

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Thursday, June 9, 2026, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Amber Blankenship, Candace Facemyer, Lesley Hill, Coty Long, Judge Jim Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Stephanie Bond, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Lori Lynch

Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) Staff Attending: Dr. Stephen Loyd, Justin Smith

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

State Opioid Response (SOR) Regional Coordinators Attending: Jill Poe

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 Thursday, June 9, 2026, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Stephanie Thornton approved the May 14, 2026 meeting minutes. There was no further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss progress of 2026 State Plan key performance indicators (KPIs).

Agenda Items:

General 2026 State Plan Updates

- Recovery Point is implementing the resiliency questionnaire along with the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questionnaire and will report on about its usage in the fall.
- A survey will be sent to the Housing Workgroup, Recovery Subcommittee, and Behavioral Health Providers Association to ask who is using the ACEs questionnaire.
- Stephanie Thornton and Dan McCawley met with Lesley Hill from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to discuss contact visits in jails and prisons from those with lived experience. She is contacting her superiors about policy updates.
- Lesley Hill provided updates on inmate's refusals for a new ID upon release from jails and prisons.
 - From January to May 2026: 580 were released, 56 had Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) appointments, 325 refused, 71 went out-of-state, 110 already had licenses, 36 were released to detainer. Lesley is asking for an additional breakdown by site.
 - The Subcommittee discussed reasons for refusal such as general government and agency mistrust, competing priorities such as housing, and transportation to a DMV appointment.
 - As of today, DCR will begin tracking reasons for refusal.
 - The REACH Initiative is still having to purchase a lot of IDs and provide administrative fees. Costs differ based on fines, charges, and whether it is a brand new ID or a replacement ID.

- Inmates will need an ID to get medication, so this emphasizes the need for peers in jails and prisons to explain the importance of having an ID and the need for third-party reimbursement for peers.
- Stephanie Thornton shared the link to a flyer about requesting a payment plan for a suspended license.
 - <https://nowrongdoor.wv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Suspended-License-Law-Flyer-July-2021-Update.pdf>
- Stephanie Thornton shared a series of state codes related to deflection and diversion as alternative sentencing.
 - <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/62-11C-5/>
 - <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/62-11A-1A/>
 - <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/61-11-22A/>
- Stephanie Thornton asked the Subcommittee to brainstorm deflection and diversion programs in the state. They were as follows:
 - Drug Court
 - Embedded Peers
 - Family Treatment Court
 - Fresh Start at the Southwestern Regional Day Report Center
 - Jail Bill meetings like those in Mercer, Raleigh, Cabell, and Kanawha Counties
 - Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) which operates differently across models as pre/post arrest
 - McDowell County Day Report works with judges, magistrates, public defenders, and prosecutors to educate on alternative sentencing
 - New Connections in Logan County
 - Police and Peers
 - Public defender diversion programs
 - Quick Response Teams (QRT) in some capacities
- Most KPIs not started are based on developing recommendations upon the completion of other KPIs. Stephanie is connecting with Amber Blankenship and Bev Sharp from the REACH Initiative about piloting the use of ACEs.

Quarter 2 Progress Report

- Stephanie Thornton is completing the Quarter 2 Progress Report with percentages of completion and will return it to Bradley McCoy by Friday, June 26, 2026.

Town Hall Meetings

- Four virtual Town Hall Meetings are scheduled for the following times. Bradley McCoy will be reaching out for facilitator volunteers.
 - Wednesday, August 12, 2026, 10:00-12:00
 - Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 1:00-3:00
 - Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 10:00-12:00
 - Thursday, September 3, 2026, 1:00-3:00

Research Feedback

- Areas identified for future research in the state were:
 - Evaluative processes for deflection and diversion and the difference between the two definitions

- Resiliency in justice-involved populations
- Stigma reduction in law enforcement and courts based on peer exposure

Additional Discussion

- Coty Long discussed the success of the McDowell County Sherriff's Department's outreach event the previous Friday. They are copying the model that has been working in Raleigh County for the last year. They meet people where they are at in the Save-A-Lot parking lot and have Jobs & Hope and First Choice Services present to connect people with resources.

Adjournment:

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