



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board  
General Membership Minutes for Monday, December 15, 2025**

**Welcome & Introductions:**

Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM. All in attendance made customary introductions.

**Membership & Infrastructure:**

Commissioner Garcia announced and read the nomination for Juvenile Committee Chair. Michael O'Brien (Chief of the Juvenile Division, Dallas County District Attorney's Office) was nominated to serve as Chair of the Juvenile Committee. Commissioner Garcia summarized Mr. O'Brien's professional background and qualifications, including his tenure in the DA's Office and specialization in juvenile law. A motion to appoint Mr. O'Brien as Chair was made and seconded. With no discussion or objections, the appointment was approved unanimously, and Mr. O'Brien was confirmed as CJAB's Juvenile Committee Chair.

**Meeting Minutes:**

The CJAB General Membership minutes from September 22, 2025 were distributed in advance. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Christina Melton-Crain and seconded by Ms. LaShonda Jefferson. With no questions, edits, or objections, the motion carried unanimously.

**Presentation:**

**Dallas County District Attorney's Office – Human Trafficking Division**

Commissioner Garcia introduced the agenda item for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office Human Trafficking Division. Ms. Ellyce Lindberg provided an introduction of Soni Lewis, noting her prosecutorial experience and current role as Chief of the Human Trafficking Division.

Ms. Lewis provided an overview of the Human Trafficking Division, explaining that the division prosecutes traffickers of both children and adults, and also handles solicitation cases and promotion/aggravated promotion of prostitution cases. She stated the division currently consists of one dedicated prosecutor (herself), supported by an investigator and an advocate, and she emphasized the division's need for additional personnel and sustainable funding to meet workload demands. Ms. Lewis noted the unit is funded through an Attorney General grant

and is required to submit quarterly and annual data regarding case outcomes, including indictments and dispositions.

Ms. Lewis explained that the division's goal is to remain involved from pre-indictment through final disposition, including collaboration with law enforcement during investigations, advising on evidence development, supporting operations when appropriate, assisting with victim services coordination, and handling bond hearings. She stated that a primary challenge in trafficking prosecutions is victim instability, including victims who are unavailable or reluctant to participate through the duration of a case. As a result, the division emphasizes collecting corroborating evidence early (e.g., cell phone records, hotel records, vehicle evidence, and other documentation) to strengthen cases even when victim testimony is limited.

Ms. Lewis described coordination across divisions for case processing, explaining that cases involving minors are routed through the Child Abuse/Sex Assault divisions and adult cases are supported through the Sex Assault division, with prosecutors assisting in moving trafficking-related cases through the courts. She noted that trafficking cases are complex and resource-intensive and require significant time from prosecutors, investigators, advocates, and detectives to locate victims, support victims, and build trial-ready cases.

Ms. Lewis reported the division tried three human trafficking cases in the prior year, resulting in convictions in all three cases, each with sentences exceeding 18 years. She provided an example illustrating "familial trafficking," noting that trafficking can involve family members or caretakers. Ms. Lewis emphasized the division anticipates increased trafficking-related activity in Dallas County in connection with the 2026 World Cup and stated the office is seeking to expand staffing and resources ahead of that period.

During discussion, members asked about dispositions and program coordination. Ms. Lewis reported the unit had handled over 100 plea dispositions and noted a significant queue of solicitation cases awaiting indictment. Stakeholders discussed the STOP program, clarifying that solicitation defendants are generally required to complete STOP as part of probation conditions, and the program is expanding capacity and evaluating outcomes, including a planned recidivism study.

Members also discussed education and awareness efforts tied to trafficking prevention, including collaboration with community partners and businesses (including hotels), training initiatives supported through the Attorney General's resources, and strategies to help the public recognize trafficking indicators. Ms. Lewis noted trafficking often involves grooming through social media and emphasized the importance of parental awareness, technology monitoring, and education to better identify risk factors. Members discussed the value of receiving information from community programs and providers when trafficking concerns arise and emphasized that timely reporting and coordination can support investigations and victim assistance.

## **Committee Project Updates:**

### **Criminal Justice Administration & Jail Population Management**

Ms. LaShonda Jefferson provided the committee update and noted the December committee meeting was canceled; however, she referenced the current CJAB packet materials (pages 11–19) and highlighted the new reporting tables on page 11, which identify the top arresting agencies and related offense trends. Ms. Jefferson reported the November 2025 average daily jail population was 6,960 and the 2025 year-to-date average was approximately 6,836. She reported the jail population on the meeting date was 6,905, representing roughly 92% of total maximum capacity and reflecting a downward seasonal trend often seen in the fourth quarter. Ms. Jefferson reported that for the month to date, releases exceeded bookings, resulting in a net reduction.

Ms. Jefferson noted emerging population and operational trends, including a continued increase in the female population (reported as approximately 22% of bookings compared to prior averages nearer 20%) and an increase in individuals with suspected behavioral health needs (reported at approximately 53% compared to a typical baseline near 50%). She reported that the prior day reflected approximately 1,055 women in custody (approximately 15% of the jail population) with an average length of stay of approximately 99 days, creating management challenges related to housing classification and compliance with jail standards requiring separation of certain populations.

Ms. Jefferson described ongoing efforts by the Jail Population Management team, including regular review of women in custody, requests for court settings, case filing status updates, competency updates, and addressing holds that prevent release. She also reported that the average jail length-of-stay metric remains a system focus, and she referenced estimated cost impacts associated with reducing detention time following jail population inquiries. Ms. Jefferson reported that the team reviewed a high volume of individuals during the month, with a portion requiring action and inquiry notifications to justice system partners. She noted continued responsiveness to ad hoc data requests and collaboration with the Commissioner's Office and County partners related to booking, immigration, and budget-related data. Ms. Jefferson reported that two temporary employees began on December 1 and were in training and noted the department continued efforts to fill a vacant jail population coordinator position. The next committee meeting was scheduled for Friday, January 16, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Fair Defense**

Ms. Christina Dean from the Public Defender's Office reported the office completed a reorganization and established its top management structure. The office reported ongoing work to develop a collaborative juvenile workgroup involving partners such as the DA's Office, Dallas ISD, Dallas ISD Police, Café

Momentum, and additional community partners, with the intent to generate new diversion ideas and strengthen early intervention options.

The office reported continued efforts to engage in homelessness-related collaboration, including coordination with local homeless response partners, and expressed interest in adapting outreach models used in other jurisdictions. Ms. Dean also reported continued work related to the Miami Model, including ongoing discussions with Miami partners, and stated that legislative changes remain a key prerequisite to expanding diversion at early intercept points. Ms. Dean also noted continued professional development efforts through state and national defense leadership training programs.

### **Justice of the Peace**

Judge Valencia Nash provided an update and reported ongoing operational challenges related to the Odyssey case management system, including outages and connectivity issues. Judge Nash reported that outages continued to be documented and communicated to the technology team and noted efforts to improve reporting accuracy, including addressing past conversion issues affecting data submissions and OCA reporting. Judge Nash noted that updates and communications from technology staff have improved and that outage duration has been shorter than in prior instances.

### **Law Enforcement and Jurisprudence**

Ms. Ellyce Lindberg provided an update indicating that cross-system learning efforts related to the Miami Model and deflection strategies continue. Judge Kim Nesbit reported that deflection models observed elsewhere consistently begin with law enforcement engagement at the earliest point of contact and require appropriate laws, facilities, and community-based response options to serve as alternatives to arrest and jail. Additional discussion highlighted the importance of including Justice of the Peace courts and constable offices in mental health deflection planning, given their role in mental health detention warrants and related processes. Judge Nash highlighted the importance of reducing siloed efforts and improving coordination across county systems to ensure shared goals and efficiency.

### **Pretrial Services**

Mr. Jeff Segura reported Pretrial Services continued day-to-day operations and was conducting minor restructuring intended to improve operational efficiency. He reported continued engagement with district judges to explore expanded use of pretrial release and supervision options and stated the program continues to identify opportunities for release at magistration, including releases occurring during weekends and other nontraditional windows. Mr. Segura also noted interest in continued collaboration with community partners to expand safe release opportunities.

## **Reentry**

Ms. Christina Crain provided the Reentry update and reported ongoing work on the Focused Deterrence initiative in partnership with law enforcement, emphasizing engagement with individuals assessed as high risk for violence and connection to supportive services to reduce future harm. She reported continued employer outreach and stated multiple potential employer partners were being developed to support job placement opportunities. Ms. Crain also reported continued peer mentoring services, including weekly availability of a peer mentor providing lived-experience counseling and support to interested clients. In addition, she reported a developing partnership with UT Southwestern focused on HIV/AIDS prevention education, including outreach related to risk behaviors such as unprotected sexual activity, tattooing, and needle sharing. She noted that health coaches are available weekly and, when eligible, clients may be connected to preventive health resources, including PrEP.

## **Program Update:**

### **Austin Street Transition Center**

Commissioner Garcia introduced Daniel Roby, CEO of Austin Street Center, and noted the program update would focus on the Transition Center and its role in expanding alternatives to incarceration and enhancing coordinated service response.

Mr. Roby provided an overview of Austin Street Center operations, describing the shelter as one of Dallas' largest single-site emergency shelters and a service hub offering extensive programming and partner-based services. He noted the campus provides access to numerous weekly activities and service partners supporting medical care, mental health services, recovery support, benefits navigation, employment services, housing-focused case management, diversion, and transportation resources. Mr. Roby also referenced Austin Street's role in inclement weather shelter operations.

Mr. Roby then presented the Transition Center pilot, describing it as an effort to "break the cycle" between homelessness, crisis response, hospitals, shelters, and the justice system by creating a time-limited stabilization pathway supported through local mental health authority funding. He reported the pilot is currently operating Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with a planned expansion to 24/7 operations by February, pending staffing. He explained the pilot is being implemented initially in partnership with DART Police, including coordination with DART's MDRT team, and described this phased approach as intended to ensure law enforcement drop-offs are efficient and consistent before expanding to additional agencies.

Mr. Roby reported the program offers a service-rich environment focused on stabilization, triage, crisis navigation, and connection to longer-term solutions,

with a typical pathway of approximately 10 days. He described program principles including prioritizing alternatives to jail when appropriate, connecting individuals to the right resources at the right time, and minimizing recidivism by addressing underlying needs through coordinated service engagement.

Mr. Roby shared example outcomes and early impact, including individuals connected to treatment, shelter placement, family reunification, medical care, hotel placement and follow-up assisted living support, and sober living. He also shared early outcome data from DART referrals since opening in mid-October, including service destinations and individuals who absconded, and noted the program's reported success rate based on those outcomes. Stakeholders discussed program eligibility, voluntary participation, criteria for activities of daily living, and benefits navigation supports. Mr. Roby confirmed the program is voluntary and that initial intake is coordinated through law enforcement referral.

Mr. Roby also referenced broader planning connected to the County's support of a related statewide grant application aimed at strengthening long-term collaboration across agencies. He stated the planning timeline includes design work beginning in January, a potential award decision in May, and anticipated implementation thereafter, which would provide additional opportunities for coordinated collaboration.

**Public Comments:**

No public comments were received.

**Announcements:**

Commissioner Garcia announced the next CJAB General Membership meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2026, at the same location and time. Holiday greetings and appreciation were expressed to staff and partners supporting CJAB operations and collaboration.

**Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made, and the meeting was adjourned.