

Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board



Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024

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HISTORY

County of Delaware

Delaware County is a 2A county consisting of 184 square miles with a 2010 census population of 558,976. It is the fifth most populous Pennsylvania County and the third most compact.

The County Seat is located in Media, Pennsylvania. The county was created on September 29, 1789, from part of Chester County. Prior to 1851 the City of Chester was the County Seat of Delaware County and before that, of Chester County. Among others, Delaware County borders the City of Philadelphia and social economically consist of mostly working class, middle and upper middle class.



CJAB

Delaware County boasts the first Criminal Justice Advisory Board formed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our journey began in 1993 when a handful of Court/County officials were invited to attend and participate in a Criminal Justice Advisory Board Conference in Tampa, Florida. That group saw the potential for such a committee and upon return laid the foundation which resulted in its first official meeting in October 1994. At that time, the board established By Laws which set forth such criteria as: members, mission, agenda, committees, communication, schedule, meeting documentation, etc.



DELAWARE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

The following are some of the accomplishments of this board of the past twenty (25) years;

Advanced technology to improve efficiency

Use of video conferencing is perhaps the most extensive of any county in PA

Live Scan digital fingerprinting and photo imaging is available to all police departments in Delaware County

Electronic Monitoring

Use of Court Smart Technology

Development of Re-entry Counselors

Expansion of RIP & IP Programs

Development of Forensic Liaisons

Evolution of Drug, Veterans, and Mental Health Courts

Cross Systems Mapping

Delaware County Cares

Multiple grant funding through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

Prison Restoration of Competency (PROC) & Community Restoration of Competency (CROC)

Heroin Task Force

Evaluation Sub-Committee

(2) Bi-Annual Summits (Heroin Epidemic & Mental Health)

Drug Treatment Court Accreditation

Recovery Specialist

Partnership with PCCD

Over our twenty year history the Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board has been acknowledged and credited with assisting/collaborating with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency for improvements across Pennsylvania. Below are some of these initiatives and accomplishments:

Recognized as a state and national leader in innovative criminal justice programming

The first county to have the Judicial and Executive Branches of government actively meeting at the Criminal Justice Advisory Board

Assisted the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency in mentoring other counties in helping to implement programs.

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency recommended Philadelphia meet with Delaware County to help with establishing their Criminal Justice Advisory Board

Delaware County was the first County on JNET



DELAWARE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

Delaware County helped the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency develop and implement state wide Standards to apply to all Criminal Justice Advisory Board's in the state of Pennsylvania

Recognized by the PCCD and PA. Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs for our aggressive campaign to reverse the growing trend of heroin use and in the training of first responders to administer Naloxone to reverse heroin overdose.

Second Chance Court Presentation at the 2020 Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency Annual Conference

MISSION STATEMENT

Through best principles of strategic management and coordinated planning, the Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board is committed to improving the effectiveness, efficiency, evenhandedness, accountability, and public and professional perception of Criminal Justice in Delaware County.

MEMBERS

Honorable John P. Capuzzi, Chairman
Honorable Kevin F. Kelly, President Judge
Honorable James P. Bradley, Criminal Liaison Judge
Honorable Judge Linda A. Cartisano, Juvenile Justice Advisory Board
Honorable Judge Richard H. Lowe, Juvenile Justice Advisory Board
Kevin M. Madden, County Council
Marianne Grace, Executive Director
Jack Stollsteimer, District Attorney
Emillio DiMatteo, Esquire, Public Defender
David Splain, Chief, County Law Enforcement
Donna Mellon, Warden, Delaware County Prison
Jerry Sanders, Sheriff
Michael W. Raith, Esquire, Adult Probation and Parole
Danielle DiMatteo, Juvenile Probation
Mark Murray, Juvenile Detention
Sandy Garrison, Office of Human Services
Gerald C. Montella, Esquire, Court Administrator
Charles E. McDonald, Esquire, District Justice Administrator
Honorable Deborah Krull, Magisterial District Judge
Jennifer Hennelly, Local Victims Organization
Kimberly Mackey, PCCD CJAB Specialist



CJAB Meetings

Meetings of the Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board are held on the second Wednesday of every other month, from 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm in the Judges' Conference Room, Third Floor, Courthouse, Media PA.

Dates for Criminal Justice Advisory Board Meetings for 2020:

January 8th, March 11th, May 13th, September 16th and November 18th.

Standing/AD HOC SubCommittees

Cross-System Mapping
Treatment Court
Veterans Court
Mental Health Court
Delaware County Cares
Re-entry
Strategic Planning
Grant Management
Heroin Task Force
Evaluation Committee



Strategic Planning Process



As Delaware County celebrates its 25th anniversary as a Criminal Justice Advisory Board, we have taken this opportunity to reflect on our many accomplishments. However, we realize that there are many issues to address in a county with constantly changing issues which greatly effect our criminal justice system. The City of Chester and Upper Darby Township comprises 20% of the entire population of Delaware County and their size and subsequent struggles presents challenges to every facet of our government. Upper Darby Township borders West Philadelphia and is the sixth most populous municipality in Pennsylvania. Its population is diverse, representing over 100 ethnic cultures with over 70 different languages. The City of Chester is a third class city which has reduced its population by half over the last 50 years due to loss of shipyard and automobile manufacturing jobs. While the population has decreased; crime, drugs and violence has risen significantly.

Despite our best efforts, Delaware County continues to battle the national heroin epidemic, along with the resurgence of methamphetamines and crack cocaine use. In addition, we continue to explore avenues to appropriately address the large numbers with mental health issues in our Criminal Justice System. Therefore, considering the above as well as many other factors in Delaware County, we believe that it is prudent to review and update our strategic plan for the next five (5) years. This process will allow us to map out the best strategy for success in dealing with all the issues that challenge our criminal justice system.

DELAWARE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

Treatment Court

Delaware County began its Treatment Court Program in 2008 with a grant secured from the Pennsylvania Commission of Crime and Delinquency. It addressed the over population at the prison of women with co-occurring disorders. Since that time the program had expanded to supervise and treat both men and women for a variety of offenses and drug uses. Presently, there are 118 clients in the program. Treatment court has celebrated 25 graduations with approximately 232 graduates and has been widely successful in helping offenders turn their lives around. With the current heroin and prescription pill epidemic in our county, we will continue to search for opportunities to expand this program in hopes of helping the most drug affected individuals in our community.

In 2016 Treatment Court added a 3rd Track called the Young Offenders Program. The court imposes a 17 month period of court supervision for Felony delivery of marijuana cases. If successful the case is reduced to 1 month probation for possession.

In 2017 and 2019 the team attended the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and are in the final stages of Accreditation.

Veterans Court

The Delaware County Veterans Court was established in 2011 as part of treatment court to provide services for men and woman who served us so honorably and are now in need of help. Due to the unique services/needs this population requires and due to the increased growth of the program; in 2012, Veterans Court became its own specialty court with a senior judge presiding. The goal of the program is to re-establish veteran defendants as productive members of our community through the use of Veterans affairs and non-Veteran's Affairs benefits, treatment and support services. As a result of the county's philosophy of "No Veterans Left Behind" this program has flourished. Presently, there are 7 clients in the program. There have been 57 individuals who have graduated at 9 ceremonies to date. Because of the importance of supporting our veterans, Delaware County through the Veterans Court Team will explore all avenues to expand this program to increase support of veterans.

Mental Health Court

In January 2014, Delaware County established its Mental Health Court. A culmination of work done to identify and address gaps in our system in regards to mental health services. This program has enjoyed the support from all areas of our criminal justice and social services systems. Presently, there are 17 individuals in the program, 32 graduates and 8 graduations. In identifying our significant needs, we are expecting that this specialty court will continue to grow and will require more resources to meet the needs of the population. One area has been the involvement in PROC and CROC followed by community supervision. We will continue to receive updates and recommendations from the Mental Health Team in regards to expansion of services.

DELAWARE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

Cross System Approach to Mental Health Services in our Criminal Justice System

302 Process – Norristown Waiting List

In 2015, there was a one year waiting list for incompetent prisoners to get a bed at Norristown State Hospital with 31 prisoners on the waiting list. To remedy this significant problem the Prison Restoration of Competency (PROC) was established. The group consists of the District Attorney, Public Defender, Norristown State, Prison Liaisons, Prison Medical, Office of Behavioral Health and Mental Health Court Team. Because of their efforts (93) individuals have been restored to competency and there is presently only 4 incompetent prisoners on the waiting list with the longest length of time being 6 weeks.

In Addition, to PROC the County/Court established the Community Restoration of Comptency (CROC). The GEO Group operates a secured facility in Chester to help individuals gain competency outside of the prison. In Addition, Norristown State has added space and operates Natale North which is a step down facility on the grounds of Norristown State Hospital. Because of the above initiatives there has been a tremendous improvement over the past five (5) years in regards to our incarcerated mental health population; however, we will continue to monitor and look to improve on these successes in the next five year plan. The CJAB has also begun to focus on individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, which presents different challenges to our system than the mental health population.

Psychiatric Evaluation

As Delaware County has evolved and becomes better educated in the area of mental health issues we have taken measures in not only determining competency and mental health disease but in addressing the areas of diagnosis, prognosis and treatment.

The establishment of the Mental Health Evaluation Committee which is a sub-committee of the Delco Cares Program and the CJAB was established in 2016 and is chaired by the Director of Pretrial/Bail/Diagnostic Services Units. The purpose of the committee was to gather together those individuals who deal with the mental health issues of individuals on a daily basis both in court and treatment settings. Other committee members include: President Judge, Judge overseeing Mental Health Court, Criminal Liaison, Judge, County Executive Director, District Attorney's Office, Public Defenders Office, Adult Probation/Parole, Deputy Warden and the Medical Director from The George W. Hill Correctional Facility, Director of District justice Administration, Coordinator of the Street Restoration of Competency Program, representatives from the facility where the Street Restoration of Competency Program operates, Deputy Director and Office Manager from the Diagnostic Services Unit and the Office of Behavioral Health.

Presently, Delaware County Courts have two (2) psychiatrists-one conducting psychiatric evaluations at the correctional facility and the second conducting psychiatric evaluations on those individuals who are on the street, while they are capable of conducting competency evaluations they are pretty much relegated to conducting psychiatric evaluations. The competency and psychological evaluations ordered by the court are conducted by two (2) psychologists both at the correctional facility and in the Office of Diagnostic Services. The turn around time for all these evaluations is approximately 10-12 days and all address the areas of diagnosis, prognosis and treatment.

Delaware County Cares

Delaware County Cares was launched in 2013. It is an umbrella committee overseeing civil and criminal Mental Health Courts. It has provided a tremendous forum for increased collaboration and communication between county/court officials and hospitals, community providers and educational institutions. It has been a driving force for our Delaware County Crisis Connection Team and monitors the numbers served on a every other monthly basis. We will continue to refine the work this committee does and branch out in other areas of our mental health system. One such area would be expansion of our mobile crisis.

Increase Focus on High Crime Area

Due to high crime rates and gun violence in some areas; the County, Court and District Attorney’s Office will continue to increase their efforts and resources in those areas.

District Attorney/Police Partnership

The District Attorney continues to support the 42 municipal police departments in the county. Presently, The District Attorney’s Office is working with the following partnerships/programs in an effort to reduce and combat crime in the county:

- Gun Violence Task Force
- Environmental Crimes
- Underground Economy

Educate citizens about resources available to prevent and treat addiction
Reduce drug related crimes in the community through public education and law enforcement

Specialized addiction training

With the expansion of heroin, prescription drugs and well as suboxone, kratom and designer drugs such as K2, spice and bath salts; as well as the resurgence of methamphetamines and crack cocaine; the district attorney's office, police, probation and parole and other law enforcement agencies will continue to receive specialized addiction training through the Office of Behavior Health and our treatment community.

Re-Entry

The Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board through the Re-Entry Subcommittee will continue to review re-entry services in Delaware County. As the subcommittee evolves it will expand in other areas where a need is identified.

Housing

Housing is a major obstacle for offenders re-entering our community. In an effort to assist in this area, the Office of Behavioral Health provides master leasing opportunities for the forensic population, however, it is limited and there is a significant waiting period. The county also provides various recovery houses in the county, as well as housing through the FACT program. We will look to expand these initiatives, and develop additional housing options.

Employment

Employment and under-employment are areas that provide difficulty for offenders in community. Individuals with arrests and convictions are less likely to secure employment in this competitive job market. The Delaware County Office of Workforce Development through Career Link does a good job supporting, educating and placing individuals in careers. However, with over 5,000 job seekers per month seeking assistance, the challenge is daunting. The county/court will look to partner with an outside job training/placement agency skilled in this area to assist in this area. In Particular the County Department of Workforce Development has a contract with EDSI in Chester for individuals Reentering the community.

Treatment

Treatment is a condition in almost every case that is processed in our criminal court. Delaware County provides funding for a wide variety of drug, alcohol and mental health treatment. In addition, medical assistance is available for many others in our system. Since drug/alcohol and mental health cases continue to rise we will continue to explore all available options to increase our services.

Forensic Liaison/Re-entry Counselors

Our Forensic Liaisons and Re-Entry Counselors located at the prison have a major impact on the success of our re-entry programs. They are responsible for among other things - setting up services upon release. Most recently they added the duty of setting up services for inmates being released who participated in the Vivitrol Program. We will continue to review and support there efforts and look to expand the processes where applicable.

Prison Vivitrol Program

In April 2019, the George Hill Correctional Facility established a voluntary Vivitrol Program for clinically eligible male inmates with an opioid addiction reentering the community. This program provides inmates with at least three (3) months time remaining on there case Vivitrol injections coupled with cognitive behavior therapy. Inmates entering the community are provided a warm hand off to the community treatment providers and additional injections are provided as necessary.

The program can support up to 30 inmates at a time. As of November 2019 there are 15 individuals in the program. There have been 12 successful discharges of which 4 have relapsed. We will continue to monitor the success of the program with an eventual eye towards adding women.

Second Chance Court

Due to the heroin epidemic the court determined that there was a significant need for pretrial re-entry services. In 2016, the Second Chance Court grant application was secured with PCCD funds. This program is comprised of all the relevant agencies, along with the Court to identify heroin related cases and divert them from incarceration and provide community supervision, treatment that utilizes Evidence Based Practices and MAT's during the pretrial process with the eventual imposition of a county intermediate punishment sentence. To date, 110 individuals have been sentenced through this program and 10 are actively being supervised in Second Chance Court.

Expansion of Intermediate Punishment Program

Delaware County has utilized intermediate punishment as a sentencing alternative since 1993. Over the past several years intermediate punishment sanctions in Delaware County have increased exponentially. As we continue to expand this program we will seek funding initiatives which will provide needed support. In addition, the Commonwealth and Court have increased the use of SIP at initial sentencing and revocation hearings.

Courthouse Security/Space

County/Court Security Management Planning Committee

Delaware County has a County/Court Security Management Planning Committee comprised of judges and high level administrators in various areas of expertise. This committee will continue to oversee the security development of the courthouse complex and provide training and information to all management members which will be disseminated to all staff for the protection of employees and visitors at the courthouse. This includes the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Emergency Planning responsibilities established by the Supreme Court through the PA. Rules of Judicial Administration 1950-1954.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Delaware County’s Emergency Preparedness Plan was developed to effectively deal with every possible emergency, including, but not limited to; fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, active shooters, etc. Since public safety is of utmost importance, the General Response is continually update and has adopted standard operating procedures.

Best use of existing space/expansion

Delaware County constantly reviews space availability and makes educated changes when appropriate. For example, all senior judge’s chambers are now located on the second floor of the courthouse. The Jury Assembly Room was relocated to the Government Center Building to provide space for a virtual courtroom and various agencies are located in other facilities throughout the county. In 2019 the county/court contracted with an outside vendor to conduct an overall space study to determine the most effect use of space in all County facilities.

Video Conferencing /Technology/E-Filing

Delaware County has used video conferencing in all appropriate courtroom matters to expedite case processing/reduce costs and provide better public safety by not transporting prisoners for every proceeding. In addition, it is utilized by many county and court agencies as a way to effectively communicate with individuals incarcerated at the county prison as well as many other jurisdictions. Some of the regular matters that utilize video conferencing are:

- Rule 150 hearing
- Fast Track Guilty Pleas
- Increased use of Gagnon II/Master Hearing
- Expedited Gagnon I Hearings

One area that we seek to explore is conducting preliminary arraignments via video conferencing. This will require a collaborative efforts by the key stake holders to determine protocols and determine funding issues.

In addition, the County IT Department continues to enhance technology through supporting departmental systems and partnering with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania (AOPC), Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) and Adult problem solving courts and Juvenile Courts Information System (PAJCIS).

In 2018 the County/Court through CPCMS implemented electronic civil filings “PAC File” that provides the option to file documents with the courts electronically on both new and existing cases. Presently, filings can be submitted to the Supreme, Superior, Commonwealth and certain Common Pleas Courts. We are looking to expanding “PACFiling” in the Family Section in 2020 and hoping to initiate the same in the Criminal Division during this five (5) year Strategic Plan.



Chairman's Message

The Criminal Justice Advisory Board's Strategic Plan highlights our history and past accomplishments, but most importantly, it details our goals and objectives for the next five years. Those of us involved in the criminal justice system are cognizant of the everchanging landscape and we will continue to explore any and all options to improve our effectiveness and efficiency while bearing in mind the impact on the victims and society, as well as the needs of the defendants.

As noted in this report, the criminal justice system is facing increasing and more diverse responsibilities and mandates without a corresponding increase in funding. We are being asked to do much more although resource levels, at best, remain stable, if not decreasing. That being said, I am extremely proud to acknowledge the dedication of all those who render criminal justice services in Delaware County which has enabled us to accomplish the goals and objectives identified in the previous plan. I am also confident that these efforts will continue unabated.

Substance use disorders and mental health illnesses permeate the criminal justice system. In Delaware County we have taken bold steps to address these societal changes, such as the restoration to competency programs, specialty courts, early intervention treatment programs and medically assisted treatment protocols. Our message is and has been that the disorder or illness does not define the person. We offer many avenues for help and treatment for these individuals.

I want to thank all the members of the Delaware County Criminal Justice Advisory Board for their contributions and cooperation in the endeavor. In particular I want to express my gratitude to Michael W. Raith, Esquire, Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee, and Danielle DiMatteo, Director of Juvenile Probation, coordinator of the semi-annual summit. Also, appreciation for the extraordinary effort of Nichole DePompeo in coordinating our updated Strategic Plan.

Finally, it is with great admiration and respect that I acknowledge my predecessors on this Board: Honorable Barclay R. Surrick, Honorable George Koudelis, Honorable Ann A. Osborne, Honorable Michael F.X. Coll and Honorable James F. Nilon, Jr. for their stewardship. If not for their vision, resolve, leadership and commitment to justice our present success would not be possible.

Date: March 11, 2020

Sincerely,

John P. Capuzzi, Sr., J.
Chair, DCCJAB