: Jim Diller, Michelle Goodman, Jeff Wiese, and Diane Mains, IOCS

- B. The April 11, 2025, meeting minutes were approved.

- C. JAC response to HEA 1144 and future activities.

Weighted caseload (WCL) measures do not fully represent the work of the judiciary. The committee explored ways to expand the scope of the WCL report to more accurately encompass the comprehensive work of judicial officers. The content of the WCL report was considered as well as what is missing from the report (i.e., committee work). Data entry errors, misreporting information, and inaccurate case type filings result in WCL inaccuracies. How can the committee address these areas of focus for the judiciary and legislators?

Staff will distribute the report submitted to the 2024 Interim Study Committee on WCL following the meeting.

At the suggestion of Judge Brown, the committee discussed the need to educate the bar on WCL and the importance of filing cases under the correct case type.

The committee discussed expanding the weight given to administrative duties, particularly committee work. One suggestion was to include an adjustment to the calculated WCL for committee work, similar to the adjustments made when cases are venued in and out. Issues such as staffing levels, staff sharing, staff salaries, and other financial matters vary across the state but impact the use of judicial officer time and should be incorporated into the report on judicial time. Also discussed were special judge cases, sharing judicial officers and other resources within the districts, and establishing a short periodic review of data to increase the accuracy of the reported judicial time overall.

The committee explored including WCL as a part of a larger report to more accurately reflect the work of judicial officers.

Judge Sarber will seek the assistance of a small number of committee members to develop a plan that can be shared with IJA at the August 2025 meeting after it is approved by the JAC.

D. Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting: October 17, 2025, @ Noon via Zoom
- 2026 meeting dates:
 - January 9, 2026
 - April 10, 2026
 - July 10, 2026
 - October 9, 2026

E. Judge Sarber adjourned the meeting.

Judicial Administration Committee

Friday, August 15, 2025

Via Zoom

Minutes

A. Attendees

Members: Judge Sarber, Chair, Judge Evans, Judge Gull, Judge Jones, Judge Kellerman, Judge Martin, Magistrate Olsen, Referee Pulley, and Emily VanOsdol

Guests: Judge Campbell and Catherine Haines

Staff: Jim Diller, Michelle Goodman, Tom Jones, Jeff Wiese, and Diane Mains

B. The July 18, 2025, meeting minutes were approved.

C. WCL and the future activities of this Committee were discussed.

How can the Committee provide better information on judicial officer workloads? Generally, the judiciary should focus on the allocation of judicial resources. The Committee also believes that WCL education is a priority, as many judicial officers and stakeholders do not understand the measurements included in the report, and many claim the data does not accurately represent a judicial officer's workload. For example, small jurisdictions have more demands on their administrative time, which should be reflected in the time study.

The Committee would like to work on the following topics: (1) enhance accuracy of the data entered into the system and provide ongoing education to judges and court staff to increase accuracy and completeness of data; (2) foster an active partnership with the General Assembly, (3) integrate additional metrics into the WCL report, including the various funding sources supporting judicial officers; (4) expand the financial expenditure reporting to encompass a full picture of the costs of Indiana's judiciary; (5) revise and simplify the WCL report and use available technology to analyze caseload data; (6) encourage collaboration within the judiciary, and (7) recommend amendments to IC 2-5-1.3-13(e) to provide factors to be considered when the Legislature is looking at the need to decrease the number of judicial officers..

D. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting: October 17, 2025, @ Noon via Zoom
- 2026 meeting dates (meetings will start at Noon and be held via Zoom):
 - January 9, 2026
 - April 10, 2026
 - July 10, 2026
 - October 9, 2026

E. The meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm.

Judicial Administration Committee

Friday, October 17, 2025

Via Zoom

Minutes

- A. The meeting was called to order.
- B. Members: Judge Sarber, Chair; Judge Brown, Judge Evans, Judge Jones, Judge Kellerman, Judge Martin, and Magistrate Olsen
- Staff: Jim Diller, Michelle Goodman, and Diane Mains
- C. On September 17, 2025, the Judicial Resources Committee was created by the Judicial Conference Board of Directors. The composition of the Resources Committee has not yet been finalized. The JAC will continue to oversee WCL project. The Resources Committee will help elevate the WCL discussion, particularly with external stakeholders, and work closely with JAC.
- D. The legislative Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary, chaired by Senator Liz Brown, met on September 23, 2025. Judge Spitzer and Judge Sarber presented on WCL at the meeting. The Committee indicated that it has no plan to challenge the WCL data. The recommendation made at the last JAC meeting to amend IC 2-5-1.3-13(e) will move forward.
- E. JAC will update the Managing Cases with Pro Se Litigants manual in collaboration with the Civil Benchbook Committee. This is a user manual and resource guide for judges. Judge Broden and Mag. Hannah from the Civil Benchbook Committee will collaborate. Mag. Olsen and Judge Brown volunteered to work on this project.
- F. Meeting Schedule
- Next meeting: January 9, 2026, @ Noon via Zoom
 - Future meeting dates:
 - April 10, 2026
 - July 10, 2026
 - October 9, 2026
- G. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.