



COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

MAY 2022

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ACCOUNTABILITY COURT GRADUATIONS

DOUGLAS COUNTY FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

Submitted by Ashley Perry, CACJ Statewide MAT Coordinator



On Thursday, April 7, 2022, the Douglas County Family Treatment Court held a hybrid commencement ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of FTC participant, Ms. Karen Holtz. Several attendees were present, both virtually and in-person, to celebrate Ms. Holtz, including Chief Juvenile Judge Michelle Harrison, Associate Juvenile Judge Talia Nurse, members of the FTC Team, current FTC participants and members of the FTC Alumni Group, and members of Ms. Holtz's family. FTC Coordinator and Juvenile Programs Director Ms. Jennifer King presented Ms. Holtz with a handmade poster of inspirational quotes and photos from the FTC team with an important reminder in the center, "Don't give up before the miracle," as this was a special quote to Ms. Holtz throughout her journey. Several attendees spoke at the ceremony to not only congratulate Ms. Holtz but to acknowledge and celebrate her hard work, determination, and perseverance. To conclude the ceremony, Judge Harrison presented Ms. Holtz with a framed certificate of completion and offered words of encouragement as she moves forward in this next phase of her recovery. Ms. Holtz expressed sincere gratitude to the many individuals who have assisted her along the way, stating, "You never gave up on me!"



ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS NEWS

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.

Dawson County Treatment Court Model Adult Felony Drug Court (2020-2023)

Court type: Hybrid Adult Felony Drug Court, DUI Court & Mental Health Court

Presiding judge: Judge Jason Deal has been the presiding judge since program inception in 2006.

Coordinator: Brittany Currans

Inception date: 2006

Number of graduates to date: 254

Current program census: 48

Recidivism rate: 17%



Innovative practices/unique programming:

Ms. Currans: "In 2019, the Dawson County Treatment Court introduced a six-month aftercare program for participants who have been in the Circuit's accountability courts in the past. Also, the treatment staff incorporates biweekly supervision and holds weekly meetings to ensure appropriate continuation of care for all participants. And the Dawson County Treatment Court has created various tracks within Treatment Court to individualize treatment needs (i.e., DUI, Drug, Mental Health). Group curriculum spans an array of subjects which all participants may attend based on their individual needs."

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court? What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Judge Deal: "As a superior court judge I feel like I deal a lot with resolutions but rarely with solutions. We resolve divorces, discovery disputes, and criminal cases but rarely do we provide solutions to problems. As a drug court judge, it is different. Working with a drug court team and a unified purpose, I feel like we are finding solutions to the epidemic of drug addiction. It doesn't work every time, but drug court is the best solution I have found in my career."

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

Judge Deal: "I wish I had known more about trauma. Trauma is rampant within our participant population, and I am still striving to learn how to deal with it effectively and appropriately. For new programs I would just encourage patience, perseverance, and focus. You have to be patient and deliberate when dealing with participants and their shenanigans. Persevere through the challenges and don't give up on the program or your participants. Termination should be a last resort. Stay focused on the goal of recovery and improvement not perfection."

What would you like to highlight?

Judge Deal: "Drug court is the highlight of my week and the best thing I have done in my career. It takes a lot of work, but it is worth it. It is a privilege to be part of a team that helps people change their lives and the lives of their families."

Ms. Currans: When I graduated from school, I wasn't sure where my place was. I only knew that I wanted to help people and make a difference. Fast forward five years and I can honestly say that Treatment Court has given me so much more than I could have hoped for. I believe this is one of the few places that we can see our work make an impact on the community and that would not be possible without the support that we have within our team and our agency."

Dawson County Treatment Court Team Members

Judge: The Honorable Jason J. Deal

Coordinator: Brittany Currans

Case Manager: Kimberly Wallace

Assistant District Attorney: Grant Shope

Defense Attorney: Sean Callahan

Probation Officer: Amanda Foster

Treatment: Rhiannon Langham, Brandi Turpin, April Hendry

Law Enforcement Liaison: Lisa Brady



Athens-Clarke County DUI Treatment Court

Model DUI Court (2021-2024)

Court type: DUI Court

Presiding judge: State Court Judge Charles Auslander, III became the presiding judge in 2011.

Coordinator: Katy Minchew has served as coordinator since November 2021

Inception date: February 2001

Number of graduates to date: 392

Current program census: 65

Recidivism rate: 26%



Innovative practices/unique programming:

"As the result of trauma informed training the program received, male and female treatment groups were developed. We have noticed that both groups feel more comfortable sharing with their cohorts now. This was implemented for treatment groups and status conferences. The program implemented separate violation hearings that occur two times a week outside of status conferences. The status groups still benefit from a brief review of recent violations when the person who was in violation meets with the judge during status. We have found that having a separate space to discuss violations means that we have adequate time to do so and, also, we often see a greater degree of honesty because participants in violation are not confronted or reprimanded directly in front of their peers."

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court?

Judge Auslander: "I consider it an honor to be a part of a team that works to make our community safer by substantially improving the trajectory of people whose substance use and mental health disorders brought them into the criminal justice system."

What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Judge Auslander: "As a model court, I hope that we can be a resource to other communities that are looking to improve their responses to individuals with these disorders."

Ms. Minchew: "I believe that being a model court is about flexibility and willingness to reinvent the program and recognize how we can grow to be better again and again through self-assessment and review. There are many things that may have served a program well in the past that no longer work. As a model court, it is my personal goal to be open to feedback from anyone, to thoughtfully examine areas that need change, and diligently work toward innovations so that our course is set on doing what is best for our participants and not on what has always been done. The day-to-day goal is to serve every participant with respect and integrity and in a way that provides them with the support they need to build the life they want for themselves and their loved ones. Something that is very important to me is to develop a thriving alumni group that will be there after commencement as a community support."

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

Ms. Minchew: "Since November 2021, we have worked to streamline staffing and the way information is received and reviewed by the team outside of staffing, so that team members can often be briefed ahead of time and utilize staffing as effectively as possible. We have developed new ways to make the most of out of dissemination and interpretation of drug screens by way of a daily screening email update. We are in the process of moving to a completely paperless program form system for phase ups, leave requests, and incentive requests. We have incorporated 'Talking Points' into our status packets. These notes, provided by each participant's counselor, provides very helpful information to the judges regarding what can be discussed that will reinforce what is being worked on in treatment group or individual counseling. Talking points are not about the participant's personal life typically, unless the participant has advised they enjoy talking about a specific personal topic, but usually contains information about concepts being learned or discussed in treatment. In March 2022, we hired a case management specialist, Laura McCoy, who is also a Certified Peer Specialist. Having a peer on the team who graduated from an accountability court in our circuit has been a game changer. We have seen an influx of buy-in from our participants as they have learned that someone who has been in their shoes sits at our staffing table, provides input, and also has the opportunity to work with them directly as a CM and Peer. It is my hope to one day see peer staff members on every accountability court team."

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

Judge Auslander: "Jail is the most ineffective sanction in a treatment court's toolbox. Jail can disrupt treatment, employment, and expose our clients to antisocial attitudes. Jail can destroy the client's trust and confidence in the program. More effective tools exist to respond to behavior-electronic monitoring, increased testing, daily or increased reporting, daily or weekly check-ins with probation, revised treatment plans, peer support, or any other non-jail response."

Words of Advice: "Our program works as well as it does because each of our team members care about the work they do. They all go above and beyond to serve our participants and the community. The work they do behind the scenes is the same as the work they do in the spotlight. They bring the same level of commitment and excellence to their work outside of our program, too. We work well together because we respect one another's input and are not afraid to disagree at times for growth and progress. This respect and willingness to share our perspectives even in disagreement allows us to have thoughtful debate and discussion when needed. Fostering an environment of mutual respect and appreciation for different perspectives is important for a healthy team and a healthy team better serves our participants and community."

Athens-Clarke County DUI Treatment Court Team Members

Judge: The Honorable Charles Auslander, III

Assisting Judge: Magistrate Court Judge Benjamin Makin

Coordinator: Katy Minchew

Case Manager & Peer Specialist: Laura McCoy

Prosecutor: William Fleenor

Public Defender: Paige Spivey

Probation Officer/Surveillance/Law Enforcement: Officer Brandon Andrews, Officer Shirlisa Howard, Lt. Seth Robinson

Treatment: Cheran Bodry-Stone, Cate Caddy, Michael Dwyer



COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

IMPORTANT UPDATE REMINDER

CACJ 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.



FY23 ACCOUNTABILITY COURT OPERATING GRANT AWARDS

On April 26-27, 2022, the CACJ Funding Committee met to review the FY23 Accountability Court Operating Grant applications. The committee reviewed 173 grant applications! Coordinators and judges will receive by email/mail the program's Operating Grant award no later than May 18, 2022. If you do not receive your award information and packet by that date, please contact your assigned CJCC grant specialist or CACJ to assist.

COORDINATOR QUARTERLY MEETINGS



Coordinators, please check your inboxes for RSVP details to attend the next quarterly coordinator call planned for **June 6, 2022** at 1:30 p.m.

CACJ 2022 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE UPDATES



CACJ 2022 Annual Training Conference October 9-12, 2022 "Back to the Future of Accountability Courts"

The Council of Accountability Court Judges will host its 7th Annual Training Conference October 9-12, 2022. The conference is expected to host more than 900+ attendees from Georgia's accountability courts. Registration and hotel room block information will become available as the information is finalized. Registration is expected to open in July 2022. Coordinators are the primary point of contact for attendee registration.

CACJ is excited to launch the official webpage for the 2022 conference. All conference announcements including registration information, the agenda at a glance, session catalog, and important details about the event can be found [here](#).

The 2022 Annual Training Conference Exhibitor Prospectus is now available. Please share with companies that offer products or services to your accountability courts or may have an interest in exhibiting at the conference.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE – MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE WEBINAR SERIES

The Council of Accountability Court Judges continues to offer webinars and training opportunities. During the month of June, the first of four quarterly mental health focused webinars is scheduled. These trainings are open to all accountability court team members, as the content is intermediate and advanced.



JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions for the June 2022 newsletter to Debbie Mott (Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov) by Friday, May 27. 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:

- *DeKalb County Mental Health Court Clinical Evaluator
- *Cobb County DUI Court Probation Officer
- *Glynn County Lead Clinical Director
- *Mountain Judicial Circuit Clinical Coordinator
- *Forsyth County Contract Counselors

- *Newton County Family Treatment Court Coordinator
- *Cherokee County Case Manager
- *Glynn County Drug Court Coordinator
- *Richmond County Accountability Court Director
- *DeKalb County Misd. Mental Health Court Social Worker

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Wondering about something? We are here to help Wednesday! Join CACJ Staff for virtual office hours!

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

When: Every first Wednesday of the month from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (times changed as of February 23, 2022)

Where: Zoom – We are pleased to offer 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.

Meeting Schedule

May 4, 2022 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

- Standards & Certification
- Data

June 1, 2022 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants
- Treatment
- Training

July 6, 2022 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

- Standards & Certification
- Data

August 3, 2022 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants
- Treatment
- Training

September 7, 2022 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

- Standards & Certification
- Data



Register Now for New Juvenile Treatment Provider Training

NADCP's National Drug Court Institute (NDCI) is bringing world-class training to adolescent substance use disorder (SUD) treatment professionals working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system. This training is presented in partnership with the American Society of Addiction Medicine and supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. [Juvenile treatment provider training](#) is offered virtually and open to both newcomers to the treatment field and seasoned professionals.

Whether you are an addiction therapist, mental health therapist, drug and alcohol counselor, social worker, clinical case manager, clinical supervisor, juvenile drug treatment court (JDTC) team member, or student, this program is for you!

More Information

Who should attend?

Treatment provider training is for anyone currently delivering or supervising the delivery of adolescent SUD treatment, co-occurring disorder services, or clinical case management to participants in JDTCs, on community supervision, or otherwise involved in the justice system. Professionals who practice in communities where JDTCs exist are encouraged to attend, even if not currently seeing treatment court participants.

Continuing Education

NADCP and its training divisions are preapproved with NAADAC only. NADCP and its divisions do not obtain preapproval through each state for on-site or virtual trainings. A certificate of attendance for eight (8) hours is provided upon successful submission of the post-webinar evaluation, which includes the number of eligible hours. If an attendee would like to submit to their accrediting agency for credit, they may do so. If any additional information is needed in order to submit to your accrediting agency, please let us know and we will be happy to provide that to you.

Cost

Registration and all materials are provided without charge. This training is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.