



COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

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ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS NEWS

APPALACHIAN CIRCUIT ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

Submitted by Chris Holt, Appalachian Circuit Veterans Court Coordinator

The Christmas Celebration Will Go On For Accountability Court Participants

Stick it COVID! The Appalachian Judicial Circuit's Accountability Courts did not allow COVID-19 to stop the holiday cheer. It looked differently this year, but on December 17, 2020, the participants of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit's Drug Court, HELP Court, Family Treatment Court, Day Reporting Center, and Veterans Court were invited to a drive-in Christmas party, complete with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

In the past, the annual Accountability Courts' Christmas party has been held in the fellowship hall at First Baptist Church in Ellijay. This year, due to the COVID-19 virus, that type of gathering was not safe. Not to be deterred, the staff of the Accountability Courts planned a drive-in party. Each of the participant's children received a bag of gifts, along with food and dessert. Santa and Mrs. Claus were able to wish everyone a Merry Christmas while remaining safe and socially distanced.



The Accountability Court Judges (Chief Superior Court Judge Brenda S. Weaver, Superior Court Judge John Worcester, and Family Treatment Court Judge Jan Wheeler) would like to thank Pastor Tony Ramirez and the members of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Jasper for all of their help, including the awesome food they provided.



Submitted by Denise Smith, Troup County Accountability Courts Manager

Judge Jeannette Little Retires from the Troup DUI/Drug Court



Judge Jeannette Little attended Furman University in 1972 and then graduated with a B.A. in English from LaGrange College in 1976. She received her J.D. from Walter F. George School of Law, Mercer University in 1979, graduating Magna Cum Laude.

She was elected judge of the small claims court in 1979, which was later changed to Chief Magistrate of Troup County. She held that position until 1986 when Governor Joe Frank Harris appointed her State Court Judge of Troup County. She was elected to that position in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016.

Judge Little was the founding judge of the Troup County DUI/Drug Court, which stated February 1, 2004. She also was the first judge of the Troup County Felony Drug Court, which opened its doors in July 2011. She served on the Georgia Commission of Domestic Violence. She is a past president of the Council of State Court Judges and received the Ogden Doremus Award in 2003 and a Distinguished Services Award from the Council of State Court Judges in 2011.

Judge Little retired from State Court and the Troup County DUI/Drug Court on December 31, 2000.



Judge Little, team members, and graduates at her last Troup County DUI/Drug Court graduation.

Words from Judge Little:

What was your initial interest in being an accountability court judge? I would have to credit two men for my initial interest in being an Accountability Court judge: Justice Robert Benham, retired now from the Georgia Supreme Court, and the late Judge Kent Lawrence of the State Court of Athens-Clarke County. Both were great men and mentors of mine. My initial memory was of being invited by Justice Benham to a small meeting at the Supreme Court offices in the mid '90s to discuss alcohol and drug issues in the courts. Justice Benham inspired me at that meeting, convincing me that we must do much more than what we were doing to deal with these issues. Soon after that I was invited to another larger state meeting to discuss implementation of drug courts. At the

time, Judge Tommy Day Wilcox had just started the first Drug Court in Georgia. Soon after that my good friend Judge Lawrence began telling us about his DUI Court, and I was eager to follow his lead. Another meeting was called to begin some pilot projects, and though I attended I did not seek out the funds because my preliminary count did not seem to indicate a large need. We did

decide, however, to begin a program, using available personnel and resources. At an early annual meeting at Callaway Gardens, I was asked to give a presentation on "how to run a DUI court on a shoestring." My opening comment was, "Where is the shoestring?" Soon the small number of cases grew much larger than we expected, but we managed to survive and prosper until state funding became available.

Why were you interested in DUI Court? I was interested because I had come to realize that our normal punishments did little to stop habitual drunk drivers, and I realized that this population was a serious danger to the public. I recall one individual we were conferencing with who could not believe all we were expecting from him because "it is just my second DUI". I looked at him and said, "How many times have you driven intoxicated?" He looked at me, his head dropped, and he said, "Several hundred." I responded, "Yes, that is the norm." He got in line, graduated from the program, and I have never seen him back in my court again.

Was there a specific moment/event that happened that let you know you were doing something right for your program? Not really. I do recall many occasions where participants have made it clear that their lives have been changed for the better, and that has been confirmation. I also recently saw a comment in social media in response to my retirement that "Judge Little saved my life".



Judge Kent Lawrence and Judge Little

To date, what do you think is your court's biggest program accomplishment? Our graduates who have remained clean and sober are our biggest accomplishment.

How does your court involve the community? Special events? Our community is very supportive of all our Accountability Courts (which, in addition to the DUI/Drug Court, includes the Felony Drug Court-which I presided over for several years in its inception, the Mental Health Court, and the Family Dependency Drug Court), but other than graduations we have not really had any special events. We do have a non-profit which supports us, Accountability Troup, and they help sponsor our graduation ceremonies. We also have great support from the self-help groups in our area.

Since you retired, do you plan to stay involved? If so, how? I would love to stay involved in any way I can on both a local and state level. I would be glad to fill in for any DUI Court judge on the State Court level who needs assistance and am open to any other suggestions. I would also love to talk with any judge who is thinking of starting a DUI Court.

What advice would you give a judge starting a new court program? My main advice would be to visit presently operating courts in the state and talk with judges who have had experience in the field. We are not carbon copies of each other, and you will get good ideas from each. For example, one of our requirements is a SCRAM unit for the first 90 days. It has been a great way to get our participants off to a good start. We also have a fast track program that gets them into the program quickly. In addition, I would say plan, plan, PLAN before starting. Then be willing to make changes as you see the need.

FAYETTE COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

Article appeared in The Citizen

Fayette Accountability Courts Help 100 Participants Get Back to Sobriety

The beginning of a new year is a great time to reflect on the previous. Despite the many obstacles of 2020, the work done by Judge Jason B. Thompson and the Fayette County Accountability Courts team was still needed by the community.

After implementing the Griffin Judicial Circuit's first DUI/Drug Court in 2016, Judge Thompson began 2020 with the judicial circuit's newest court: Veterans Treatment Court. Last year concluded by graduating the largest class of participants in DUI/Drug Court to date, who remained dedicated to their sobriety while navigating the Covid-19 pandemic.



Staff members of the Fayette County Accountability Courts stand ready to help.

The Accountability Courts are comprised of the DUI/Drug Court and the Veterans Treatment Court. The programs are designed to keep a qualified participant in treatment while continuing to work and give back through community service and other charities. This method for substance abuse cases has shown promising results in Fayette County every year. Since their inception, the Accountability Courts have graduated over 100 participants and assisted in the graduates' journey to sobriety with the support of the community and their families.

The Accountability Court has shaved off an average of 34 months of jail time for each participant and saved money for the community. This reduction in incarceration allows those who are willing and ready to change their lives an opportunity to do so.

If any organization is interested in learning more about the DUI/Drug Court or the Veterans Treatment Court, contact Alex Domaleski, Accountability Courts Coordinator, at 770-716-4328 or adomaleski@fayettecountyga.gov to schedule an opportunity for Judge Thompson to speak at your next meeting.

COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

MAT: EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY APPROACHES

Submitted by Tara Zellous, CACJ Statewide MAT Coordinator

Since the mid-1970s, scientific research has shown that treatment of those diagnosed with substance use disorders (SUD) involved with the criminal justice system can change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward drug use, avoid relapse, and successfully remove themselves from a life of substance use and crime (www.drugabuse.gov). Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of medications in combination with behavioral therapies to effectively treat opioid use disorders (OUD) and help some people to sustain recovery.

Most are familiar with the three FDA-approved medications (Methadone, Buprenorphine, and Naltrexone), but what behavioral therapies are effective for this population?

One of the most effective therapeutic techniques for those diagnosed with an OUD is *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)*. Clinicians who practice this approach work to assist individuals with:

- becoming aware of unproductive thought patterns and the impact those thoughts have on one's life,
- identifying negative thoughts and learning strategies to reshape them in a way that changes how one feels, and
- learning new behaviors and putting them into practice.

Another effective behavioral therapy is *Contingency Management Therapy*. This approach, which is widely used by accountability courts, provides motivational incentives in the form of tangible rewards for positive behaviors. By nature, people tend to pursue activities or practice behaviors that seemingly produce a sense of reward. The achievement of a "reward" in-turn enforces the behavior.

Treatment delivered to participants in accountability courts should include comprehensive care which includes behavioral therapy and ancillary services, as well as medication, for those who demonstrate a need.

2021 ANNUAL CALL FOR SPEAKERS PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED



CACJ is excited to launch its call for presenters for the 2021 Annual Training Conference. As a member of the accountability court professional's community, we need your help on ideas for workshops and presenters! There are two opportunities to submit a proposal for the 2021 training conference. CACJ is seeking proposals for workshop speakers and an inspirational speaker. Proposal instructions and additional details are available on the CACJ website 2021 conference page: <https://cacj.georgia.gov/training/2021-annual-training-conference>.

IMPORTANT UPDATE RE: EMAIL SERVICE

CACJ has transitioned to a new email service to distribute bulk emails to accountability court professionals. Please check your junk or spam folders for messages from CACJ. The new service provider is Constant Contact.



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Level of Service Case Management Instrument Booster Training

The Council of Accountability Court Judges, in partnership with Multi-Health Systems, Inc., is pleased to announce a training opportunity for accountability court team members currently certified to administer the Level of Service Case Management Instrument (LS/CMI) Assessment. During 2021, up to five live virtual sessions are scheduled for anyone interested in a refresher course.

The LS/CMI booster is a an interactive, four-hour training that will provide attendees instruction on common pitfalls to avoid during the assessment, as well as time for Q&A. Registration is currently open for the first two sessions scheduled in March and May of 2021. Space is limited, and registration will close once all eligible spots are full. Future sessions are tentatively scheduled for June, August, and November. Registration details are located on the CACJ website [here](#).

Medication Assisted Treatment Program Training

The Council of Accountability Court Judges' Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) implementation and expansion program will offer its first statewide training opportunity **February 24, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.** This live webinar will provide vital information in a question-and-answer format regarding the implementation and collaborative efforts of treatment provider/court staff related to the management of medications prescribed for accountability court participants who have been diagnosed with a severe substance use disorder. Registration will end on February 12, 2021 and can be completed by visiting the CACJ website [here](#).

ASAM Criteria Training for Accountability Courts

The Council of Accountability Court Judges is pleased to offer an ASAM-endorsed eTraining opportunity for accountability court treatment providers to participate in the ASAM Criteria Training developed by The Change Companies. This training is exclusively for Behavioral Health Clinicians and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Providers providing direct services in Georgia's adult accountability courts. Please visit the CACJ website for complete details about the training opportunity and to request training by using the training request form [here](#).

Special Topic Webinar: Overdose

Dr. Kevin Baldwin with Applied Research Services presents a webinar on "Coping with a Participant's Death: When the Unthinkable Becomes Inevitable" providing an overview of addiction and some practices towards preventing and coping with overdose in accountability courts. **The webinar is scheduled for April 7, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.** Registration is open to all accountability court team members. To register for the webinar, please visit the CACJ website [here](#).

Coordinator Certification Program – April Course Registration Opens

Registration for the next cycle of the Coordinator Certification Program courses will open February 16, 2021.

ON-DEMAND CONTENT FROM THE 2020 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

Recorded sessions and resources from the CACJ 2020 Annual Training Conference are available as an on-demand learning experience to conference attendees on the virtual conference platform until August 31, 2021. You can access all the recordings on the Pathable website and use the recordings to catch what you may have missed from this past conference. Instructions to access the on-demand content can be found on the CACJ website [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN PREPARATION FOR THE FY22 FUNDING SEASON

Court Operating Profile Report

CACJ, with the support and partnership of CJCC, opened the Court Operating Profile on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. The COP is a survey used to collect accountability court program information. On January 19, 2021 accountability court coordinators received by email instructions to complete the survey, and each CACJ-funded accountability court is required to submit a Court Operating Profile. The final report is due no later than Friday, February 5, 2021. Instructions to complete the COP are located on the CACJ website [here](#).

FY22 Grant Solicitation and Grant Webinar Date

The FY22 Fiscal Year Operating Grant will be released on Monday, February 22, 2021. The completed grant application is due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 19, 2021. **A webinar to provide coordinators help with navigating the grant application is planned for March 4, 2021.** Please register for the FY22 Grant Solicitation webinar [here](#).

MARCH 2021 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions for the March 2021 newsletter to Debbie Mott (Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov) by Wednesday, February 24. If you plan to include a photo where participants can be identified, please be sure to send a signed photo consent with your submission.

GEORGIA ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS JOB POSTINGS

Please see the Career Opportunities tab (under About Us) on the CACJ website for information about these job postings:

Drug Court Coordinator – Alapaha Judicial Circuit
Behavioral Health Services Coordinator – Fulton County
Family Treatment Court – Rockdale County
Juvenile Drug Court Case Manager – Rockdale County
Court Counselor – Hall County
Family Treatment Court Coordinator – Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit

Director of Accountability Courts – Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit
Drug Court Coordinator – Enotah Judicial Circuit (South)
Case Manager – Lowndes County
Lab Technician – Hall County
Counselor – DeKalb County



RESOURCES



Emerging Best Practices in Law Enforcement Deflection and Community Supervision Programs — Journal for Advancing Justice Volume III Now Available

For those of us who work in treatment courts and the larger justice system, we know the crucial roles played by both law enforcement and community corrections professionals. What we know less about, however, is the emerging field of law enforcement deflection and prearrest diversion, as well as what constitutes best practices for effective community supervision. In both areas, research, evaluation, and practical insight are needed to help shape an improved justice response to people with substance use and mental health disorders in our communities.

NADCP's JOURNAL FOR ADVANCING JUSTICE is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that provides evidence-based and promising practices on the most pressing issues facing the justice system today. We are thrilled to announce the publication of **Volume III: "Emerging Best Practices in Law Enforcement Deflection and Community Supervision Programs."**

Funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, this volume addresses programs and interventions designed to assist individuals with mental health and substance use disorders who come to the attention of law enforcement and community corrections programs. It also analyzes community supervision practices to contribute to the research on effective strategies for probation, parole, and pretrial supervision programs. Through a range of articles written by both researchers and practitioners, this issue provides insight and analysis to assist justice professionals in identifying promising programs and interventions as well as areas that require further investigation to solidify them as best practices.

We hope this journal will be a valuable resource as you strive to better serve justice-involved individuals.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Supporting Peers Providing Services at Intercept O

February 25, 2021

2:30 – 4:00 p.m. EST

Peer support specialists often serve as first responders to individuals who are experiencing a crisis in the community and who are at risk of interfacing with the justice system. However, standardized peer trainings do not always include specific considerations for responding to a behavioral health crisis, such as physical safety and risk for secondary trauma.

This webinar will present practical information from the field and highlight new innovations to support peers who respond to mental and substance use crises at Intercept o of the Sequential Intercept Model. Presenters will discuss safety considerations, opportunities for leveraging technology, and promising practices that have emerged in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Register Now](#)



Want to Reduce Impaired Driving in Your Community?

APPLY FOR FOUNDATIONAL TRAINING BY APRIL 1

DWI courts are a vital, strategic way to prioritize public health while increasing public safety in our communities. Is your program following the evidence, doing all it can to help participants achieve recovery and keep repeat impaired drivers off the roads? Maybe you're still trying to get your program off the ground. NADCP's [National Center for DWI Courts \(NCDC\)](#) provides the training you need no matter what stage your program may be in. Even better, [this training](#) is available at little or no cost to you through collaboration with your State Highway Safety Office.

NCDC's 3.5-day [DWI Court Foundational Training](#) is designed to help:

- Courts not yet operating a DWI court program
- Teams that have had significant staff changes
- Teams that have never attended an NCDC training before

This training will assist your court in designing an effective program for treating repeat DWI offenders, and your team will benefit from one-on-one interaction with our experts. You'll also be mentored by one of our DWI Academy Courts, exemplary programs that share their wisdom and insight so you avoid reinventing the wheel.

Applications are due Thursday, April 1, 2021.

Learn More and Apply!





2021 Annual Training Conference



September 26 - 29, 2021

Accountability Court Teams Paving New Roads to
Recovery and Continuing to Shine Bright !



The 6th Annual Training Conference will be held at the
Classic Center in Athens, Georgia.

Details for conference registration will be available in Spring 2021. Please continue to monitor the
CACJ website at www.cacj.georgia.gov for the most up to date information.