



*Strategic Goal 2: ADMINISTERING JUSTICE FOR EFFECTIVE RESULTS*

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**Priority 2A: Integrate a judicial problem-solving approach into court operations for cases involving alcohol and other drug (AOD) addicted offenders**

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**ISSUE**

Persons who suffer from alcohol and other drug (AOD) addiction present a pervasive and growing challenge for Minnesota’s judicial branch, and, in particular, its criminal courts. AOD addiction is a factor in 80% of Minnesota’s criminal cases, but the impact of AOD problems is not confined to any one case type -- it is a pervasive problem in juvenile delinquency, child protection, family, and mental health cases, as well.

Methamphetamine production and use has grown at an alarming rate, adding urgency to the need to address the problem. The financial costs to the state are substantial and rising.

In recent years, alternative and demonstrably more effective judicial strategies for dealing with AOD-addicted persons, and particularly criminal offenders, have evolved both in Minnesota and other states. Known as “problem solving approaches,” these strategies use the coercive power of the court, in collaboration with prosecution, defense, probation, and treatment providers, to closely monitor the defendant’s progress toward sobriety and recovery through ongoing treatment, frequent drug testing, regular court check-in appearances, and use of a range of immediate sanctions and incentives to foster behavioral change. This priority calls for a broad and fundamental shift in how

Minnesota’s courts deal with AOD-addicted offenders.

The benefits of using judicial problem solving approaches include reduced AOD use, lower recidivism and incarceration rates, and reduced costs to the criminal justice system

**OBJECTIVE**

Administer justice in cases involving AOD-addicted offenders in ways that enhance their chances for long-term sobriety and recovery.

**APPROACH**

- Provide education on the philosophy of problem-solving courts
- Proactively collaborate with criminal and juvenile justice system partners to institute new problem-solving approaches for cases involving AOD-addicted offenders
- Provide leadership to ensure sustainability of problem-solving courts by courts and justice partners
- Establish a comprehensive multi-phased plan to make problem-solving approaches available throughout the state
- Evaluate effectiveness