



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, September 22, 2025**

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

Membership & Infrastructure:

There were no changes to membership or infrastructure at this time.

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the June 23, 2025, CJAB General Membership meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Michael Noyes and seconded by Mr. Jeff Segura. The motion carried unanimously with no objections or edits.

Presentations:

Decriminalizing Mental Illness through the Miami Model

Christina Dean, recently appointed in the Dallas County Public Defender's Office, was invited shortly after her appointment to Miami to observe and receive training on the Miami model. She found the training both overwhelming and highly informative, as the approach was new to her, although not entirely unfamiliar in the context of Dallas County. The Miami model is based on the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), a strategic framework designed to divert individuals with behavioral health and substance use needs away from the criminal justice system and into treatment. This model primarily targets individuals charged with lower-level felonies and misdemeanors and identifies six key intercept points where interventions can occur.

Ms. Dean focused her presentation on Intercepts 0 through 3, which she identified as the areas with the greatest potential for impact in Dallas County. Intercept 0 addresses the pre-crisis stage, emphasizing community-based interventions such as mobile crisis teams, peer support, and public education. She noted that the Public Defender's Office can support this stage through training for law enforcement and community partners and by partnering with mobile outreach teams. She highlighted the importance of alternatives to 911, crisis intervention training, and potential legislative measures similar to Florida's Baker and Marchman Acts to allow longer involuntary commitments for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders. While Dallas County

currently focuses on inpatient protective psychiatric care, efforts are underway to explore outpatient models, including Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), although supportive housing remains a gap.

Ms. Dean described examples from other jurisdictions, including Miami's conversion of a former forensic hospital into a diversion center and Los Angeles' collaborative community outreach corps, which provides on-site legal services to unhoused individuals while connecting them to housing, employment, and reentry resources. Tucson's system was cited as a "no wrong door" model offering 24/7 crisis services and facilitating law enforcement drop-offs without turning anyone away.

Intercept 1 involves law enforcement engagement with the goal of deflection rather than arrest. Dean emphasized that public defenders can support first responders by providing training, establishing clear diversion processes, and fostering ongoing collaboration, thereby ensuring diversion is the practical choice over jail. Intercept 2 centers on early legal intervention, where defense attorneys play a critical role in supporting diversion, protecting client confidentiality, and ensuring access to mental health assessments and relevant bond options. Ms. Dean stressed that early diversion reduces the harms of incarceration, preserves continuity of care, and safeguards constitutional rights.

At Intercept 3, where individuals have entered the criminal justice system, public defenders can advocate for diversion programs, jail-based treatment, and alternatives to custody, including securing housing and restoring benefits to stabilize treatment. Dallas County can leverage outpatient models similar to Miami's and seek additional funding to expand housing support. Collaborative engagement with treatment court teams and problem-solving courts is essential to protecting client rights while advancing treatment-focused outcomes.

Ms. Dean concluded by noting that while Dallas County already implements many innovative diversion programs and treatment courts, the greatest opportunity for improvement lies in pre-criminal justice system interventions. She highlighted existing collaborative efforts, such as the diversion program and low-barrier homelessness units, and expressed eagerness for the Public Defender's Office to continue expanding these initiatives. She also supported sending additional personnel to Miami for further training, given the volume and complexity of information presented.

The discussion following Dean's presentation included insights from the District Attorney and other stakeholders. Key points emphasized included the importance of training for all stakeholders, the limitations of current misdemeanor-focused models, the need for systems to handle felony mental health cases, and the potential for legislative changes to support crisis stabilization in Texas. There was broad agreement on the value of learning from existing models, the need for further training and experience, and the importance of collaborative, system-wide approaches to mental health diversion.

Committee Project Updates:

Criminal Justice Administration & Jail Population Management

Ms. Charlene Randolph provided the update on behalf of the Criminal Justice Administration and Jail Population Management Committee. Ms. Randolph reported the Jail Population Management Committee Meeting was held on September 12, 2025 and excerpts of the packet could be found on pages 19 through 26 of the CJAB packet. She reported that the average daily jail population for August 2025 was 6,917, bringing the year-to-date average to 6,769. Today's jail population is 7,154, the jail was operating at 95% total maximum capacity. Thus far in the month of September, 2,469 individuals had been booked into custody while 2,532 were released. Ms. Randolph reported Dallas County is currently experiencing unprecedented jail population levels, this increase is primarily driven by the rise in overall bookings year over year coupled with a slower release rate. During the month of August 2025, Dallas County booked in 5,400 individuals, the highest since August 2019. The Criminal Justice Department's Jail Population Management team continues to take a proactive approach in reviewing individuals in and custody and working tirelessly to bring awareness to the criminal justice partners. So far this year, the team has researched 29,773 individuals, 4,855 of those have been released after a Criminal Justice Department jail population inquiry was sent. Lastly, the new Detention Early Warning Report, also known as the DEWR report, that project is underway with IT, and they are anticipating a completion date of December 31st.

Fair Defense

Representing the Fair Defense Committee, Ms. Christina Dean provided an update on the Dallas County Public Defender's Office. She reported that the office continues to file writs as appropriate and actively monitor jail overstay. Ms. Dean noted that current priorities include analyzing misdemeanor bond data to identify potential disparate outcomes across courts and monitoring the implementation of new bond statutes with the district courts judges to assist with a process for individuals who are unable to post bond under the revised eligibility rules. Additionally, the office is exploring opportunities to expand reentry services for individuals leaving county custody. In coordination with the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C., the team is gathering best practices with the goal of developing more formalized reentry support over the next one to two years.

Justice of the Peace

Judge Valencia Nash was unable to attend, no updates provided.

Law Enforcement and Jurisprudence

Ms. Ellyce Lindberg provided a physical copy of the District Attorney's General Felony Pre-Trial Diversion and Specialty Courts brochure. A virtual version is available on the Dallas County District Attorney's homepage under "Diversion Programs." The brochure also includes QR codes that link to a YouTube video offering an overview of the process for those seeking additional information. The

District Attorney's Office offers a wide range of diversion programs, and the brochure serves as a valuable resource for determining whether an individual may be an appropriate candidate. It is highly informative for the public and particularly helpful to defense attorneys seeking suitable options for their clients.

Pretrial Services

Mr. Jeff Segura of Pretrial Services reported ongoing efforts to assist magistrates and misdemeanor judges in identifying defendants who may be suitable for supervised release, particularly those on the borderline for bond decisions. He noted continued collaboration with CJD, including reviewing cases of individuals who have been detained for extended periods to determine whether they may be appropriate for presentation before a judge. These initiatives aim to provide additional options for safely reducing the jail population, and Mr. Segura expressed optimism that usage will increase as awareness grows. Mr. Segura reported that they are currently monitoring approximately 2,300 individuals. This includes about 1,400 in the alcohol monitoring unit, 525 in electronic monitoring, 235 in the Smart Justice Unit (which handles individuals with mental health issues), and 150 in the general pretrial committee unit.

Reentry

In Ms. Christina Melton-Crain's absence, Ms. Jessica Gamez delivered the Reentry Committee report. Ms. Crain continues to work closely with Shenna Oriabure on the Focused Deterrence initiative and met with Dallas PD to discuss serving individuals coming through that program. Ms. Crain is looking to bring on additional law enforcement agencies to the program. Furthermore, she is partnering with Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas on a new upskilling and job-readiness initiative focused on individuals residing at the Volunteers of America (VOA) federal halfway house. In support of broader reentry efforts, Ms. Crain is also continuing to educate and onboard additional employers to promote second chance hiring opportunities, with more than 150 employer partners engaged to date.

Research:

Dr. Michael Noyes did not have a formal report to present; however, he informed the group of ongoing research that will involve and impact the Dallas County Jail. He stated that he would coordinate with Ms. Jessica Gamez to schedule a future presentation on the research initiative. Dr. Noyes also expressed his gratitude to the group for their support during his health challenges in the spring and conveyed his sincere appreciation for their care and concern.

Program Update:

Juvenile Program Update

DA John Creuzot, Michael O'Brien, and Judge Herrera, provided an overview of ongoing improvements in the juvenile justice system. They explained that an internal review conducted several years ago revealed significant delays in case dispositions and practices that differed from both state and national standards. Many youths were repeatedly referred to the system without meaningful intervention, resulting in escalating behaviors and more serious offenses over time.

In collaboration with the Juvenile Department, the DA's Office implemented major reforms, retraining staff, improving communication, and adopting practices aligned with aspirational standards. As a result, the percentage of cases formally petitioned has dropped dramatically, unnecessary detention has been reduced, and the daily juvenile detention population has decreased from more than 200 youth to approximately 80.

They highlighted improvements in early assessment, diversion, and timely access to services, noting that other major Texas counties use similar practices. They also emphasized stronger collaboration among the DA's Office, probation, and law enforcement, which has enhanced decision-making and reduced repeated system involvement.

Judge Herrera and Mr. O'Brien both commended DA Creuzot's leadership, noting that his active engagement with regular visits to the juvenile building, participation in detention meetings, and commitment to individualized case review, has significantly transformed the division's culture and outcomes. Early indicators show fewer cases requiring certification and decreased violence among youth, though continued monitoring is planned.

Overall, the group reported that the juvenile justice system is moving toward more effective, timely, and child-centered practices, with forthcoming data expected to confirm continued progress.

Public Comments:

No public comments were received.

Announcements:

District Attorney John Creuzot announced that the DA's Office is launching a new initiative to address delays in processing judgments and transferring individuals from the Dallas County Jail to TDCJ. Historically, errors and slow turnaround times in judgment preparation have led to rejected transfers, overstay, and increased costs. To resolve this, the DA's Office, working with two district court judges, will begin preparing judgments and sentences at the time of the plea, rather than relying on clerks to complete them later. Judges will sign the documents immediately, and the clerk's office will upload them and finalize

disposition steps the same day. This approach is expected to collapse the processing timeline from weeks or months to just a few days. Additional staff have been assigned to support this effort, and early testing has begun. If successful, the initiative will reduce jail overstay, improve accuracy, streamline communication with TDCJ, and positively impact county operations and finances.

The next CJAB General Membership meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 15, 2025.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44 PM.