

KENTUCKY JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON
MENTAL HEALTH



Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health Meeting Minutes	
Meeting Date, Time	March 7, 2025; 1:00-3:00 PM ET
Meeting Location	Administrative Office of the Courts 1001 Vandelay Drive Frankfort, KY 40601
Virtual Option	The meeting was also offered virtually through Zoom; a recording can be found here .

Attendees	
Name	Organization
Crystal Adams	Director, Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Hon. Stephanie Burke (Zoom)	District Judge
Hon. Robert B. Conley	Deputy Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. J. Foster Cotthoff (Zoom)	District Judge
Lisa Dejaco Crutcher (Zoom)	Executive Director/CEO, Catholic Charities of Louisville
Margaret Forsee	Owen County Circuit Court Clerk, President of Kentucky Circuit Court Clerk Association
Rebecca Frost (Zoom)	Facility Director, Western State Hospital
Dr. Todd Gray	Kentucky Baptist Association
Hon. Tyler Green	District Judge
Glenda Harrison (Zoom)	Executive Director, Access to Justice
Erica Hargis (Zoom)	Director of Division of Probation and Parole
Jim Henderson	Executive Director/CEO of Kentucky Association of Counties
Hon. Tanisha A. Hickerson	District Court Judge
Hon. Yvette Hourigan (Zoom)	Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program, Kentucky Bar Association
Van Ingram	Executive Director of Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
Dr. Lindsey Jasinski	Chief Administrative Officer, Eastern State Hospital, University of Kentucky

Hon. Lisa Jones	Judge, Kentucky Court of Appeals
Hon. Debra Hembree Lambert	Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. William Leach	District Court Judge
Lisa Lee (Zoom)	Commissioner of Department of Medicaid Services
Amy Luttrell	CEO, Goodwill
Hon. Cole Adams Maier	Circuit Court Judge
Katie Marks	Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Hon. Melissa Murphy	District Court Judge
Hon. Rebecca Phillips (Zoom)	Chief Circuit Judge
Hon. Damon Preston	Department of Public Advocacy
Hon. Zach Ramsey	Director, Administrative office of the Courts
Brenda Rosen	CSW, Executive Director of National Association of Social Workers Kentucky
Dr. Koleen Slusher	LCSW, Director of Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center
Tom B. Stephens (Zoom)	President and CEO of Kentucky Association of Health Plans
Diane Thompson	Nelson County Circuit Court Clerk
Hon. John Lindsay Tackett	District Judge
Hon. Stacy Tapke (Zoom)	Past President of the County Attorney's Association
Hon. Larry Thompson	Kentucky Court of Appeals
Hon. Jordan Dallas Turner (Zoom)	Boone County Attorney, Kentucky County Attorneys Association
Hon. Marcus Vanover (Zoom)	Family Court
Whitney Westerfield (Zoom)	Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, LifeSkills, Inc.
Randy White (Zoom)	Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice
Ryan Bowman (Zoom)	Delegate — Ashli Watts
Courtney Maynard	Delegate — Tom Vicini
Silas Session	Delegate—Whitney P. Allen, Jr.
Martha Mather	Delegate— Randy White
Dr. David Susman (Zoom)	Delegate- Katie Marks
Christina Weeter	Delegate—Kelly Foster
David Trimble (Zoom)	Delegate — Phillip Burnette, Jr.

Agenda

- I. Registration and Lunch**
- II. Welcome and Commission Updates**
- III. Department of Public Advocacy: Alternative Sentencing Worker Program**
- IV. Committee and Workgroup Updates**
- V. Closing Remarks**
- VI. Adjourn**

Welcome and Commission Updates

Honorable Robert B. Conley, Deputy Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court, welcomed commission members and thanked them for their presence. He referenced the commission materials, which included a copy of the agenda and the meeting minutes from the December Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health (KJCMH) Quarterly meeting.

Deputy Chief Justice Conley acknowledged a new Supreme Court Order, signed into effect on January 17th by Chief Justice Lambert, which updates the commission's membership. The new members include District Court Judge Tyler Green from Floyd County and Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Director Zach Ramsey. He also recognized Jennifer VanOrt-Hazard's departure from the commission, expressing gratitude for her service. Jennifer extended her appreciation for the opportunity to serve, and Deputy Chief Justice Conley wished her the best in her next chapter. Additionally, he welcomed Heather Vice as the commission's new behavioral health liaison.

Reports were provided on the commission's community mapping efforts. The meeting materials included updates on community mapping in Warren and Madison counties. The next scheduled mapping events will take place in Crittenden, Union, Webster, Bullitt, and Lincoln counties. At the end of this month, AOC will host a second facilitators' training, adding twelve additional facilitators to expand system mapping efforts for judges and their communities.

Deputy Chief Justice Conley also provided updates on the commission's legislative recommendation, Senate Bill (SB) 26. A one-page overview outlining the details of the bill was included in the meeting materials. He expressed appreciation for Crystal Adams and Judge Vanover for their leadership and guidance throughout the process. He also extended gratitude to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Department of Behavioral Health, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for their support. Lastly, Justice Conley recognized Maria Macaluso, the commission's staff attorney, for her contributions to this effort.

Deputy Chief Justice Conley also announced the commission's new collaborative initiative with the Department of Behavioral Health. As part of this effort, the commission will host 202A Virtual Forums, which aim to improve services for Kentucky citizens through the involuntary commitment process. These forums will complement the ongoing work of the Commitment Workgroup, led by Stacy Tapke. All recommendations and opportunities for improvement identified in the forums will be directed back to the workgroup for implementation and system-wide change.

Deputy Chief Justice Conley then introduced today's presenters from the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, who shared insights on the Alternative Sentencing Worker (ASW) Program.

Department of Public Advocacy: Alternative Sentencing Worker Program

Damon Preston, the Public Advocate for the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, presented alongside Dawn Gasser, the Alternative Sentencing Program Supervisor. Damon Preston began with the history of the ASW program, which was introduced in Kentucky in 2006. Since then, the program has received numerous awards for its innovation. He explained that the ASW program functions as an agent of the defense attorney, working to provide sentencing alternatives for eligible clients.

Dawn Gasser provided an overview of the ASW's role and its collaboration with various agencies. She also outlined the ASW case priorities, which include, but are not limited to, felony probation cases, specialty court revocations, juvenile disposition hearings, and 202A cases. Additionally, she highlighted key barriers and gaps in the system. She also shared several success stories demonstrating the program's impact.

Damon Preston then addressed recent legislative challenges, noting that a bill introduced in the last legislative session aimed to defund the program. While the ASW program ultimately remained funded, he acknowledged ongoing opposition and concerns that similar challenges may arise in the next budget cycle. He encouraged continued support for the program.

Following the presentation, the presenters opened the floor for questions. Judge Maier inquired about expanding the program's resources to others. Preston emphasized that every client should have access to the same resources and that efforts should be made to ensure equitable support.

Deputy Chief Justice Conley then referenced the quarterly reports, which were included in the meeting materials. He welcomed Amy Luttrell as the new chair of the Treatment and Access Committee. Amy Luttrell, who serves as the president and CEO of Goodwill Industries

of Kentucky, stepped into the role following the tragic passing of Judge Kevin Mullins. Justice Conley recognized her willingness to take on this responsibility and commended her engagement with the committee's work. He then directed attention to the updated commission structure, included in the meeting materials, and turned the discussion over to the committee chairs.

Committee and Workgroup Updates

I. Treatment and Access Committee

Amy Luttrell provided an update on the Treatment and Access Committee. She highlighted the ongoing efforts of the workgroups, which are actively expanding their work plans and advancing key action items. Amy also acknowledged Wes Butler, who has been the lead of the Strengthening Communities Workgroup and remains committed to the commission but will be stepping down from his leadership role due to work obligations. Dr. Lindsey Jasinski will be stepping into the role as the new workgroup lead.

A. Crystal Adams, Director of the Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, provided an update on the Intellectual and Developmental Disability Workgroup. She reported that the workgroup has convened twice this quarter, receiving an update on SB 26 and a presentation from Professor Robyn Powell, a national expert on parents and caregivers with disabilities.

The workgroup has been focusing on developing its work plan and expanding data collection efforts to better understand the experiences of individuals with disabilities in the justice system. They are also exploring self-identification models, as Kentucky currently lacks a statewide approach. Given the positive feedback on existing self-identification models, the workgroup aims to expand these efforts.

Additionally, the workgroup has been working on specialized training initiatives. Two autism-focused training sessions are currently under approval and are expected to be scheduled in the coming months. Crystal Adams expressed pride in these efforts, noting that these will be the first court-specific trainings on autism in Kentucky.

B. Judge Stephanie Burke, 30th Judicial District, attended virtually via Zoom, and Amy Luttrell provided an update on behalf of the Court Responses Workgroup. She noted that the workgroup recently received a presentation from the Department of Transportation's Medical Review Board regarding the process for driver's license reinstatement for individuals deemed incompetent to stand trial. The workgroup has also been tracking the progress of Louisville's pilot jail-based restoration program

and looks forward to receiving further updates. Additionally, the group remains interested in expanding mental health court initiatives. Amy referred attendees to the meeting materials for further details.

C. Amy Luttrell provided an update on the Strengthening Communities Workgroup and directed attendees to the meeting materials for further details.

II. Civil and Family Justice Committee

Judge J. Foster Cotthoff, 3rd Judicial District, and Chris Griffith, President of the Kentucky Mental Health Counselors Association, were unable to attend. Brenda Rosen provided the update for the Civil and Family Justice Committee on their behalf. She noted that the committee recently received a presentation from Tami Blevins, Executive Director of the Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children, on Peer Support Services. Additionally, she highlighted the continued effort on advancing workgroup priorities.

A. Judge Denise Brown, 30th Judicial Circuit, was unable to attend, and Brenda Rosen reported on behalf of the Domestic Violence Workgroup. She referred attendees to the meeting materials for additional details.

B. Judge Marcus Vanover, 28th Judicial Circuit, provided updates via Zoom. He reported progress on the Relations Matter Part 2 training series. The workgroup is also finalizing a bench card and resource guide outlining best practices for understanding the role of treatment providers. Another key initiative is the court-appointed counsel training, which will consist of three in-person training sessions in Hopkinsville, Frankfort, and London, Kentucky. To guide future priorities, the workgroup has distributed a survey to its members to identify key focus areas for the next meeting. Additionally, upcoming discussions will include legislative recommendations for the 2026 session.

C. Stacy Tapke, Kenton County Attorney, provided updates via Zoom. She noted that the workgroup has adjusted its schedule to meet every other month. Recent discussions have centered on potential conflicts of interest involving service providers under waivers applying to become guardians for individuals they serve. The workgroup is also focused on enhancing education and training on the guardianship process, including resources for Guardian Ad Litem (GALs). They are exploring collaborations with the Prosecutor Advisory Council to develop trainings for GALs. Additionally, they have distributed a 2026 legislative survey to identify additional areas for potential reform in the next legislative session.

The Commitment Workgroup recently received a presentation on the 1915(i) plan and plans to invite presenters back for updates. Members are also exploring potential AOC form changes and have identified inconsistencies in medical clearance definitions across the state. Future meetings will focus on reviewing the 202A process to address these discrepancies.

III. Criminal Justice Committee

Judge Cole Adams Maier, 25th Judicial District, provided an update on the Criminal Justice Committee and expressed her gratitude to the workgroups for their continued efforts. She acknowledged Judge Tackett's commitment as vice chair of the committee and praised the exceptional leadership of the workgroup leads. Judge Maier also recognized the commission's community mapping in Madison, noting the positive feedback received from these events. She encouraged attendees to review the invitations and share them with colleagues to ensure broader participation.

A. Dr. Koleen Slusher, Director of the Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center (KCPC), provided an update on the Competency Workgroup, which continues to meet monthly. Dr. Slusher reported that the workgroup is very close to finalizing the AOC forms related to Seth's Law and competency hearings. As a result of Seth's Law, outpatient evaluations are now being conducted within four weeks across the system, significantly expediting the process. Dr. Slusher also shared that she presented to the Court Responses Workgroup on the Louisville Metro Department of Jail-Based Competency Restoration Program, highlighting the program's continued care efforts. The next Competency Workgroup meeting will also include a presentation on this program. Dr. Slusher reported that the KCPC waitlist for beds is at its lowest in history. She also provided an update on the monthly KCPC meetings. Lastly, the workgroup reviewed competency-related resources from the Council of State Governments (CSG) and determined that further refinement is necessary before publication.

B. Steve Shannon, Executive Director of KARP, Inc., was unable to attend to report out on the Prearrest and Diversion Workgroup. Judge Maier provided the workgroup update on his behalf. Judge Maier shared how the workgroup is in the process of finalizing the police social worker white paper. The primary focus is completing the statewide jail survey, which maps out the types of jails and the available services within them. Judge Maier also referenced the workgroup's quarterly report in the meeting materials for additional information.

C. Judge Lisa Jones, 1st Appellate District, Division 2, Kentucky Court of Appeals, provided the Juvenile Justice Workgroup update. She reported on the legislative subgroup's focus on establishing a minimum age of criminal responsibility in Kentucky. The subgroup received a presentation from forensic clinical psychologist Dr. Kavanaugh on adolescent brain development, which informed their legislative recommendations. The mapping subgroup also received a presentation from the University of Connecticut's Innovations Institute on mobile response and stabilization services. Discussions centered around expanding Kentucky's crisis services through collaboration with existing programs. Judge Jones shared that the next steps for this workgroup include refining their legislative recommendations based on expert input, gathering compelling narratives for legislative advocacy, and further evaluating the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

D. Erica Hargis, Director of the Division of Probation and Parole at the Department of Corrections, provided the update for the Reentry Workgroup via Zoom. Erica invited everyone to join this new workgroup, which is one of the latest workgroups to be established within the Commission. She reported that the workgroup recently heard a presentation from Seven Counties Services. The group is particularly interested in collaborating with the Prearrest and Diversion Workgroup based on the jail survey to inform reentry responses. One tangible outcome is that the "Find Help Now" resource is now available on public library computers statewide.

Judge Maier encouraged everyone to connect with the workgroups to increase involvement and collaboration.

Closing Remarks

Deputy Justice Conley expressed gratitude to all chairs and members, acknowledging the significant contributions across the workgroups. Before adjourning, Justice Conley invited any commission members to share updates or comments.

Silas Session, Executive Director of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA), shared that KDVA offers a free app for veterans and service members, providing 24/7 access to credentialed mental health providers. The app also includes regional assistance in Kentucky, including the "Find Help Now" feature. He also shared how the Kentucky Bar Association (KBA) Governors' Challenge secured a \$300K grant for suicide prevention review. Dr. Fry from the University of Louisville is collaborating on a legal means training in September and invited the commission to participate. Additionally, KBA has acquired a job

fair platform for the state, with an event scheduled for April 16th, where state departments can participate.

Katie Marks, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities, expressed gratitude for the 202A Virtual Forums and praised the work of the Commission and the ASW Program. She also shared updates from the Intellectual and Developmental Disability 2024 report and highlighted key takeaways from this report.

Cortney Maynard, Education Director of Operation UNITE, reported on the expansion of opioid abatement funds to new counties. She mentioned five upcoming launch luncheons in various counties and provided their dates.

Jaden Norris introduced herself as the new Executive Director of NAMI Kentucky.

Chief Judge Larry Thompson thanked everyone for their attendance and the presentations.

Justice Conley reiterated the commission's continued efforts to promote statewide work at the local level through community mapping. He encouraged members to keep an eye on their emails for details regarding the planning of the 202A virtual forums. Justice Conley also thanked Dr. Cooley, Dr. Jasinski, and Dr. Woods for organizing a second tour of Eastern State Hospital and the EmPATH program earlier this week. An invitation was extended to all commission members for the Appalachian Valley Autism Center tour on April 9th, 2025, in recognition of Autism Awareness Month.

Lastly, Justice Conley referenced two press releases included in the meeting materials for commission members to review.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 13th, 2025, at AOC. Justice Conley expressed appreciation for the members' participation, attendance, and ongoing support of the Commission.

Contact information: JCMH@kycourts.net.

Webpage: [Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health – Kentucky Court of Justice \(kycourts.gov\)](https://kycourts.gov)

The commission adjourned at 3:00 PM ET.

Additional Information

Noncommission Members and Public in attendance:

Name	Organization
Jayden Norris	NAMI Kentucky
Dawn Gasser	Department of Public Advocacy
Abbie Martin	NASW-KY

Terra Harper	Department of Public Advocacy
Lily Patteson	Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs
Graydon McGrannahan	University of Kentucky
KJCMH Support Staff in attendance:	
Name	Department
Jason McGinnis	Deputy Director
Jacindia Rowe	Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. Robert Michael Pack	Pretrial Services
Shawna Mitchell	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Hon. Maria Macaluso	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Jim Hoffman	Communications
Jason Dufek	Pretrial Services
Rebecca Hisel	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Elizabeth Nichols	Specialty Courts
Audrey Collins	Specialty Courts
Ashley Clark	Family and Juvenile Services
Billy Ousley	Specialty Courts
Nadalie Hardwick	Family and Juvenile Services
Tina Morrow	Office of Statewide Programs
Ian Shepherd	Office of Statewide Programs
Eboni Blackford	Division of Family Services
Melana Gross	Pretrial Services
Nadalie Hardwick	Division of Juvenile Services
Josh Ochala (Zoom)	Audio Video Manager