



Court Systems Task Force

Robert Weisman Governmental Center
12th Floor, McEaddy Conference Room
301 N. Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 12:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judge April Bristow, Chair, 15th Judicial Circuit
Andrea Rocha, Manager, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller, Criminal Division
Cheo Reid, State Attorney's Office, 15th Judicial Circuit for Alan Johnson, State Attorney's Office
Derek Gibson, Circuit Administrator, Department of Corrections
James Snowden, Public Defender's Office, 15th Judicial Circuit
Michelle Cruz, Director of Case Management, Court Administration, 15th Judicial Circuit
Shantel Drayton, Manager of Court Services, Public Safety

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alan Johnson, State Attorney's Office
Alfonso Starling, Colonel, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office
Judge Daliah Weiss, 15th Judicial Circuit
Barbara Dawicke, Trial Court Administrator, 15th Judicial Circuit
Judge Bradley Harper, 15th Judicial Circuit
Glenny Cueto, Assistant Director, PPS Inc.
Judge Ted Booras, 15th Judicial Circuit

CJC STAFF PRESENT:

Angelique Pickett, Executive Director
Brad Allen, Criminal Justice Analyst
Damir Kukec, Research and Planning Manager
Dawn Caveness-Davenport, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst
Christopher Slydell, Criminal Justice Analyst
Katherine Shover, Criminal Justice Systems Manager
Margo Smith, Criminal Justice Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT:

- I. Welcome and Opening Comments** – *Judge April Bristow, Chair*
 - Welcomed members of the Task Force along with guests.
- II. Roll Call and Introduction of Guests** – *Christopher Slydell, Criminal Justice Analyst*
 - Conducted roll call and established there was a quorum to meet.
- III. Approval of and/or Additions to the Meeting Agenda**
 - CJC Analyst, Christopher Slydell, requested to add the National Courts Standard to the Agenda as requested by Damir Kukec. Chair, Judge Bristow, approved the addition to the Agenda and added the item under subsection D.



IV. Approval of Minutes for the May 29, 2024 Meeting

- Chair, Judge Bristow, & Ms. Michelle Cruz added clarification to the Minutes on “continuances” & data. Ms. Cruz stated when looking at the continuances, to capture the purpose we need to look at the event type, as a case has a natural course of action (i.e. first appearance, arraignment, and case disposition; not all court event types fall under the category of a continuance. Chair, Judge April Bristow made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Michelle Cruz and passed unanimously.

V. Discussion Items

- A. Felony Mobile Probation Unit (MPU) - *Margo Smith, Safety and Justice Challenge Program Coordinator/Criminal Justice Analyst***
- Presented the Mobile Probation Unit data for January 2024 to August 2024. She also went over the number of individuals served in 2024 (1,637) and 2023 (2,306). Ms. Smith informed members that the MPU was selected by Palm Beach County to participate in a SJC Urban Institute site implementation case study to begin in 2024 with a report presented/available in 2025.
 - Christopher Slydell referred to attached data in the Agenda Packet on the MPU schedule along with a racial/gender breakdown.
 - Chair, Judge Bristow, asked if the individuals reporting to the MPU are new or existing clients on probation. Derek Gibson of the Department of Corrections stated they are existing clients that are reporting.
 - Michelle Cruz asked if the MPU travels further west than Wellington. Mr. Gibson stated that the MPU has locations in Belle Glade and Pahokee at churches and more specifically Restoration Destination.
 - Research and Planning Manager, Mr. Kukec, thanked Mr. Gibson and DOC for their commitment and effort. Mr. Kukec also welcomed Mrs. Pickett to the task force.
 - Christopher Slydell provided an update on a question posed by Mr. Johnson at the last meeting regarding early termination of probation. Mr. Gibson stated that he needs an email/mailbox to send the request for early termination to the division head(s) and/or a departmental mailbox. Cheo Reid of the State Attorney’s Office stated the mailboxes are for each division with the following format (ex. CFDIVletter@sa15.org). Mr. Reid requested Mr. Gibson’s email address to send him the division mailbox email addresses by this afternoon.
- B. Professional Probation Services Inc., Monthly Report - *Glenny Cueto, Director of Operations, PPS, Inc.***
- Ms. Cueto was not present due to illness. Mr. Slydell stated the PPS data packet is included in the meeting AGENDA PACKET for the members to review. Chair, Judge Bristow, reviewed the packet with the taskforce and is pleased at the number of successfully completed cases. The Chair inquired on if there was any new information on Administration Probation. Mr. Slydell will follow up with Ms. Cueto on this matter for the next meeting. The Chair discussed Administration Probation with County Criminal and explained to that AP should be for no contact with no additional terms of probation.
- C. Court Data - *Michelle Cruz, Court Administration***
- Case Continuances – Ms. Cruz mentioned that she and Andrea Rocha from the Clerk’s office discussed that there is not a field in showcase that captures



“continuance” data. They recommend for the task force to look at specific events that are scheduled back to back. For example, if a case has a First Appearance scheduled three times, that indicates the case has been continued. Ms. Cruz suggested that we start with a small data set and review three (3) months of data, excluding the specialty division courts like Veterans, Mental Health, and Driving Under Suspension (VA, T2, and DUS) since specialty courts tend to have several status checks due to the nature of the division; specialty courts will not appropriately fit the criteria for this study.

- Ms. Cruz also recommended creating a small committee to review the data before it's shared outside of the task force. The committee will review felony, misdemeanor, and traffic (CF, MM, and TC) cases. Chair, Judge Bristow, provided an overview to the taskforce members of the purpose of this study, which is the result of the findings from the Jail Stress Test that were presented to the task force by Dr. Jim Austin in May of this year. Ms. Cruz explained how they discussed reviewing various events that include case disposition, first appearance, plea conferences, bond hearings, evidentiary hearings, etc. The key is to look for cases that are being rescheduled for the same event types as a continuance.
 - Mr. Kukec mentioned a previous strategy utilized in identifying the continuances with the tables that has been unsuccessful, agreeing with Ms. Cruz's recommendation on reviewing the event types as the continuances are difficult to capture with multiple varying continuance types. The members agreed to start by exploring the data and comparing the findings to the National Court Standards. The Chair asked the members about forming a group to explore this data. Mr. Kukec also mentioned the upcoming Urban Institute study on case processing that will work alongside this strategy. Mr. Slydell asked for a motion to approve the creation of a subcommittee to review the data prior to outside dissemination. Chair, Judge Bristow, made a motion, seconded by Michelle Cruz and passed unanimously.
 - Chair, Judge April Bristow, inquired on if anyone would like to volunteer to join the subcommittee (will meet at least once to review data). The following individuals volunteered: Margo Smith, James Snowden, Cheo Reid or Alan. Michelle Cruz and Andrea Rocha.
- D. Recommended Continuation Policy by the National Center for State Courts - *Christopher Slydell, Criminal Justice Analyst***
- CJC Analyst, Mr. Slydell, briefly discussed a “Model Continuation Policy” as provided by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).
 - The task force reviewed the Recommended Continuation Policy by the NSCS, as included in the AGENDA PACKET. Members discussed the possible definitions for the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) Model, as it appears to be similar to a model that was used in felony cases. Further research, including an update on the court model, will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.
- E. Data - *Damir Kukec, Research & Planning Manager* - Research on Misdemeanor & Circuit Felony (CF) Cases (excluding SVU, Murder & VOP's):**
- Mr. Kukec discussed strategies for identifying direct files for Juveniles. Ms. Rocha recommended sorting the CF files by date of birth to determine the Juvenile Direct file case types.



- Mr. Reid from the State Attorney recommended pulling the information from the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) website as they have a data dashboard. Mr. Snowden echoed Mr. Reid's recommendation.
 - The members discussed the table of model time standards included in the packet. Mr. Kuvec provided the historical analysis which include felony, traffic, and misdemeanor...misdemeanor cases are typically settled within 90 days.
 - Michelle Cruz inquired if Mr. Kuvec is able to access various jail type, as there were some previous barriers. Mr. Kuvec stated that (BIRS) Booking Information Retrieval system has been discontinued and migrated to a new Open database connectivity platform, providing expanded access to the jails microdata. The CJC is working on the migration to ensure quality assurance and will provide any ongoing updates during the process.
- F. Update on the Jail Review Management Team – Dawn Caveness-Davenport, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst**
- Provided an update on the status of the Jail Review Management Team. Mrs. Davenport stated the team would consist of the Public Defender, State Attorney and Courts to streamline the course of action for more efficiency in case processing, ultimately effecting the jail population positively. Members of the Public Safety Coordinating Council also decided to wait until December to give Mr. Todd Bonlarron time to meet with all the newly elected/appointed justice partners, more updated are to follow.
- G. Update regarding why the CJC wants the CSTF to look at cases post-judgment in addition to pre-judgment for clarification purposes - Christopher Slydell, Criminal Justice Analyst**
- Discussed the CJC's longstanding relationship with the MacArthur Foundation and the purpose of the Safety and Justice Challenge along with the importance of identifying racial and ethnic disparities as case processing is reviewed. The members reviewed the attachment in the AGENDA PACKET about the overcrowding in Pinellas County, understanding why we need to address racial disparity and more. They also discussed if the strategy aligns with the purpose of CSTF. Mr. Kuvec concluded the strategy to address racial disparity does fall under CSTF as it was historically in the realm of the Public Safety Coordinating Council. The members discussed the status of the new statewide bond schedule study through Dr. Copp of Florida State University (Ms. Cruz stated that Dr. Copp reported that at least 12 months of data is needed to analyze the effects of the bond schedule. Mr. Slydell advised the members that everything is on track with the bond schedule study and those results will be available in 2025. Mrs. Pickett also advised members that Dr. Copp will be here for a site visit on October 7, 2024 and will have an update for the CJC at that time; the task force will be advised on any progress provided by Dr. Copp.

VI. Guest/Members Comments –

- Mr. Slydell discussed the importance of identifying racial equity/disparity as mentioned by the Macarthur Foundation. According to the most recent study, 17% of the



population in Palm Beach County is Black, but they comprise almost 60% of the overall jail population, an increase in almost 10% as captured by the MacArthur Foundation from November to April of 2016, prior to the SJC initiative, with no change in the Black population. Mr. Snowden encouraged the CJC to dive deeper into the why and recommended identifying specific charges. Mr. Kucek stated that a large percentage of people in the jail are waiting to be transported after being convicted. The members discussed strategies for identifying the disparities and agreed that reviewing the case types is a good starting point. All agreed that having law enforcement at the table is a key component to having meaningful conversations about this as well, given the arrest(s) start with them. However, reviewing the bonds and the case processing efficiencies are also key indicators in identifying any disparities with this analysis.

VII. Adjournment – MEETING ADJOURNED

ACTIONS ITEMS

The Task Force will look at cases/data by Court Division, not by Judge.

1. Cheo Reid will provide the division email addresses to Derek Gibson, for the purpose of clients early terminating their probation. Mr. Gibson’s email address is Derek.Gibson@fdc.myflorida.com.
2. Christopher Slydell will follow up with Glenn Cueto to provide any updates for Administration Probation for the next meeting.
3. Mr. Kucek will look at specific events over three (3) months, excluding the specialty division courts like Veterans, Mental Health, and Driving Under Suspension that are scheduled back to back to determine the number of “continuances” in a case.
4. Continuances – A subcommittee was formed to review three (3) months of data. The members of the subcommittee are
 - i. **Michelle Cruz**, Court Administration,
 - ii. **Andrea Rocha**, The Clerk and Comptroller,
 - iii. **Margo Smith**, Criminal Justice Commission,
 - iv. **Cheo Reid or Alan Johnson**, State Attorney’s Office, and
 - v. **James Snowden**, Public Defenders Office.
5. The taskforce will further research the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) model listed in the Continuation Policy by the National Center for State Courts and discuss at a subsequent meeting.
(https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/18977/model-time-standards-for-state-trial-courts.pdf)
6. Discuss the representation of Law Enforcement on CSTF to discuss matters that occur during Intercept Zero (prior to arrest).

Next Meeting: TBD, October 30, 2024 - 12 PM
Robert Weisman Governmental Center
12th Floor, McEaddy Conference Room
301 N. Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401