

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Tuesday, October 14, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Stephanie Bond, Lori Lynch, Judge Jim Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Amber Blankenship, Candace Facemyer, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Tom Plymale

Guests Attending: Lauren Plymale, Chief Shawn Schwertfeger

Office of Drug Control Policy Staff (ODCP) Attending: Olivia Fox, Justin Smith

State Opioid Response (SOR) Regional Coordinators Attending: Jessica Martinez

Marshall University Staff Attending: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Stephanie Thornton (Chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Stephanie Thornton approved the September 4, 2025 meeting minutes. There was no further discussion. The motion passed with all in favor. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss priorities for the 2026 State Plan

Agenda Items:

Community Conversations and Priorities for the 2026 State Plan

- Stephanie Thornton will draft some goals, strategies, and key performance indicators (KPIs) before the November meeting. The Subcommittee will finalize it then and have it to ODCP by mid-December for the 2026 State Plan to go to the legislature in January 2026.
- Bradley McCoy, Stephanie Thornton, Stephanie Bond, and Justin Smith gave an overview of the three virtual and four in-person Community Conversations. Stigma, transportation, and the lack of youth treatment were common across all dates.
- Stephanie Bond discussed how in the virtual conversations that she facilitated, there was concern about reentry into communities after release from jails and prisons. They claimed that transportation and medical assisted treatment (MAT) appointments were not being set up for those on Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) while in prison. There is confusion because this Subcommittee thought it was a requirement and is being done. They also claimed that sometimes they are given MOUD, but it is not enough supply to last until their appointment. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) has policies on this that they can provide to the Subcommittee.
- Diversion and alternative sentencing came up as a priority.
- The Subcommittee discussed the lack of youth treatment options. Truancy court is seen as an initial touch point with the system where they can be referred to programs or places that treat

the behavioral health problems leading to truancy. Public perception is that children should not go to court for something as trivial as “just” truancy, but it functions as almost as an intercept model. The Subcommittee discussed this as opportunity to engage versus a school-to-prison pipeline. Mississippi has been successful in this area, and the Subcommittee would like to explore models that are working for them as a state. The Subcommittee wants more information on the Recovery High School in Putnam County. Judge Stowers has been a champion in this area for the state so they would like to engage him next year. Large judge turnover also requires education for them.

- The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) would like to have a specific staff member who works with youth to also attend these meetings in the future.
- There is concern about those who leave jails and prisons and go to recovery residences that cost money. This Subcommittee would like to provide judges with a map of recovery residences so that they are aware of what they are working with. Kentucky’s Shepherd’s House contracts with local employers near recovery residences so that they have first-chance employment with companies that are waiting for them. The lack of housing for sex offenders is also concerning.
- Judges need more education around MAT services.
- Youth and people of color (POC) overdose rates are not decreasing at the rate of majority populations in our state.
- Trauma-informed care and the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Coalition are another priority.

Additional Discussion

- None.

Adjournment:

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 10:00 AM.