

**COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES  
BI-YEARLY REPORT  
12/1/23-5/31/24**

**Name of Department - OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE, CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS (PSC)**

**Contact Information** – Kelly Gallivan-Illaraza, Director of the Problem-Solving Courts  
Office of the Chief Judge  
Illinois Circuit Court of Cook County  
69 W. Washington St., Suite 3300  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Cell (773)860-4146  
[kelly.gallivanillaraza@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:kelly.gallivanillaraza@cookcountyil.gov)

Lorena Roque, Senior Research Analyst  
Office of the Chief Judge  
Illinois Circuit Court of Cook County  
69 W. Washington St., Suite 3300  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Office: (312) 603-1906  
Cell: (773) 490-7041  
Fax: (312) 603-9933  
[lorena.roque@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:lorena.roque@cookcountyil.gov)

**A - General Data on the population served, including a breakdown of where patients of the program reside in Cook County and the total year-to-date number of patients served.**

The Cook County criminal court system is one of the largest unified criminal court systems in the world, and the county operates the largest single-site jails in the United States with approximately 50,000 individuals circulating through the jail annually and averages a daily population of 5,000. An unpublished data analysis from the Office of the Chief Judge indicates that in 2022 there were 24,378 felony filings. The Circuit Court of Cook County offers a number of alternatives to incarceration, including deferred prosecution, standard probation, specialized probation, and problem-solving courts (PSC). PSC are a rigorously studied criminal justice response to a high risk (of reoffending) and high need (for behavioral health and other interventions) population, but are only available to individuals identified as meeting the specific criteria of the various PSC. Without access to evidence-based programming, outcomes for high-risk individuals are generally poor.

The Circuit Court of Cook County (Court) operates twenty Problem-solving Courts (PSC), also known as specialty or therapeutic courts, throughout the County. PSC in Cook County include adult drug, mental health, and veteran's treatment courts. The Population of focus in the programs is adult men and women (age 18 and older) who:

- 1) are arrested/charged with non-violent, offenses;
- 2) are diagnosed with a substance use and/or mental health order;

- 3) have accepted they have a problem;
- 4) are willing to participate in treatment; and
- 5) have not been convicted of a violent crime within the past 5 years.

The target population includes individuals from across the County, the majority of whom have had a prior felony conviction and are reportedly unemployed. Participants are overwhelmingly indigent and qualify for Medicaid, but require assistance in accessing benefits; in addition, justice-involved individuals often lose coverage after being detained for periods of time. All six Districts have a Drug, Mental Health and Veteran’s Treatment Court, allowing individuals access to these therapeutic justice programs countywide. The PSC program roster is included for reference.

**CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS**

<b>Criminal Courts Building</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Calls</b>	<b>Staffing*</b>	
1	RAP/WRAP Program	Males: Mon-Wed/Females - Fri	9:00 am	
2	Men’s Mental Health Court	Every Thursday	12:30 pm	
3	Women’s Mental Health Court	Every Tuesday	1:00 pm	
4	Veteran’s Court	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon. of the month	1:00 pm	
5	ACT Court	Every Friday	8:30 am	
<b>Skokie – 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal District</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Calls</b>	<b>Staffing*</b>	
6	Adult Drug Treatment Court	Every Thursday	12:30 pm	
7	Mental Health Court	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Fri. of the month	9:00 am	
8	Veteran’s Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Fri. of the month	1:00 pm	
<b>Rolling Meadows- 3<sup>rd</sup> Municipal District</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Calls</b>	<b>Staffing *</b>	
9	Adult Drug Treatment Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tue. of the month	12:30 pm	
10	Mental Health Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month	9:30 am	
11	Veteran’s Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month	10:30 am	
<b>Maywood – 4<sup>th</sup> Municipal District</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Calls</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Court Call</b>
12	Adult Drug Treatment Court	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thur. of the month	10:15 am	1:30 pm
13	Mental Health Court	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month	9:30 am	1:30 pm
14	Veteran’s Court	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month	11:00 am	1:30 pm
<b>Bridgeview – 5<sup>th</sup> Municipal District</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Call</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Court Call</b>
15	Adult Drug Treatment Court	Females every Mon./Males every Wed.	Mon. 9:30am*	Wed. 9:00am*
16	Mental Health Court	Every Thurs.	9:00 am*	
17	Veteran’s Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed. of the month	1:00 pm*	
<b>Markham – 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal District</b>		<b>Staffing/Court Call</b>	<b>Staffing*</b>	
18	Adult Drug Treatment Court	Every Tue.	9:00 am	
19	Veteran’s Court	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month	9:00 am	
20	Mental Health Court	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month	9:30 am	

**B - Overall goals of behavioral health program(s) and information on the best practices in this type of programming.**

The Court's countywide PSC network includes Drug, Veteran's Treatment and Mental Health Court programs. The PSC operates with the goal of diverting individuals from prison, into treatment and recovery. Each of the three types of PSC, focus on the behavioral health needs of the participants, providing access to targeted treatment providers with specific interventions. A Trauma screening process is being developed and will be implemented to participants in the second phase of the PSC four phase program.

The Court continues its partnerships with treatment and recovery support service agencies in addition to making referrals to appropriate, community-based, health and social service providers. The services will be sensitive to issues of race, culture, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

General administration and supervisory authority over all courts is vested in the Illinois Supreme Court and is exercised by the Chief Justice in accordance with the Supreme Court's rules (Ill. Const. 1970, art. VI, § 16).

Illinois statutes specific to PSC include the Drug Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 166/1 *et seq.*), the Mental Health Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 168/1 *et seq.*) and the Veterans and Servicemembers Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 167/1 *et seq.*).

The PSC operate in compliance with the Illinois statutes and keeping with National Association of Drug Court Professionals (ALL RISE) Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards<sup>1</sup>, and the Illinois Supreme Court Problem-Solving Courts Standards<sup>2</sup>. The Standards are based on evidence-based practices, now well established by a substantial body of research, as well as on promising accepted practices that are correlated with positive, cost-effective outcomes and enhanced public safety.

PSC are required to obtain Certification to operate by the Illinois Supreme Court through the AOIC. Certification is valid for three years and is contingent upon following evidence-based best practices and maintaining the professional development of PSC team members. The Court offers continuing education and training to all team members in topics related to PSC effectiveness.

**C - Information on the providers, managers, operators, and/or contractual personnel of the behavioral health care program, activity, or service, and any information on external partners working with your agency on this program.**

Problem-Solving Courts are staffed and supported by Cook County Judges, Cook County State's Attorney(s), Public Defender(s) or private counsel, Adult Probation Officer(s), case managers from TASC, NAMI Chicago and Amita Health, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinators, representatives of the Office of the Chief Judge, Cook County Sheriff's Department of Corrections, treatment providers and other service providers throughout Cook County. A Memorandum of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ndci.org/resources/publications/standards>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/problem-solving-courts>

Understanding among the PSC team members' offices or organizations defines and documents the roles and responsibilities of each member. Full and effective communication between PSC team members is crucial to the success of the program. Each discipline involved has its own ethical obligations and professional philosophies. Each team member must respect the boundaries and responsibilities of other team members. Collaboration with stakeholders is the key to the success of the PSC programs.

**D - Key performance indicators measuring the results of the program.**

The Court utilizes both process and outcome data to guide PSC operations. The Research Analyst for PSC activities works collaboratively with all PSC staff providing individual- and program-level data to improve program performance. The Court complies with data requested by the Illinois Supreme Court reported to the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC).

Successful completion of the program results in graduation from the PSC. Each of the PSC holds graduation ceremonies two times per year, in the spring and fall, to commemorate the accomplishment. This spring, each of the PSC programs held ceremonies where the participants receive certificates of achievement and had their convictions vacated. Individuals are provided assistance in filing for expungement of felony cases.

**E - Quality measures or expectations for contracts involved in the program, where applicable.**

To assure that scarce public resources are used in ways that assure the greatest positive return on the investment, PSC utilize evidence-based practices. All behavioral health treatment providers must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health and follow state and federal confidentiality laws and practices.

Current PSC operations include contracting with community-based service providers, who engage participants and deliver services to meet their individualized needs. The court works with the service providers to secure data required by the Illinois Supreme Court, to review outcome measures. Service Providers are also required to operate in compliance with the Problem-Solving Court Standards.

**F - Information on how the care being provided in this program serves the best interests of the patient/recipient of care.**

PSC are required to provide the scope and type of treatment services based upon the needs of the participants. The multi-disciplinary team approach to supervision, treatment interventions, and ancillary services responsive to the needs of this challenging population make drug courts one of the most successful criminal justice interventions.<sup>3</sup>

**G - Information on how the continuum of care plan and whether the participant has received follow-up care at a Cook County hospital(s) or clinic(s) including medication management as a part of aftercare.**

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<sup>3</sup> [Drug-Court-Fact-Sheet-2020.pdf \(nadcp.org\)](https://www.nadcp.org/Drug-Court-Fact-Sheet-2020.pdf)

The full continuum of care for substance use disorders recommended by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is offered. Treatment includes on-site detoxification, residential treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, medication assisted treatment, and recovery homes. All treatment and recovery support services are provided by agencies that are licensed by the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery.

PSC clients may be referred to Cook County Health or community health clinics for healthcare, substance use disorder treatment or prescription medication for mental illness, as appropriate. Cook County community clinics offer buprenorphine and methadone for opiate users and naltrexone for opiate and alcohol users, via their primary care clinics.

**H - An evaluation of the impact of the program and an overview of its effectiveness, particularly as it pertains to vulnerable populations, racial and ethnic minorities; and populations facing disparities in behavioral health outcomes, behavioral health care, and behavioral healthcare access.**

Research, such as the National Institute of Justice's Multisite Adult Drug Court Evaluation, found that PSC programs significantly reduce drug use and criminal offending — both during and after program participation. Compared to traditional case processing and supervision, drug courts have higher investment costs, especially in treatment services. However, savings associated with victim and criminal justice system costs are greater due to fewer crimes, rearrests, and incarcerations. Drug courts that target offenders with high criminogenic risk and high substance abuse treatment needs yield the most effective interventions and maximize return on investment.<sup>4</sup>

Problem-solving courts operate without bias or prejudice, including but not limited to, bias or prejudice based upon gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, limited English proficiency, disability, socio-economic status or sexual orientation. Each PSC has policies and procedures to prevent discrimination that would keep any individual from being unfairly excluded from the PSC. If the individual meets the written and clinical criteria for the program, the individual will not be unfairly excluded from admission.

PSC must obtain Certification and Re-Certification by the Illinois Supreme Court to maintain operation. Certification is established through a review process administered by the AOIC. Certification is valid for three years.

**I - Information with the costs associated with the program(s) and funding source(s).**

The PSC programs are funded by a variety of sources including County Funds, Drug Court Revenue Fund, Mental Health Court Revenue Fund, Probation service fees, State and Federal grants, and in-kind contributions from individual agency partner including the court, Adult Probation Department, State's Attorney's Office, and the Public Defender's Office.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/237108.pdf>

**J - Any additional information which may facilitate the Committee’s understanding of the program, initiative, or activity.**

PSC information can be found at the link to the Circuit Court’s website below:

[Problem Solving Court \(cookcountycourt.org\)](http://cookcountycourt.org)

**K - Any additional information which may foster a more accurate assessment of behavioral health care needs and opportunities for collaboration or growth within the Cook County Government entity’s behavioral health care programs.**

PSC participants often have a range of service needs extending well beyond substance use disorder and/or mental health treatment. Participants benefit from linkages to trauma-informed services, criminal thinking interventions, family counseling, vocational or educational counseling, housing assistance and both primary and oral health care. The PSC are currently working on a project with Cook County Health, having a certified alcohol and drug counselor (CADC) and recovery coach with 29 years of experience in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, provide support to individuals in two of the drug courts. The project began in October of 2022 and is planned to continue through 2024. The collaboration has proved to be a positive intervention for participants of the programs.