



Judicial Commission on Mental Health

Collaborate. Educate. Lead.

Mission:

The mission of the Judicial Commission on Mental Health is to engage and empower court systems through collaboration, education, and leadership, thereby improving the lives of individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, or intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Collaborate

Collaboration among court systems—including the legal community, mental health professionals, law enforcement, state agencies, and court participants—is essential for achieving the best possible outcomes for Texans. To facilitate such collaboration, the Commission will:

- collaborate with stakeholders to collect and analyze data, practices, law, and policy with the goal of improving court functioning for people with mental health needs, substance use disorders, or IDD.;
- identify and assess current and future needs of the judiciary to improve courts' ability to serve people with mental health needs, substance use disorders, or IDD;
- improve collaboration and communication among courts, agencies, and community partners;
- encourage sharing of appropriate information to enhance judicial efficiency;
- explore potential partnerships to promote early awareness and education about mental health, substance use disorders, or IDD in the court system;
- examine the prevalence and impact of racial disparities for people with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and IDD in the court system;
- assess data collection, reporting, and sharing for projects receiving Commission support;
- identify funding and resource options available to facilitate the Commission's efforts to serve the state; and
- endeavor to increase resources and funding and maximize the effective and efficient use of available judicial system resources.

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Educate

Education—including specialized training, resources, and tools—for judges, attorneys, and court personnel is essential to fair and efficient resolution of cases involving individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, or IDD. To further the goal of education, the Commission will:

- develop high-quality, multi-disciplinary education in coordination with state and national training experts and raise awareness of best practices and areas requiring improvement;
- create and provide tools and resources on key concepts and court procedures related to mental health, substance use, or IDD;
- promote best practices that are data-driven, evidence-based, and outcome-focused; and
- educate the judiciary and stakeholders on the importance of collecting and sharing data.

Lead

Judicial leadership is essential to serving individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and IDD in Texas courts. To promote leadership in the judiciary, the Commission will:

- promote innovative projects, as well as policy and procedural changes that improve court functioning;
- serve as a resource in the development of policy, legislation, and practice recommendations, including policy recommendations for consideration by the Texas Judicial Council;
- explore technological solutions to assist the courts, including the statewide implementation of a computerized case-management system and expanded data-sharing between stakeholders.
- promote improved court performance and accountability;
- assist judges in leading local and regional initiatives to improve mental health, substance use disorders, and IDD service delivery and capacity;
- promote appropriate consideration of mental health, substance use disorders, and IDD needs expressed by children, youth, and families in the judicial process;
- elevate awareness of mental health, substance use, and IDD as an important area of expertise within the legal and judicial community;
- strive to serve as both a statewide and national leader in mental health, substance use, and IDD law and practice;
- oversee the administration of funds appropriated and granted to the Commission; and
- provide progress reports to the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.