

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES  
CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

CCJ Resolution 22  
COSCA Resolution 4

In Support of Problem-Solving Courts

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators appointed a Joint Task Force to consider the policy and administrative implications of the courts and special calendars that utilize the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence and to advance strategies, policies and recommendations on the future of these courts; and

WHEREAS, these courts and special calendars have been referred to by various names, including problem-solving, accountability, behavior justice, therapeutic, problem oriented, collaborative justice, outcome oriented and constructive intervention courts; and

WHEREAS, the finding of the Joint Task Force include the following:

- The public and other branches of government are looking to courts to address certain complex social issues and problems, such as recidivism, that they feel are not most effectively addressed by the traditional legal process;
- A set of procedures and processes are required to address these issues and problems that are distinct from traditional civil and criminal adjudication;
- A focus on remedies is required to address these issues and problems in addition to the determination of fact and issues of law;
- The unique nature of the procedures and processes encourages the establishment of dedicated court calendars;
- There has been a rapid proliferation of drug courts and calendars throughout most of the various states;
- There is now evidence of broad community and political support and increasing state and local government funding for these initiatives;
- There are principles and methods grounded in therapeutic jurisprudence, including integration of treatment services with judicial case processing, ongoing judicial intervention, close monitoring of and immediate response to behavior, multidisciplinary involvement, and collaboration with community-based and government organizations. These principles and methods are now being employed in these newly arising courts and calendars, and they advance the application of the trial court performance standards and the public trust and confidence initiative; and
- Well-functioning drug courts represent the best practice of these principles and methods;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators hereby agree to:

1. Call these new courts and calendars “Problem-Solving Courts,” recognizing that courts have always been involved in attempting to resolve disputes and problems in society, but understanding that the collaborative nature of these new efforts deserves recognition.
2. Take steps, nationally and locally, to expand the principles and methods of well-functioning drug courts into ongoing court operations.
3. Advance the careful study and evaluation of the principles and methods employed in problem-solving courts and their application to other significant issues facing state courts.
4. Encourage, where appropriate, the broad integration over the next decade of the principles and methods employed in the problem-solving courts into the administration of justice to improve court processes and outcomes while preserving the rule of law, enhancing judicial effectiveness, and meeting the needs and expectations of litigants, victims and the community.
5. Support national and local education and training on the principles and methods employed in problem-solving courts and on collaboration with other community and government agencies and organizations.
6. Advocate for the resources necessary to advance and apply the principles and methods of problem-solving courts in the general court systems of the various states.
7. Establish a National Agenda consistent with this resolution that includes the following actions;
  - a. Request that the CCJ/COSCA Government Affairs Committee work with the Department of Health and Human Services to direct treatment funds to the state courts.
  - b. Request that the National Center for State Courts initiate with other organizations and associations a collaborative process to develop principles and methods for other types of courts and calendars similar to the *10 Key Drug Court Components*, published by the Drug Courts Program Office, which define effective drug courts.
  - c. Encourage the National Center for State Courts Best Practices Institute to examine the principles and methods of these problem-solving courts.
  - d. Convene a national conference or regional conferences to educate the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators and, if appropriate, other policy leaders on the issues raised by the growing problem-solving court movement.
  - e. Continue a Task Force to oversee and advise on the implementation of this resolution, suggest action steps, and model the collaborative process by including other associations and interested groups.

*Adopted as Proposed by the Task Force on Therapeutic Justice of the Conference of Chief Justices in Rapid City, South Dakota at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting on August 3, 2000.*