

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Tuesday, March 10, 2026, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Stephanie Bond, Candace Facemyer, Coty Long, Judge Jim Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Amber Blankenship, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Lori Lynch, Tom Plymale

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

State Opioid Response (SOR) Staff Attending: Stephanie Frazer, Renee Harris

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, March 10, 2026, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Stephanie Thornton approved the February 10, 2026 meeting minutes. There was no further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was to continue planning and to provide key performance indicator (KPI) updates for the Quarter 1 Progress Report.

Agenda Items:

Quarter 1 Progress Report

- Stephanie Thornton will provide Bradley McCoy with exact percentages for KPI completion for the Quarter 1 Progress Report after the meeting.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** Stephanie Thornton met with Chief Shawn Schwertfeger last month to discuss the following. There are two law enforcement programs operating in West Virginia: 1) Embedded Peers with Police Program 2) Police and Peers program. The focus is on the Embedded Peers with Police Program. The Embedded Peers with Police Program is a working model in the Wheeling Police Department, the Moundsville Police Department, Buckhannon, Charleston's Care unit, Weston, and Clarksburg. All are in operation with First Choice Services.
 - The Wheeling Police Department's outcomes have shown where they are able to respond on site, at any time of the day, to an overdose and/or mental health crisis happening in the community. 75% of these calls are classified as crisis calls. The teams are arriving with peers to ensure they are linked to immediate services as well as continued support. The program has shown positive results towards crime reduction. They have two mental health professionals and two embedded peers. It has proven to lower arrests because of immediate access to the services needed.
 - The departments have encouraged peers to interact with police. It is a team approach. Peers are given uniforms and legitimized. This has contributed to reframing and

reducing the stigma around substance use disorder. Peers are bridging a gap between law enforcement and people in mental health crisis and substance use.

- Stephanie will connect with the other programs utilizing the Embedded Peers with Police Program to gain feedback and compare procedures and practices.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 1:** The Subcommittee will partner with the Pregnant and Parenting Women Subcommittee to follow up on whether the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale is being used as well as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scale.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 2:** The Subcommittee will schedule a meeting with the Recovery Subcommittee to learn about at least one day report program and one behavioral health center who are doing the ACE questionnaire and the Resilience questionnaire.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 3:** This KPI has been completed as the Subcommittee hosted Kathy Szafran from the ACE's Coalition of West Virginia.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** Stephanie Thornton is working to identify and map reentry services.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 2, KPI 1:** The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) will have Medicaid and BMS updates by April. There were two bills regarding state ID that did not move in the legislature this year. DCR is evaluating the reasons that those leaving incarceration did not get an ID. The Subcommittee discussed potential reasons and barriers such as birth certificate access. The Subcommittee also posed the question of those who are incarcerated and already have an active driver's license would not need a new ID and therefore their refusal of documents would not be a gap in services, but something to be aware of.

Additional Discussion

- Stephanie Bond updated the Subcommittee that the legislature has approved funding for family treatment courts.

Adjournment:

Stephanie closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10:00 AM.