

**Cook County Government Behavioral Health Services Quarterly Report
MARCH 2021 – MAY 2021**

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Clinical interventions: Problem-Solving Courts (PSC)

1. General information on the population served, including how patients were identified or applied for services, a breakdown of where patients of the program(s) reside in Cook County and the number of patients served over the last 24-month cycle

The Circuit Court of Cook County operates twenty Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) programs, also known as specialty or therapeutic courts. Problem-Solving Courts in Cook County include adult drug, mental health, and veteran’s treatment courts. The first PSC in Cook County has been in operation since 1998. These vital, community-based programs have developed nationally and in Illinois to provide an alternative forum for individuals in the criminal justice system who have behavioral health disorders, which include mental illness and substance use disorders. PSC utilize a collaborative, therapeutic approach with justice professionals partnering with community treatment providers to address an individual's underlying behavioral health issues.

PSC include, but are not limited to, a designated judge and staff; specialized intake and screening procedures; intense and coordinated treatment procedures administered by a trained multidisciplinary professional team; close evaluation of court participants, including continued assessments and modification of the court requirements and/or use of sanctions, incentives and therapeutic adjustments to address behavior; frequent judicial interaction with participants; less formal court process and procedures; voluntary participation; a low treatment staff-to-client ratio; and additional goals of cost savings and an increase in public safety.

The target population for the PSC are individuals charged with non-violent, felony offenses. Most participants have a significant criminal history and would otherwise be sentenced to prison upon conviction if not selected for participating. The goal of the PSC process is to identify potential participants at the earliest possible point of involvement in the criminal justice system. Defendants on bond are given an appointment to meet with a PSC team member to schedule a clinical assessment, while incarcerated candidates are assessed in jail. Before a case is transferred to an PSC for consideration, it is the responsibility of defense counsel to explain the terms and conditions of the program, the assessment procedure the defendant will be required to complete, and the Consent to Participate he or she will be required to sign. A legal eligibility screening is conducted by the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office. If the defendant agrees to participate in the risk/needs screening and assessment process, the case is transferred to a PSC for the next available court date. After a case is transferred to a PSC, the defendant must first sign a form, Consent for Release/Disclosure of Confidential Information, which allows the judge and team to discuss confidential substance use and mental health treatment information about the defendant to decide whether he or she is an acceptable candidate. The case is continued for a criminogenic risk screening by the PSC probation officer and a clinical needs screening and assessment by the clinical caseworker.

Assessments consist of: the Adult Risk Assessment (ARA) pre-screen/short version Community Supervision Screening Tool (ARA-CSST) by the Cook County Adult Probation Department (CCAPD); A Drug Court Screening Interview by CCAPD; The Texas Christian University Institute of Behavioral Research TCU Drug Screen V (TCU V) is used by the clinical caseworker to quickly identify individuals with a history of heavy drug use or dependency, and; The Texas Christian University Behavioral Research TCU Comprehensive Intake (TCU CJ CI) assessment tool is used to collect socio-demographic information along with risk indicators based on key social functioning (family, friends, education) information. After admission, the ARA-CST comprehensive assessment tool is administered within 60 days of admission.

The purpose of these assessments is to make a preliminary determination of substance use disorder, criminality risk to re-offend, and clinical and social needs. The results of the screenings are provided to the court and PSC team on or before the date the case is next scheduled to appear in PSC. Evidence-based screening and assessment information is used by the PSC team to determine eligibility and to develop service plans addressing treatment and recovery support needs. Clients begin PSC services immediately upon acceptance into the program.

The network of PSC are located in each of the six Municipal Circuit Court Districts. 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 2021

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

Markham – 6 th Municipal District		Staffing/Court Call	Staffing*
18	Adult Drug Treatment Court	Every Tue.	9:00 am
19	Veteran’s Court	2 nd & 4 th Tues. of the month	9:00 am
20	Mental Health Court	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd Wed. of the month	9:30 am

2. Overall goals of behavioral health program(s) including goals unique to the specific population served

The Court’s countywide network of Problem-solving Courts includes Drug, Veteran’s Treatment and Mental Health Court programs. The PSCs operate with the goal of diverting defendants from prison into treatment and recovery. Each of the three types of PSC focus on the behavioral health needs of the participants, having targeted treatment providers with specific interventions.

Treatment options available to PSC participants include on-site detoxification, residential treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, Medicated Assisted Therapy (MAT), and recovery homes based on assessed level of need. 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. Several community treatment partners are committed to providing evidence-based MAT for participants diagnosed with opiate and/or alcohol use disorders, specifically buprenorphine and naltrexone.

The Vet Courts have Recovery Support services including Vocational Rehabilitation, Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR), Compensated Work Therapy (CWT), Homeless Services including Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) are also offered through all the VA medical facilities. 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.

Inpatient and outpatient substance abuse and psychiatric treatment are available at all VA medical facilities and community-based outpatient clinics. 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. All treatment services are provided in safe accredited treatment environments that incorporate evidence-based practices into treatment plans in order to assist clients in developing the tools necessary to sustain sobriety.

The Circuit Court is interactively involved with all treatment and recovery support service agencies. Service provider meetings are convened on a regular basis to monitor and ensure that service providers are delivering quality and effective services to all PSC participants. Scheduled and unscheduled site visits are made to all PSC service provider facilities by PSC team members.

3. Information on the providers, managers, and/or operators of the behavioral health care program, activity or service and any overlap in funding, to the extent it is known.

The PSC team is made up of the judge, state’s attorney(s), public defender(s) or private counsel, Adult Probation officer(s), case managers from Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), case managers from Amita Health, Veteran’s Justice Outreach Coordinators,

representatives of the Office of the Chief Judge, Cook County Sheriff's Department of Corrections, treatment providers and other service providers.

4. Key performance indicators measuring the results of the program

The Circuit Court of Cook County utilizes both process and outcome data to guide Problem-Solving Court operations. The Research Analyst for problem-solving court activities works collaboratively with all problem-solving court staff providing individual- and program-level data to improve program performance.

5. 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 used by substance abuse treatment providers include Motivational Interviewing (MI), modified Therapeutic Community (TC) and Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). MI has been used in substance abuse treatment programs since the 1980s and is supported by the National Institute of Corrections.¹ A client-centered approach fosters change through internal rather than external motivation. It is a valuable tool for the offender population because it encourages optimism and respect for client choice which teaches self-reliance – an important skill for long term sobriety. CBT is particularly effective with offender populations because it works to restructure distorted thinking and perception, which in turn will help to change a person's behavior for the better. This approach is most effective in changing thinking and behavior when clients simultaneously receive other support, such as supervision, employment, education and training. CBT is supported by the National Institute of Justice and widely used in corrections as well as substance abuse treatment/recovery milieus.² Current VTC operations as previously described include service providers who engage families of participants and deliver recovery services.

6. Information on how the care being provided in this program serves the best interests of the patient/recipient of care as well as the communities where the patient/recipient of care or services resides.

PSCs are adult felony post-plea programs wherein defendants are sentenced to a period of 18 to 24 months' probation. PSC are required to provide the scope and type of treatment services based upon the definition of the PSC target population. PSC ensure that participants have access to and receive evidence-based, quality treatment to address the individualized clinical needs that are identified by the results of a participant's initial screening and assessment and ongoing reassessments during his/her participation in the PSC. The combined intensive judicial supervision, mandatory drug testing, incentives, sanctions and therapeutic adjustments, adaptive case management, and treatment have proven to be effective in reducing recidivism. 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.³

¹ US Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections: <http://nicic.gov/EvidenceBasedPractices>.

² Milkman, H., and K. Wanberg, *Cognitive- Behavioral Treatment: A Review and Discussion for Correction Professionals*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2007.

³ [Drug-Court-Fact-Sheet-2020.pdf \(nadcp.org\)](#)

7. Information on how the continuum of care may be addressed through this program

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.

8. Information on the best practices in this type of programming

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).

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 Service members Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 167/1 *et seq.*).

The Cook County Problem-Solving Courts operate in compliance with the Illinois Statutes and keeping with National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)'s Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards, and the Illinois Supreme Court Problem-Solving Courts Standards.^{4 5} The PSC 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 Administrative Office of Illinois Courts. 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 Circuit Court will offer continuing education and training to all team members in topics related to PSC effectiveness

9. Information detailing meetings and coordination on patient identification, programs and goals with other Cook County agencies, City of Chicago or other partners or entities on this program, where applicable

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 Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) 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 Understanding is entered among the PSC team members' offices or organizations that 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.

⁴ <https://www.ndci.org/resources/publications/standards>

⁵ <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/problem-solving-courts>

10. An evaluation of the program and an overview of any overlap in outreach, communities served, and programs with other Cook County and City of Chicago Agencies, and 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.⁶

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.

11. 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 corporate funds, Probation service fees, State and Federal grants, State salary subsidies and in-kind contributions from individual agency partners including the Office of the Chief Judge, Adult Probation Department, State’s Attorney’s Office, and the Public Defender’s Office.

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

Problem-Solving Court information can be found at the link to the Circuit Court’s website below:

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

13. 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.

Problem-solving court 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.

⁶ <http://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/237108.pdf>

14. Any additional information if patients receive follow up care at a Cook County hospital including medication management as a part of aftercare.

PSC clients may be referred to Cook County Hospital 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.