

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