



Council of Accountability Court Judges

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

The Council of Accountability Court Judges and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government Recognize the First Graduates of the Coordinator Certification Program

Athens, GA --- The Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) recognized the first graduates of the Accountability Court Coordinator Certification Program at the annual CACJ training conference's closing session on Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

The CACJ partnered with CVIOG to offer an extensive training program to accountability court coordinators and program directors throughout the state of Georgia. Employing a combination of online and in-person training sessions, the Coordinator Certification Program includes eight courses for a total of 45 hours of instruction, and the curriculum covers topics central to successful accountability court administration: accountability & advocacy, communication, conflict resolution, financial concepts, grant administration, procurement & contract management, succession planning & delegation, and team & group dynamics.

As the number of accountability courts has grown rapidly over the past few years, the objectives of the Coordinator Certification Program are to increase the knowledge of the primary administrative functions of accountability court coordinators, develop the skills necessary to carry out the administrative functions as an accountability court coordinator, develop and maintain the high standards for the functioning of the accountability courts, and increase the professionalism of accountability court coordinators.

The following court professionals make up the first cohort of graduates:

*Angela Anderson, Conasauga Mental Health Court

*Jennifer Barnett, Coweta County Drug Court

*Richard Bosten, Jackson County Drug Court

- *Stephen Brown, Savannah-Chatham Mental Health Court
- *Janice Cartwright, Dodge County Drug Court
- *Georgee Corley, Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court
- *Kristen Daniel, Western Mental Health Court
- *Priscilla Daniels, Gwinnett County Judicial Circuit
- *Marlow Dix, Coweta County Family Treatment Court
- *Lakisha Dixon, Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court
- *Robert Fox, Newton County & Walton County Resource Court
- *Shawonna Gaither, Rockdale County DUI Court
- *Steven Giglio, Towaliga Accountability Courts
- *Leslie Grabensteder, Coweta County DUI Court
- *Anita Grainger, Douglas County DUI/Drug Court
- *Scharita Greene, Newton County Juvenile Behavioral Health Court
- *Latrell Gulotta, Chatham County Family Treatment Court
- *Kristy Hardin, Gwinnett County Judicial Circuit
- *Glenda Harriman, Atlantic Judicial Circuit Drug Court/Liberty County DUI Court
- *Melissa Johnson, Cherokee Circuit Drug Court
- *Darcy Kamau, Cobb County DUI Court
- *Jennifer King, Douglas County Family Treatment Court
- *Beau Leyse, Pataula Drug Court
- *Karen McClain, Ogeechee Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court & Drug Court
- *Lauren Ortiz, Paulding Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court
- *Katelyn Parker, Cobb County Veterans Treatment Court
- *Patricia Pinkney, Savannah-Chatham County Drug Court
- *Dayna Solomon, Muscogee County Drug Court
- *Terry Sosebee, Conasauga Drug Court
- *Danny Stevens, Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court
- *Jennifer Tillery, Cobb County Family Treatment Court
- *Lynda Tobias, Burke County Accountability Courts
- *Monyato Tolbert, Henry County Juvenile Mental Health Court
- *Kelsey Topolski, Lookout Mountain Mental Health Court
- *Karen Tovey, Rome Circuit Mental Health Court
- *Jonathan Tucker, Clayton Judicial Circuit Behavioral Health Accountability Court
- *Melanie Valentine, Cobb County Mental Health Court
- *Samantha Whaley, DeKalb County DUI Court
- *Jennifer Williams, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit Drug Court
- *Erin Young, Rome/Floyd County Drug Court

As of July 1, 2021, there are 170 certified accountability court programs in Georgia, and the mission of the CACJ is to provide a unified framework that promotes and improves the quality, accessibility, and administration of accountability courts with a vision to make accountability courts work for all Georgians. Established in 2015, the CACJ fulfills this mission through certification, standards, peer review, data collection, training, treatment fidelity monitoring, and grants.

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The Council of Accountability Court
Judges and Carl Vinson Institute of
Government present the
2021 Coordinator Certification
Program Graduates

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Angela Anderson

Conasauga Mental Health Court

The Coordinator Certification program was extremely beneficial. My favorite course was Effective Communication. It helped me learn my communication style. It also helped me better understand the communication styles of my team members and taught me ways to effectively communicate with them.



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Jennifer Barnett

Coweta Drug Court

I enjoyed learning from Eric's leadership style. It was also nice spending time with other coordinators, as sharing ideas with other programs always proves valuable.



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Richard Bosten

Jackson County Drug Court

The Coordinator Certification Program was extremely helpful for me as a relatively new coordinator. I found many of the classes useful, but I enjoyed the Conflict Management and Communication courses the most. They both helped me understand the different personality types and ways to effectively communicate among team members. After completing this program, I am more prepared for my position and plan on utilizing all of the skills I have learned to better serve the Piedmont Circuit.



4

Stephen Brown

Savannah-Chatham Mental Health Court

The Coordinator Certification Program enabled me to evaluate my management style, as well as share experiences with other coordinators and learn from them. I found the subjects of communication and conflict management are helping me to interact with my teams effectively, and the self-paced financial courses gave me a better understanding of difficult subjects.



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Janice Cartwright

Dodge County Drug Court

A few of the sessions that were quite helpful were Conflict Resolution, Procurement & Contract Management, and Team & Group Dynamics. All of the sessions were well presented, and the instructors were excellent! They were helpful, personable, and very well versed.



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Georgee Corley

Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court

The Coordinator Certification Program is truly an all-encompassing overview of the many potential duties and occurrences in the life of a Coordinator. I had been a Mental Health Coordinator for barely six months when I began the curriculum, and it was a great foundation, especially in budget/finance, in which I had no experience. My favorite courses were those in which I could learn new tricks for old skills...Communication and Conflict Management.



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Kristen Daniel

Western Mental Health Court

The Coordinator Certification program was helpful for networking with other coordinators and with developing skills to be a better leader. The communication and conflict management skills will help me to work better with my team as well as community partners. I can take this new knowledge about teamwork and government functions to provide the best services and care for our participants and community. Overall, I learned a lot of new skills which will help me to continue to improve and grow our court program.



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Priscilla Daniels

Gwinnett County Judicial Circuit

I wish this information had been available when I became a coordinator 16 years ago. This program is an amazing opportunity for new coordinators.



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Marlowe Dix

Coweta County Family Treatment Court

I enjoyed the Coordinator Certification Program and especially Eric Robinson. He made learning fun! Communication was my favorite training, and I learned a lot from the class and fellow coordinators.



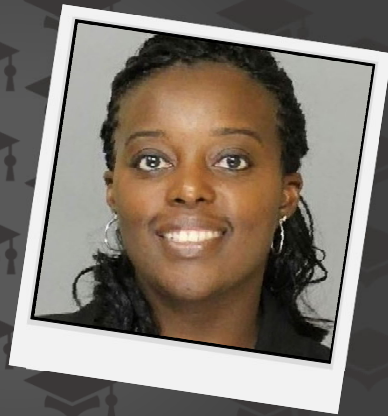
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Lakisha Dixon

Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court

The Coordinator Certification was helpful in reiterating what I've already learned. I believe it is essential to those coming into the position. I enjoyed all the courses with Mr. Robinson due to how animated and sometimes funny he was but the one I enjoyed the most was the Communication class. Learning and observing how to communicate in multiple ways was informative as well as enjoyable.



11

11

Robert Fox

Newton & Walton County Resource Court

The Coordinator Certification Program exceeded my expectations in content, delivery, and experience. In particular, the courses led by Eric Robinson were engaging and lively. I am very excited to be part of the initial training group and see how CACJ's certification process continues to develop and grow.



12

12

Shawonna Gaither

Rockdale County DUI Court

The coordinator training was an amazing opportunity. I learned that most of us coordinators go through the same or similar challenges in our position. My favorite courses were Communication and Conflict Resolution. Through these two courses, I have learned new communication techniques and ways to resolve conflict better with more difficult or less receptive individuals. I also learned that sometimes we are talking when we really should be listening...



13

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Steven Giglio

Towaliga Accountability Courts

The main thing I learned during the certification program was that I had resources to call upon. Whether that be CACJ staff, Carl Vinson professionals, or other court coordinators, I came to understand that we are all in this together. I enjoyed all my courses, but my favorite was Group and Team Dynamics. I learned a lot from this class and will bring some of that material to my own team in future trainings locally. This program has really helped me develop skills and resources to be successful.



14

14

Leslie Grabensteder

Coweta County DUI Court

Being a court coordinator for over 10 years, a certification program is something that we could all use, something to give us common ideas and suggestions on positive ways to deal with our participants and team members. The Carl Vinson program introduced an array of classes, and I found the Communication class to be the most helpful. It introduced ideas as to how to deal with different personalities and help everyone work cohesively as a team.



15

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Anita Grainger

Douglas County DUI/Drug Court

My favorite classes were Communication, Team & Group Dynamics, and Conflict Resolution. The personality assessments were awesome! The Financial Concepts, while not exciting, will be helpful to new coordinators. Thank you for this opportunity to train and exchange ideas with my fellow coordinators!



16

16

Scharita Greene

Newton County Juvenile Behavioral Health Court

The coordinator certification process has been long but rewarding. I enjoyed all the classes, and I learned a lot. I've been in the coordinator role for just over three years without a clear understanding of the grant funds and how they are disbursed. One of my favorite classes was the Communication class. What I will take away from that class is understanding we don't all communicate the same way. Oftentimes I leave a conversation and think what I communicated was understood by everyone, and that's not always the case.



17

17

Latrell Gulotta

Chatham County Family Treatment Court

Succession Planning and Delegation - This course allowed me to revisit our program objectives, goals, and mission and assist in developing a model with an action plan based on some of our current program challenges with the oversight committee members.



18

18

Kristy Hardin

Gwinnett County Judicial Circuit

I am thankful for the opportunity to have been able to attend and complete the Coordinator Certification Program. I really got a lot from the Team & Group Dynamics class along with the Communication Class. Working daily with multiple teams, roles, and personalities, it is important to recognize the different dynamics of the teams to make sure that as a leader we are in collaboration with one another to be effective and efficient for our participants.



19

19

Glenda Harriman

Atlantic Judicial Circuit Drug Court/Liberty County DUI Court

I found the "writing of policy" portion of the course to be extremely helpful and liked the detailed structure and protocols it outlined as it went along. It was thorough which I felt, as a Coordinator, was so important, and I will definitely use that as I update my policy of my two courts.



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Melissa Johnson

Cherokee Circuit Drug Court

I really enjoyed being able to attend the classes with the other coordinators. The topics that we discussed are realistic issues that we face. There were several classes that gave me new perspectives on how to approach certain situations. I believe that I will utilize the new skills and knowledge into my daily interactions and operations.



21

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Darcy Kamau

Cobb County DUI Court

I'd like to thank CACJ and UGA for the comprehensive Coordinator Course. All of the classes were beneficial and applicable to our position. The Financial Concepts course was particularly challenging, but I learned the most from that class. It gave me a "big picture" idea about how my financial components fit into the larger picture of our county budget and explained some of the methods to the madness behind the finance department policies.



22

22

Jennifer King

Douglas County Family Treatment Court

The Coordinator Certification Program has been a great experience! I have enjoyed attending with my fellow coordinators and sharing in our experiences, challenges, and successes. I believe this program is very beneficial to ensuring that coordinators will deliver an outstanding level of service to our organizations.



23

23

Beau Leye

Pataula Drug Court

The coordinator training made me realize that when improving our programs, we should always start with improving ourselves.



24

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Karen McClain

Ogeechee Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court & Drug Court

I greatly enjoyed the Zoom classes because of the interaction with other individuals/coordinators and the presenter/instructor. Also, I enjoyed hearing how other court teams address matters.



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Lauren Ortiz

Paulding Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court

The coordinator program was very helpful. The wide range of topics certainly were applicable to the role as coordinator. My favorite class was the grant writing. It helped me better understand the financial aspect of the county's government and the system of checks and balances that it uses.



26

26

Katelyn Parker

Cobb County Veterans Treatment Court

I learned skills to become a better program coordinator. My favorite course was the Communication course. I learned a lot about myself and better ways to communicate with my team. I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend the Coordinator Certification classes and excited to apply the knowledge and skills I learned.



27

27

Patricia Pinkney

Savannah-Chatham County Drug Court

As always, I enjoy any opportunity to be in a room with other coordinators either in person or virtually. I especially enjoyed the Conflict Management and Team Dynamics courses. Using these new tools will be particularly helpful managing "unique" team personalities.



28

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Dayna Solomon

Muscogee County Drug Court

The conflict style and communication courses will be most beneficial to the operation of the staff and the team.



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Terry Sosebee

Conasauga Drug Court

I found the training to be very good. Even though it was virtual training, I was able to get to know several coordinators through the online interactions and class exercises. I believe that the program will be helpful to those taking the classes in the future. While many of us come from varied backgrounds, the certification program allows us to share our experiences and to gather new information about accountability court operations and administration.



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Danny Stevens

Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court

Participating in the Coordinator Certification Program provided opportunities to learn new concepts, opportunities to be reminded of key concepts we may have already known, and opportunities to get to know fellow coordinators on a deeper level. The certification program allowed continuity of learning for the coordinator community.



31

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Jennifer Tillery

Cobb County Family Treatment Court

At first, the idea of spending 45 hours of instruction to obtain certification was daunting considering our already busy schedules. However, the quality of the training content and the facilitators exceeded expectations. I learned new ideas and concepts from each of the courses that enhanced my abilities as a coordinator. The Financial Concepts Course taught me the most! I am grateful that we had this opportunity to learn!



32

32

Lynda Tobias

Burke County Accountability Courts

The Coordinator Certification Program was very beneficial to me. I believe it accomplished its goal by teaching us several different aspects of running our accountability court. My favorite course was Team & Group Dynamics.



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Monyato Tolbert

Henry County Juvenile Mental Health Court

Completing the Coordinator Certification Program has been extremely beneficial to my role as the Coordinator of Henry County Juvenile Mental Health Court. The certification program has helped strengthen my administrative skills, increased my understanding of essential areas of the grant process, and personal accountability of self as the coordinator.



34

34

Kelsey Topolski

Lookout Mountain Mental Health Court

Through this certification process I have learned a lot about what it takes to be a leader while also working with a team. I have also learned that I am not alone in the struggle to run a successful accountability court. Finally, I have learned a lot about myself and how to think through my actions before implementing them.



35

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Karen Tovey

Rome Circuit Mental Health Court

My positive experience with Coordinator Certification classes was that the sharing of ideas and techniques from other programs was fantastic to hear. There is a lot of support out there from our many peers. My favorite class was Team and Group Dynamics.



36

36

Jonathan Tucker

Clayton Judicial Circuit Behavioral Health Accountability Court

I have thoroughly enjoyed the Coordinator Certificate Program simply because of the think tank opportunity with my contemporaries. While there are specific subject matters, the information was made practical through shared experiences and trials and errors of my peers. In addition, I was exposed to areas that had never been put before me, but now I feel that I can sit on additional conversations and be able to hold my own.



37

37

Melanie Valentine

Cobb County Mental Health Court

I enjoyed getting to know my fellow coordinators throughout the training. As a newer coordinator, I enjoyed hearing the insight of my colleagues. I learned different strategies to make me an effective leader and to push me out of my comfort zone. My favorite course was Group Dynamics. I came back with ideas to make the Mental Health Court team even stronger and hope to implement some of the suggestions we received.



38

38

Samantha Whaley

DeKalb County DUI Court

One of the things I was able to take away from the Team & Group Dynamics course is that there are certain stages of team development. I learned what stage my team was in and the strategies to help us grow and become more effective and efficient team members. I really enjoyed the asynchronous courses because of the flexibility.



39

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Jennifer Williams

Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit Drug Court

The course and trainers were professional and knowledgeable. The course reinforced the tools necessary to be an effective coordinator.



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Erin Young

Rome/Floyd County Drug Court

Overall, the Coordinator Certification Program benefitted my continued growth in the field of accountability court systems in a very positive way. The Communication and Conflict Management courses specifically assisted me the most. Whether it be guiding our diverse team or the participants we serve, the material in these two courses gave me new tools I plan to utilize to better serve in my role.



41

Congratulations Graduates

42