

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Tuesday, July 7, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

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

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Amber Blankenship, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Patrick Mirandy, Tom Plymale

Guests Attending: Ashley Payne, John Bess

Office of Drug Control Policy Staff: Justin Smith

ODCP Regional Coordinators: Christina Adkins, Alison Browning, Adrienne Brubaker, Chelsea French, Tyler Kerns, Jessica Martinez, Raj Masih, Alyssa Parker

Marshall University Staff: Rachel Bledsoe and 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, July 7, 2025, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was not present to approve June 2025 minutes. The purpose of this meeting was to host a discussion with Ashley Payne, the co-chair of the Transportation and Employment Workgroup, with an emphasis on second-chance employment. The Subcommittee also discussed their 2025 key performance indicator (KPI) status and progress.

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Introductions

- The Subcommittee introduced themselves to the new attendees, the ODCP Regional Coordinators. John Bess attended for Patrick Mirandy, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Guest Speaker – Ashley Payne, Marshall Health's Creating Opportunities for Recovery Employment (CORE) Program

- CORE helps to identify and expand second chance hiring policies for employers. The CORE program serves 16 counties in West Virginia and since 2019 has assisted over 400 individuals in gaining employment. For employees, it is an individually focused program that helps fast-track employment opportunities for the justice-involved population.
- CORE offers a free service to connect employees to employers. This includes helping individuals obtain documentation such as state identification, social security cards, and birth certificates as well as creating resumes.

- The workforce participation rate has declined. This rate represents the number of people available to work but are not looking for employment. This could be the result of challenges such as mental health, physical disability, or substance use disorder. It tells more of a story than just the unemployment rate, which is those who are available to work and also seeking employment.
- CORE works with treatment providers, drug courts, and parole to get referrals for individuals to their program. They then can help to diminish some of their barriers to employment.
- Since COVID, employers have been more open to hiring with a history of being justice-involved.
- CORE partners with employers to identify existing recovery-friendly workplaces and help others become recovery-friendly.
- CORE assists in identifying the needs of the employers and helps to review their current recruitment policies.
- CORE helps employers navigate things such as appointment schedules and drug screen schedules for employees who are in recovery.
- Employees face several challenges when trying to seek employment. These challenges include the lack of state Identification and the lack of safety nets such as housing and transportation.
- CORE's success has been from word of mouth between employers and employees.
- The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce and CORE have developed a recovery-friendly employer toolkit on the Chamber of Commerce's website. <https://wvchamber.com/drug-responsible-workplace/>
- Each semester, CORE hosts a resume building training session. It assists employees in updating resumes and personal recommendations to ensure a candidate can stand out. If the employee is outside the 16 counties CORE serves, the program will make a referral to another agency to ensure the employee has assistance. The resume training can also be done virtually.
- CORE, in collaboration with the Transportation and Employment Workgroup, is hosting a three-session training course in September. Training is open to all recruiting and hiring managers for employers. This upcoming training is to educate employers about hiring justice-involved employees. They will also cover the bonding process and tax incentives for hiring that many employers are unaware of.
- For further information, Ashley Payne can be contacted via email at Ashley.payne@marshall.edu or by visiting the Marshall Health CORE webpage.
- The ODCP Regional Coordinators plan to meet with Ashley again for more information. They have had success in sending toolkits to employers, but they need an easier handout to distribute information about the bonding process.

In-Person Meeting of Subcommittee Chairs

- Stephanie Thornton and Bradley McCoy provided a brief overview of the in-person meeting of the Subcommittee Chairs. The Chairs will meet again soon to develop measurable indicators they provide in cross-collaboration of the Recovery Ecosystem Model. Additionally, they will determine priority items for the next legislative session.

Town Hall Meetings/Community Conversations

- Stephanie Thornton reminded the Subcommittee of the virtual Town Hall Meeting schedule and requested volunteers for facilitators for breakout sessions and reminded members to email Bradley McCoy their availability.

Key Performance Indicator Updates

- Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1: 100% complete, new policy from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has been published.
- Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 2: 100% complete, new policy from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has been published.
- Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 1: 100% complete, they have met with the Youth Subcommittee and Aetna and plan to do so again.
- Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 2: 50% complete, a new treatment map will be published by ODCP in September. They will also get this data from Aetna.
- Goal 1, Strategy 3, KPI 1: 50% complete, the new ODCP treatment map rollout in September will determine this.
- Goal 1, Strategy 3, KPI 2: 0% complete, Stephanie Thornton will discuss with Justin Smith how to encourage more participation in his open bed database and disseminate the treatment map to providers.
- Goal 1, Strategy 3, KPI 3: 0% complete, this is still pending the appointment of a Treatment Subcommittee Chair.
- Goal 1, Strategy 3, KPI 4: 50% complete, Stephanie Thornton has a list of programs that go into jails by region but is getting more from Raj Masih.
- Goal 1, Strategy 4, KPI 1: 100% complete, this was completed in Quarter 1.
- Goal 1, Strategy 4, KPI 2: 0% complete, there are no updates until Stephanie Thornton researches this further.
- Goal 1, Strategy 5, KPI 1: 100%, State Opioid Response (SOR) is funding them through September.
- Goal 1, Strategy 5, KPI 2: This was reported as 0% in the last quarterly report, but Stephanie Bond's office has begun working with local departments and stakeholders. Successful implementations have been identified in Fayette and Wood Counties. Churches and other local organizations have been beneficial.
- Goal 1, Strategy 6, KPI 1: 100% completed, the Subcommittee has met with the Youth Subcommittee and has plans to do so again.
- The rest of the KPIs were tabled until the next meeting due to time constraints.

Adjournment:

Stephanie closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet on Monday, Aug. 4, at 10:00 AM.