



**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

**BJA DRUG COURT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT  
JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE  
TO ENHANCE ESSENTIAL JUSTICE/PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

While the role of the judge in initiating the formation of a Drug Treatment Court may be readily acknowledged, as these programs have become part of the mainstream, we often lose sight of the importance that continued judicial leadership must play in sustaining these programs, keeping the many “moving parts” working together and moving coherently forward. A few aspects of the continued judicial leadership role needed are described below:

**LEADERSHIP OF THE DRUG COURT TEAM**

- I. The judge needs to continue to renew the team’s commitment to the mission of the drug court and to assure adherence to the Key Components<sup>1</sup>. As procedures become routine, people often start to lose that sense of mission that was so important in the initial decision to take this path.*
- II. The judge must promote the team’s understanding of the therapeutic principles underlying the drug court model and their application in a drug treatment court, particularly when the roles of the team members can become blurred as people or personnel change. In that leadership role the judge must reinforce with program personnel and team members the nature of their role and that of the judge. The judge must also ensure that the team receives cross-discipline training, updates regarding best practices, effective responses to behaviors, and training regarding other relevant topics to enhance the program.*
- III. The Judge and team must develop a working knowledge of all relevant issues, including “addiction”, “trauma”, “mental illness” and other “co-occurring disorders”, “pharmacology”, “criminogenic needs”, and “drug testing”. This knowledge is particularly relevant to responses to the behavior of participants and interpretation of that behavior within the context of the recovery process, and appropriate therapeutic responses. [See Volume II: Curriculum]*
- IV. The judge must provide the leadership to ensure that the Drug Court follows evidence based practices and national standards and protects participants’ constitutional rights. The judge must lead the team in frank discussions about court operations and improvements, as needed. It requires the judge to create an atmosphere inviting opinions from the team and valuing constructive ideas. While the Judge must foster a team concept he/she must not abdicate his/her role as the ultimate “decision maker”*

**ENSURING EVIDENCE BASED TREATMENT SERVICES**

- V. The Judge and other team members must be aware of and knowledgeable about the services being provided by the treatment provider(s). Depending upon the services available within each state, the guidance of the single state agency for substance abuse and mental health services may be helpful to ensure that evidence based treatment services are being provided by the treatment provider(s). The judge should ensure that the provider(s) are informed regarding the drug court program mission, goals and requirements as well as expectations for communication, delivery of services and collaboration. The court should also schedule opportunities for specific and regular exchanges among stakeholder agencies and the community.*

**PROGRAM LEADERSHIP: EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS TO EXPAND AND PROMOTE DRUG COURTS BY EDUCATION AND COLLABORATION**

- VI. The judge must be a leader and an advocate in the criminal justice community to extend the benefits of Drug Courts to all high risk/high need offenders. There is a continuing need for the judge to inform frequently changing criminal justice practitioners about the drug court’s mission and level of support needed to continue its development and*

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<sup>1</sup> “Defining Drug Courts: The Key Components”. National Association of Drug Court Professionals. U.S. Department of Justice. 1997.

growth.

VII. *Consistent with ethical requirements, the judge should actively promote public understanding of and support for the Drug Court concept in the community, the media and with elected officials.*

VIII. *Consistent with ethical requirements, the judge must also educate representatives of targeted government and community agencies in an effort to obtain their support and garner the resources necessary to maintain and expand Drug Courts.*

IX. *The judge should convene an oversight or advisory committee comprised of community leaders and representatives to provide programmatic support, improve access to services and resources, and to aid in expansion and sustainability of Drug Courts.*

#### **PROGRAM LEADERSHIP: INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION/ OVERSIGHT**

X. *The judge must promote ongoing review of the court's caseload to ensure that its eligibility criteria does not present systemic barriers in its entry process that produces a racial, gender, socio-economic, or cultural disparity in the court's population. The entry process must maximize the program's outreach and service to the volume and nature of all offenders who need the program's services*

XI. *The judge must ensure that the program operates with consistency and transparency, adheres to its articulated policies and procedures and does so in a manner that is consistent with effective and responsible stewardship of public resources.*

XII. *The judge must ensure that the program conducts routine and periodic monitoring of the status of the program's operations and services, instituting improvements as necessary, and conducts external evaluations as well. The judge must also ensure that program materials, documents and forms are revised periodically to reflect current practices and operations*

#### **DRUG COURT JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Judge Robert Ziemian (Ret.), Boston, Massachusetts, Chair*

*Judge Michael Barrasse, Lackawanna Co. (Scranton), Penn.*

*Joel Bennett, Travis County (Austin), Texas*

*Judge Eric J. Bloch, Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon*

*Judge Kevin Burke, Hennepin Co. (Minneapolis), Minnesota*

*Judge Jeri Cohen, Dade County (Miami), Florida*

*Brenda Desmond, Missoula, Montana*

*Hartwell Dowling, Augusta, Maine*

*Judge William Dressel (ret.), Reno, Nevada*

*Judge Jeffrey Ford, Champaign County, (Urbana), Illinois*

*Judge Dennis Fuchs (Ret.), Salt Lake City, Utah*

*Judge Richard Gebelein (Ret.), Wilmington, Delaware*

*Dr. Richard Grimm, Pensacola, Florida*

*Judge Harl Haas (Ret.)\* Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon*

*Judge Peggy Hora (Ret.), Alameda County (Hayward), California*

*James Hennings, Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon*

*Judge Jamey Hueston, Baltimore, Maryland*

*Judge Ronald Ibarra, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii*

*Roberta Leis, Boston, Massachusetts*

*Judge Brian MacKenzie (Ret.), Oakland, Michigan*

*Judge Stephen Manley, Santa Clara County (San Jose), California*

*Judge James Morrison, Marinette Co., Wisconsin*

*Judge John Parnham (Ret.), Pensacola, Florida*

*Judge Louis Presenza (Ret.), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

*Judge Robert Russell, Buffalo, New York*

*Judge William Schma (Ret.), Kalamazoo, Michigan*

*Michael Schrunk, Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon*

*Judge John Schwartz (ret.), Rochester, New York*

*Yvonne Segars, Newark, New Jersey*

*Judge Margaret Spencer, Richmond, Virginia*

*Judge Mark Spitzer, Grant County (Marion), Indiana*

*Judge Mary Hogan-Sullivan, Dedham, Massachusetts*

*Judge Ronald Wilper (Ret.), Fourth Judicial District (Ada,*

*Boise, Elmore and Valley Counties), Idaho*

*Judge John A. Zottola, Allegheny County (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania.*

*\*Died September 21, 2013\*

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