



Judicial Council Minutes

April 17, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Room 230, MN Judicial Center and via Zoom

The Judicial Council met on Thursday April 17, 2025, in St. Paul, Minnesota and via Zoom. Fifth Judicial District Assistant Chief Judge Christine Long attended the meeting for Chief Judge Bueltel.

1. Decision Item: Approval of Draft March 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft March 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes, as submitted. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the March 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes, as submitted.

2. Decision Item: Judicial Council Policy 903, Treatment Court Key Results and Measures

Liz Willey, Treatment Court Research & Evaluation Specialist, Strategy, Performance, & Projects Office, State Court Administration, and Cecilia Bliss, State Treatment Court Coordinator, State Court Administration, returned for a decision on Judicial Council Policy 903, Treatment Court Key Results and Measures.

Following the March Council discussion, a suggestion was made to amend the policy to require a comparison study every five years between treatment courts and non-treatment courts. It was noted that the purpose of the policy is to define performance measures, not direct specific research projects. It was also noted that a comparison study requires significant resources. A suggestion was made to bring the topic back to the Treatment Court Initiative (TCI) for feedback and consider a comparison study as part of the branch operational plan.

A discussion ensued around the proposed performance measures. Concerns were expressed about adopting performance measures before approving the statewide treatment court strategic plan. Additional concerns were expressed about the graduation rate performance measure and that the performance measures could be misinterpreted by

the legislature and could negatively impact future funding. It was noted that the performance measures align with national standards, were approved by district courts and treatment court coordinators, and provide a baseline to measure treatment court performance and adherence to best practices. There was general agreement on the importance of establishing performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment courts.

A motion was made and seconded to table approval of Policy 903, Treatment Court Key Results and Measures until a later date in order to address broader questions and gather additional feedback on the proposed comparison study. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council tabled approval of Policy 903, Treatment Court Key Results and Measures until a later date in order to address broader questions and gather additional feedback on the proposed comparison study.

3. Discussion Item: Judicial Council Policy 513, Court Interpreter Program

Rosie Sanchez, Court Interpreter Program Coordinator, State Court Administration, and Karen Jaszewski, Legal Counsel Division, State Court Administration presented proposed revisions to Judicial Council Policy 513, Court Interpreter Program. The policy was revisited to address ongoing challenges in the Court Interpreter Program including a limited number of interpreter resources, a significant increase in interpreter requests, and a strong preference among interpreters for remote work. The proposed revisions allow the Court Interpreter Program to maximize the utilization of limited interpreter resources, promote fiscal responsibility, and ensure equitable scheduling practices across the state.

A discussion ensued. It was agreed that subject matter experts and judicial officers would meet before the next Judicial Council meeting to discuss potential amendments to the policy regarding judicial officer requests for in-person interpreters and the 15-minute interpreting time limit.

The topic will return for a decision at the May Judicial Council meeting.

4. Discussion Item: Guardianship Audit

Jamie Majerus, Branch Audit Manager, State Court Administration, and Paul Regan, Legal Counsel Division, State Court Administration, provided an overview of the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) audit report on the Guardianship of Adults. The audit identified several areas of needed improvements and included a number of recommendations directed to both the judicial branch and legislative branch. The branch agreed with many of the recommendations and has either resolved them or is in the process of resolving them. The OLA is expected to follow up with the branch in November or December of this year and will submit an updated report to the legislature on the branch's progress.

5. Discussion Item: Preparing for FY28-29 (Access and Service Delivery 3)

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, and Katie Schurrer, Director, Strategy, Performance, and Projects Office, State Court Administration, provided an overview and history of previous Access and Service Delivery (ASD) Committees, reviewed past ASD recommendations and accomplishments, and presented a proposal for the creation of a new ASD Committee.

The proposed charge for the new committee includes developing options for restructuring delivery systems, redesigning business processes, expanding the use of technology, and prioritizing functions to provide appropriate levels of access and services statewide to be prepared for a potential budget reduction starting in July 2027 (FY28). The committee will identify short-term priorities to be implemented by July 2027 and longer-term priorities that will be implemented after.

The committee is scheduled to meet from May through October 2025 and will provide a report and recommendations to Judicial Council in November 2025. The Council will decide on short-term implementation options at the December 2025 meeting, with an initial progress report and discussion of long-term priorities scheduled for February 2026.

Proposed committee members include:

- Judge David Knutson (chair), First Judicial District
- Judge Richard Kyle, Second Judicial District and MDJA Vice President
- Chief Judge Sara Grewing, Second Judicial District
- District Administrator Shelley Ellefson, Third Judicial District
- Chief Judge Kerry Meyer, Fourth Judicial District
- District Administrator Mike Kelly, Fifth Judicial District
- Chief Judge Leslie Beiers, Sixth Judicial District
- Judge Michelle Lawson, Seventh Judicial District
- District Administrator Deb Mueske, Eighth Judicial District
- Chief Judge Jana Austad, Ninth Judicial District
- Chief Judge Elizabeth Strand, Tenth Judicial District
- Chief Judge Jennifer Frisch, Court of Appeals
- Justice Paul Thissen, Supreme Court
- Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator

A motion was made and seconded to accept the charge for the new ASD Committee. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council accepted the charge for the new ASD Committee.

6. Discussion Item: Increase Spot and Achievement Award Expenditure Limit

Dan Ostdiek, Director, Finance Division, State Court Administration, requested that the Judicial Council increase the Spot and Achievement Award expenditure limit from

\$500,000 to \$750,000 in FY2025. A suggestion was made to expand eligibility for the award to include law clerks. It was noted that expanding eligibility would require changes to a State Court Administrator policy, which would need review by JAD.

A motion was made and seconded to increase the Spot and Achievement Award expenditure limit to \$750,000 in FY 2025 and direct JAD to look at expanding the eligibility for law clerks. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council increased the Spot and Achievement Award expenditure limit to \$750,000 in FY2025 and directed JAD to look at expanding the eligibility for law clerks.

7. Other Business

a. Legislative Update

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, provided a Legislative Update.

b. 30th Anniversary of Judicial Center on May 7th

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, reminded Council members of the upcoming celebration marking the 30th anniversary of the Minnesota Judicial Center, taking place on May 7, 2025.

c. Special Topic on the Anniversary of Judicial Council

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, shared that a special topic will be held in fall 2025 to recognize the anniversary of the Judicial Council. The special topic will offer an opportunity to reflect on the Council's work, hear from past and current members, and discuss the impact and value of the Judicial Council.

8. Executive Session

A motion was made and seconded to go into Executive Session. The motion prevailed.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to exit Executive Session. The motion prevailed.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.