



COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

JANUARY 2022

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ACCOUNTABILITY COURT NEWS

FULTON COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURT

Submitted by John Collins, Fulton County Accountability Court Director



Fulton County Accountability Court celebrated the holiday season with two important incentives for participants. In association with the Atlanta Bar Association, Family Division, the Court was able to provide a bounty of holiday gifts for the children and grandchildren of participants. In association with the Hope and Healing Foundation, the program also hosted a holiday incentive store. Participants were able to use their "holiday incentive bucks" to buy household items, small appliances, and holiday gifts.



DOUGLAS COUNTY FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

Submitted by Ashley Perry, CACJ Statewide MAT Coordinator



On December 9, members of the Douglas County Family Treatment Court team, Chief Juvenile Judge Michelle Harrison, and CACJ's Statewide MAT Coordinator attended The Never Alone Clubhouse's ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Never Alone Clubhouse is a Recovery Community Organization (RCO) in Douglasville, GA that provides a safe space for members of the recovery community to form positive connections and establish healing. They host recreational activities and events and provide daily social activities for individuals, families, and allies of recovery, including peer coaching, mutual-help groups, educational services, jail in-reach, and linkage to treatment services. All services are free of charge. The Executive Director, Ms. Jocelyn Wallace, is a Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist (CARES) who believes that recovery is real, recovery is possible, and that connection is critical to sustaining long-term recovery. Since officially opening their doors in February of 2020, Ms. Wallace and her

team of volunteers have worked diligently to foster community relationships and partnerships, including working closely with the local accountability court programs, to ensure the services offered best meet the needs of the community. She expressed gratitude for the support of the Douglas County FTC team and looks forward to continued collaboration.

MODEL COURTS FEATURE

The goal of Georgia's Accountability Court Model Court program is to recognize the great work of accountability courts across the state, as well as identify strong programs that may serve as mentors for other courts. Programs identified as Model Courts are those that have met and exceeded adherence to Georgia's Standards as dictated by strong performance on certification and peer review processes. To recognize the talent and expertise of the accountability court community, each month CACJ will recognize a model court or two and their work in the substance use and mental health fields.

Newton & Walton County Resource Court

Court type: Mental Health Court

Presiding judge: Judge Layla H. Zon began presiding over the Newton County Mental Health Court in August 2020, and Judge Jeffrey L. Foster began presiding over the Walton County Mental Health Court in January 2021.

Coordinator: Robert Fox began serving the court in August 2017.

Inception date: Newton County Mental Health Court – July 2013; Walton County Mental Health Court – January 2014

Number of graduates to date: Newton – 46; Walton – 39

Current program census: 30

Recidivism rate: Across both counties, the recidivism average after 24 months is 20%.

Innovative practices/unique programming: "The Newton program has been able to partner with a private treatment provider to offer transportation, SOAR case management services, and a wide variety of evidence-based treatment groups. The Walton surveillance deputies support in-home surveillance with remote surveillance apps. In both counties, we conduct frequent in-home drug screens and curfew checks, and our deputies are often an early warning system for participant issues that can be addressed in treatment."

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court?

Judge Zon: "I choose to preside over the Resource Court because I believe in problem solving. The offenders who enter our court as participants have mental health and/or recurring substance abuse problems that can be addressed through treatment and the accountability our court requires. The collaborative effort of the team approach ensures we are all working to maximize the opportunity for each participant's success. Most of what I do as a judge is more formal, less personal, and more reactive than proactive. Presiding over Resource Court gives me the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with participants who are in need of services. It can be life-changing for the participant. That is well worth the effort and is very rewarding."

Judge Foster: "Having handled many cases as a prosecutor and defense attorney with clients who struggled with serious, under-treated mental health issues, and having fostered and adopted children that come from a traumatic background, I have long held an interest in mental health."

What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Judge Zon: "As a model court, I hope to give other courts encouragement and guidance for their courts. Much is learned through trial and error and hopefully, other courts will learn from what we have learned. Our goal overall is to reduce recidivism and make our communities safer by guiding the participants through their various challenges. If we can accomplish this in our Court, others can follow suit, and we can collectively benefit and mutually be of assistance to one another."

Mr. Fox: "As a model court, I hope our program can be a resource for courts that want to see how the non-adversarial approach can work at its best, or that want to see how our team members come together to see our participants as a whole person and creatively meet their many needs."

What are you most proud of in terms of the program's success?

Mr. Fox: "I am proud that within the first 10 days after Georgia's March 2020 pandemic lockdown, our programs had CDC-compliant pandemic policies in place and were able to support our participants with frequent contacts, remote treatment, and remote surveillance. We returned to staffing and court hearings, remotely, within the first week, and within six weeks we had made outdoor arrangements for distanced, masked group treatment. Our deputies made frequent distanced visits to participants' homes and often dropped off much-needed food, cleaning supplies, and a kind word to our participants throughout the pandemic."

What is something you wish you had known at program inception that you hope to impart to newer courts?

Judge Foster: “How important it is, for long-term success, for participants to have regular social work case management to navigate available resources and more extensive access to basic life skills programs (such as financial literacy, soft-skills job training, etc.).”

Judge Zon: “Something I wish I had known at the beginning of my tenure as judge is to ask my treatment team about the questions and conversation I have with participants in court. It really makes a difference what that interaction is comprised of. It can be awkward for a judge at the beginning. My best advice is to watch videos of other successful courts which they have provided through CACJ training.”

Words of Advice...

Judge Foster: “Be prepared to be invested in your participants and their success to the extent that you are bothered by sanctioning even the most frustrating and difficult participant. Every serious sanction should give pause for staff to reflect on whether there may be a problematic systemic issue, or a need for additional different treatment options, that play a role in the violation necessitating sanctions.”



Newton County Resource Court Team Members

Judge: Honorable Layla Zon

Coordinator: Robert Fox

Case Manager: Anna Watkins

Prosecutor: Jillian Hall

Defense Attorney: Nicholas Gettys

Probation Officer: Antwanella Hall

Probation Supervisor: Jonathan Grine

Treatment Providers: Priscilla Faulkner, Stacia Schmidt

Surveillance Officers: Danny Underwood, Susan Young



Walton County Resource Court Team Members

Judge: Honorable Jeffrey Foster

Coordinator: Robert Fox

Case Manager: Anna Watkins

Prosecutor: Jillian Hall

Defense Attorney: Brianna Brantley

Probation Officer: Michael Brown

Probation Supervisor: Amela Newson

Treatment Provider: Debbie Brooks

Court Liaison: Katie McFarland

Surveillance Officers: Dwayne Grayer, James Muse, John Mealor, Anner Pittman

Model Mental Health Court (2021-2024)

Appalachian Judicial Circuit Drug Court

Court type: Adult Felony Drug Court

Presiding judge: Chief Superior Court Judge Brenda S. Weaver has presided over the court since inception in 2002.

Coordinator: Nichole Panter began serving the court in 2013 and as Coordinator since 2017.

Inception date: February 2002

Number of graduates to date: 388

Current program census: 100

Innovative practices/unique programming: "We utilize 'The Depot' and 'EG House', which are homeless shelters for men and women, specifically for participants in our accountability courts. Participants can live in the home if they are homeless or do not have a safe sober living environment. The homes provide shelter, food, and transportation. Participants can also attend meetings there on Sunday evenings."

"We use incentives for every court review and strive to recognize progress. We regularly use the following incentives: verbal praise, 100% compliance drawings to win a \$25 gift card, participants' fees paid on time drawing to win a \$25 gift card, certificates of achievement, coins, curfew extension, fast pass for court or drug screens, incentive wheel to win gift cards, fee credits, toilet paper, laundry detergent, etc. and higher phases have reduced court reviews. The participants who are 100 percent compliant go first in the court reviews."

"During Christmas holidays, we have a special 'Christmas Wheel'. We use the following Christmas incentives: mini-Christmas trees, wrapping paper and bows, Christmas mug, Christmas toilet paper, and Christmas blankets and socks. We plan to start this for other holidays, as well."

"We recognize birthdays once a month by gifting participants with a birthday card, singing "happy birthday", reviewed first in court, and an individually packaged cupcake."

"We partner with local doctors to help provide participants with medically assisted treatment services and other medical and dental services."

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court?

Ms. Panter: "Judge Weaver states to everyone that presiding in accountability courts and in adoption proceedings are the best part of her job as a judge. She feels that she can positively change a person's life and his/her family by presiding in these courts. She is always blessed when she is told by a participant or his/her family members that she 'saved their life' or 'helped make their life so much better'. She hopes to encourage, by her example, more judges to preside in accountability courts so that every person who wishes to be in an accountability court has the opportunity to participate no matter where he or she lives in Georgia."

What are you most proud of in terms of the program's success? What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Ms. Panter: "I am most proud of the program being adaptable. Over the past two years, we have faced many challenges, and despite them, we still served our participants to the best of our abilities. We adapted to online classes, court, and case management. We got creative with drug screens and compliance visits. The team strives for excellence, and we are not afraid to change things up to better assist participants. As a model court, we strive to continue to set an example for other courts and assist, as needed."

What is something you wish you had known at program inception that you hope to impart to newer courts?

Judge Weaver: "Medically assisted treatment for participants and less use of jail for sanctions."

Words of Advice...

Ms. Panter: "Hire great staff and they make your courts shine!"

Model Adult Felony Drug Court (2020-2023)

Funding Opportunities

The Council of Accountability Court Judges in partnership with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is accepting applications for the following accountability court funding opportunities.

The FY22 Emergency Grant will open on Monday, 1/10 and close on Friday, 1/28 at 5:00pm.

FY22 Emergency Grant

Scope/allowable requests

- Treatment
- Drug testing
- Surveillance
- Case management – contract ONLY.
- Emergency funds are typically used to support an increase in census



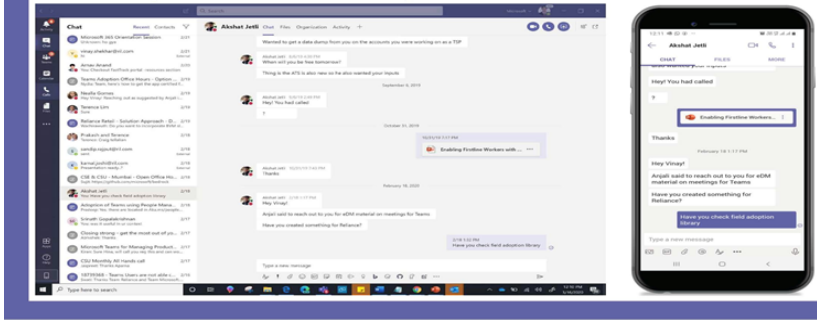
FY23 Court Operating Profile

Each CACJ accountability court (existing and new) is required to complete the Court Operating Profile. **This report is mandatory for all courts that will apply for state grant funds during the upcoming FY23 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023).** The CACJ FY23 Court Operating Profile will open on Monday, January 10, 2022 and is due no later than Friday, January 28, 2022.

CACJ and CJCC will host a tutorial webinar for the FY23 COP on Thursday, January 13, 2022.

COORDINATORS DISCUSSION BOARD

Participate in 1:1 or Group Chat



The Council of Accountability Court Judges is pleased to announce the relaunch of a communications platform for the accountability court coordinators and directors. Members have permission to post questions, share files, and start discussions with colleagues. To receive a "request to join CACJ Teams" email to set up an account or if you have questions about the platform, please contact Ms. Sacha Greene at sacha.greene@georgiacourts.gov.

DBHDD LIAISON TO ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

Submitted by Rebecca Nix, DBHDD Liaison to Accountability Courts



You have an ally in the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)! Some of you are aware of my position at the department, and I have met many of you at trainings and events since starting my liaison work in 2017. For those who I have not met yet, I'm Rebecca Nix, and I'm here as your CACJ/DBHDD liaison.

In the past, I have been limited in how many courts I could visit and assist due to locations, but because so many courts are now experts in conducting virtual staffing sessions and court reviews, the opportunity to connect with many more of you is now a viable option!

You may ask, "What can a Treatment Court Liaison do for my program?" The answer is to provide resources and connections, both DBHDD related and possibly more. Some of the services I may be able to provide are:

- Assist with service delivery challenges you may have with local Community Service Boards (CSB)
- Identify services at the CSB you may not be aware of and help to make the necessary connections for implementation within your court
- Identify services at other state agencies you may not be aware of and help to make the necessary connections for implementation within your court.
- Keep you updated on programs and services not only with DBHDD but with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Community Supervision
- Share applicable resources that are presented in other state coalition meetings I regularly attend
- Assist with developing and initiating alumni groups for your court program

If you are interested in this partnership, or would just like to say hello, I am available to attend your team staffing sessions (virtually) as often as my schedule allows or whenever you need support. I am also able to offer general DBHDD related technical assistance when you have a question or need information. I will also have the opportunity to join the CACJ team for their new Virtual Office Hours during the "Treatment" segment of the sessions, so bring any related questions, and let's talk!

If you have questions between staffing or Virtual Office Hours, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at Rebecca.Nix@dbhdd.ga.gov or at (404) 805-1786. I am ready to support you and your court. I look forward to the possibility of meeting you and your staff soon!

FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions for the February 2022 newsletter to Debbie Mott (Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov) by Wednesday, January 26. 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:

*Columbia County Accountability Court Case Manager
*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court Coordinator
*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Case Manager
*Douglas County DUI/Drug Court Coordinator
*Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician I
*Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician II
*Forsyth County Contract Counselors

*Mountain Judicial Circuit Clinical Coordinator
*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Group Facilitator
*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Drug Testing Technician
*DeKalb County Misdemeanor MHC Social Worker

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Wondering about something? We are here to help Wednesday!

Join CACJ Staff for virtual office hours beginning in 2022!

Who: CACJ Teams – Data, Executive Director/Legal/Grants, Standards & Certification, Training, and Treatment

When: Every first Wednesday of the month, with staggered times

Where: Zoom – We are pleased to begin offering this new form of technical assistance!

Why: Virtual office hours give you the opportunity to ask your questions and receive support in a streamlined fashion. You can meet with CACJ Staff on a regular basis to stay informed and get the answers you need.

***Instructions:** In advance of the event, click on the link to register for the Zoom meeting. The drop-down box lists all meetings as 11:00 am; however, on the day of the virtual office hours event, join the Zoom meeting at the hour and for the Team meeting in which you wish to participate.

CACJ STAFF

Taylor Jones, Executive Director
Josh Becker, Assistant Director
Sacha Greene, Certification Officer II
Jeffrey Holiday, Certification Officer II
Kimberly Howard, Training & Operations Manager
Alison Lerner, General Counsel
Rachel Meyer, Data Programs Manager & Certification Officer II
Ashley Perry, Statewide MAT Coordinator
Keisha Ray, Treatment Fidelity Program Monitor
Tara Zellous, Treatment Services Program Manager



Meeting Schedule

January 5, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

February 2, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

March 2, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

April 6, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

May 4, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

June 1, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

July 6, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

August 3, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

September 7, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

October 5, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

November 2, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

December 7, 2022 (*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm