JANUARY 2025 | VOL. 11

INNOVATIVE SPECIALTY COURTS *QUARTERLY*

QUARTERLY NEWS, GRANT SOURCES, AND TRAINING EVENTS

The Innovative Specialty Courts Committee exchanges ideas, discusses issues and recommends policies related to the operation and administration of Ohio courts with specialty dockets (mental health courts, drug courts, re-entry courts, etc.). The Innovative Specialty Courts Committee is working to identify additional resources available to these courts and to develop a procedural framework in order to facilitate the continued operation of these dockets.

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Eleventh Edition of the Innovative Specialty Courts Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide articles, training opportunities and resources and to foster collaboration among our community of specialized docket judges.

On October 25, 2024, the Specialized Dockets Section of the Ohio Supreme Court hosted 576 attendees at the 2024 Ohio Specialized Docket Fall Conference, Ohio State University, The Union.



Pictured Speaker: Judge Gregory G. Pinski (ret.)

Check your calendars! The 2025 Ohio Specialized Docket Conference will be held on October 28, 2025. Be sure to Save the Date to make this year's conference another great success!



New Year, Fresh Perspective: Assessing Your Specialized Docket

by: Sam Campbell, Manager, Supreme Court of Ohio Specialized Dockets Section

The New Year is a great time to review your goals for the upcoming year. In the Specialized Dockets Section, our goals are to streamline certification and enhance our resources to help you focus more time on participants. Speaking of resources, our grant partner, NPC Research is offering free virtual customized training sessions for your entire team. See the attached flyer for more information. As you start the New Year, we suggest you review your program materials and engage your advisory committee with these critical items in mind.

Program Documentation Review

Begin by reviewing three key documents: the Program Description, Participant Handbook, and Participant Agreement. These materials should reflect your current practices and should be easy to understand.

Strive to write the handbook and agreement at an eighth grade reading level. You can check readability using Microsoft Word (under *Home* > *Editor* > *Document Stats*) or free online tools such as readable.com.

Confirm whether your practices distinguish between sanctions and therapeutic adjustments. Participants should be clear when they receive a therapeutic adjustment, that it is not punitive. Rather, therapeutic adjustments support the participant, with measures such as increased counseling sessions or more frequent support group attendance. I find this a good way to remember:

- Incentives are what participants *want*
- Sanctions are what participants *do not want*
- Therapeutic adjustments are what participants *need*

Constitutional Compliance

Several constitutional issues frequently arise in specialized dockets that require careful attention.

Dockets must accept Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) when available and prescribed by an authorized clinician. Programs may not broadly prohibit prescribed medications, though you may implement procedures to prevent misuse and require participants to inform providers of their substance

NEW YEAR, FRESH PERSPECTIVE: ASSESSING YOUR SPECIALIZED DOCKET (cont.)

by: Sam Campbell, Manager, Supreme Court of Ohio Specialized Dockets Section

use disorder. For more information, see our MAT bench cards for Drug Courts and Community Control, Probation, and Supervision, as well as the 2024 Settlement Agreement between the United States Department of Justice and the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania.

Legal representation remains crucial. Because they waive significant rights upon entering the program, participants must have access to counsel when reviewing participation agreements, facing jail sanctions, or potential program termination.

Program materials must prominently address how the court will consider a participant's financial status when assessing and collecting fines and fees. The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly struck down rules and practices that discriminate against defendants based solely on their inability to pay fines and fees. Locally, the Ohio Supreme Court sanctioned an Ohio judge last September regarding fines and court costs and the ability to pay.

Participation in support groups such as AA/NA requires special attention because they often include religious or spiritual components. Dockets must offer secular alternatives and should only mandate support group attendance when clinically appropriate in individual treatment plans.

For more information on the topics above, see Constitutional Rights of Participants Guidance.

Administrative Requirements

A few other items to recall, please submit your data to the Supreme Court portal monthly. See, Data Collection FAQs.

Judges must complete six hours of specialized docket continuing education every three years. It does not need CLE accreditation and participation in roundtables, self-study, webinars are all acceptable, as is the annual Ohio Specialized Dockets Conference (free registration, October 28, 2025, at the Ohio Union).

All Rise (formerly the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, NADCP) has updated their Best Practice Standards. Click the link and scroll down for a concise summary. As always, we in the Specialized Dockets Section are available to help you and your staff work through these and other issues related to your specialized docket. We look forward to working with you in 2025!



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



TRAINING REQUESTS

Through funding from a grant from the Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA) obtained by the Supreme Court of Ohio, specialized dockets can receive training, coaching, or technical assistance from NPC Research through September 2025.

SCHEDULING OPTIONS

NPC will work to meet your scheduling needs and availability. Training options include:

- One-time or multiple shorter sessions (e.g., 75 to 90 minutes)
- Half-day sessions
- Full-day sessions that include activities and practice

To submit a request, please contact the Specialized Docket Section at specdocs@sc.ohio.gov.

SAMPLE TRAINING TOPICS & SESSIONS

The list below provides the most common training topics and sessions. NPC has additional trainings available by request. If you have additional training needs not included in the list, please use the email address above to learn what additional options may be available to meet your needs.



Topic: Access, Enrollment, and Retention

Sessions:

- Increasing Enrollment and Retention
- Avoiding Termination
- Enhancing Equivalent Access and Retention
- Maintaining Participant Engagement

Topic: Team Member Roles

Sessions:

- Team Member Roles
- Trauma-Informed Approaches for Every Role
- Appropriate Information Sharing Among Team Members

Topic: Effective Behavioral Change

Sessions:

- Incentives, Sanctions, and Service Adjustments
- Alternatives to Incarceration as a Sanction
- Virtual Site Visits for Effective Practices to Support Behavior Change
- Navigating Participants' Relationship Challenges

Topic: Best Practices in Program Structure and Operations

Sessions:

- Implementing Multiple Tracks by Participant Risk and Need
- Combining Clinical and Supervision Case Plans for Improved Outcomes
- Opioid Intervention Courts

Topic: Implementing Best Practices

Sessions:

- Treatment Courts 101
- Implementing Best Practice Standards
- *Note: Trainings Can be Tailored by Court Type: DWI Courts, Veterans Treatment Courts, Mental Health Courts, Tribal Healing to Wellness, Family Treatment Courts, Juvenile Treatment Courts (including training on the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines)*
- Virtual Site Visits - Best Practices in Staffing and Court

Topic: Program Monitoring & Evaluation

Sessions:

- Evaluation 101 for Non-Researcher Team Members
- Preparing Your Treatment Court for Evaluation
- Using Peer Review and Certification for Program Improvement
- Using Results from Evaluations and Self-Monitoring to Enhance Your Treatment Court

***Additional topics available by request.**

A TREATMENT COURT TEAM BUILDING RETREAT

by: Hon. Nanette DeGarmo VonAllman, New Philadelphia Municipal Court

Assembling a good team is essential to the success of any treatment docket. Keeping a good team together, though, requires nurturing and mindful effort. Working with adult defendants with substance abuse and mental health needs presents a big challenge for judges and the treatment court staff, with the successes sometimes few and far between. Scarce resources and burn out remain constant threats. Investing in, and retaining good people, a cornerstone of success in the private sector, should be the model for team building in our treatment courts.

All Rise Adult Treatment Court Best Practices Standards, Ed. II, at Standard VIII, Multidisciplinary Team, provides guidance in assembling the team: "A dedicated multidisciplinary team of professionals brings together the diverse expertise, resources and legal authority required to improve outcomes for high-risk and high-need participants. **Reliable and sustained backing from governing leadership and community stakeholders ensures that team members can sustain their commitments to the program…"

The standard also recommends that treatment team members meet regularly for the purpose of reviewing the program's performance and outcomes. The standards place the responsibility on courts to ensure that all team members, at least annually, receive training in best practices, including refresher courses. In practice, though, getting team members, and their funding sources, to commit to attending recovery court-specific trainings and evaluations proves challenging.

When our team at the New Philadelphia Municipal Court conceived the idea of a treatment court retreat, we identified two purposes: training and team building. With no funding and no idea where to begin, we followed logic and started small. We held our first retreat at my home. Everyone brought a covered dish. We spent a few hours informally reviewing program issues, brainstorming ways to improve and just getting to know each other away from our courthouse roles.

The next year we rented a large log cabin, continuing the informal agenda and covered dish format. Unfortunately, the COVID years demanded that we suspend our gatherings.

Recently, I realized that we had finally assembled our dream team, all committed to our vision of providing critical services to our clients: treatment providers, probation officers, health department nurses, re-entry jail staff, law enforcement, prosecutor and defense counsel, and two job facilitators. I also recognized that this team, and our participants, found support behind the scenes from case managers, peer mentors and others not part of the formal team.

In 2024, we decided to expand our retreat to include all of the treatment court stakeholders. I also wanted to use the retreat as an opportunity to demonstrate to everyone how much their hard work was valued and appreciated. Because our programs have many treatment and support staff in common, we collaborated in 2024, for the first time, with Common Pleas Judge Elizabeth Thomakos and her COBRA drug court team.

Judge Thomakos and I selected a small local lodge, The Inn at Honey Run, near Millersburg, Ohio, as the venue for our retreat. We also prepared "swag bags" for each participant which included an inspirational book, some snacks and other items gathered from local agencies, such as the County Visitors and Convention Bureau and the local Health Department.

Our counselors developed the agenda. We met early for coffee and some social time, followed by a virtual presentation provided by All Rise at no cost. Julie Seitz, an All Rise trainer, presented a current overview of best practices, followed by a moderated question and answer session. While All Rise had some funding available for an in-person appearance as well, we opted for the video appearance, as training was only part of our agenda for the retreat.

A TREATMENT COURT TEAM BUILDING RETREAT (cont.)

by: Hon. Nanette DeGarmo VonAllman, New Philadelphia Municipal Court

After lunch we received an update on some upcoming changes in program funding and then we engaged in fun team-building activities presented by the peer supporter and the counselors. To end the day we took an (optional) walk on a nature path at the Inn, enjoying some interesting art installations along the way. We wrapped the retreat in the late afternoon and everyone enjoyed the drive home through Amish country.

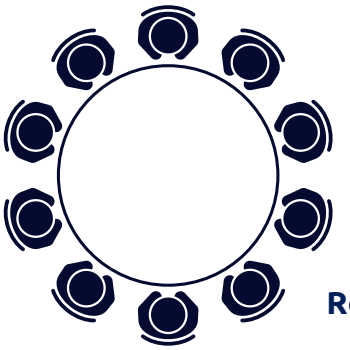


To cover the cost of the retreat, Judge Thomakos utilized staff training funds in her probation budget and I relied on Special Projects funds. With twenty-seven in attendance, the funds covered the cost of the venue, programming, a continental breakfast, all-day coffee and beverage service, and a hot buffet lunch. The Inn staff provided planning assistance, conference room and AV set up, and all food services. In addition to the conference room we had the use of an adjoining patio, game room, hearth room and outdoor spaces for break-out sessions and casual conversation.

Whether your local treatment court develops plans to comply with the All Rise Standards for team-building by starting small with coffee and donuts before a team meeting, or if available resources allow you to take your team (or even part of the team) to the All Rise conference in Orlando next summer, I encourage you to find ways to let your team know how much their efforts are appreciated and how important continual improvement is to a successful program.

If you would like more details about our retreat, or would like to share ideas for future retreats, please email me at nanvonallman@gmail.com.





2025 Specialized Dockets Roundtables

Registration is open for the 2025 Ohio Specialized Dockets Roundtables. All roundtables will be held online and can be registered for here.

Drug-Domestic Violence	Tuesday, Feb. 4, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Probation Officers	Thursday, Feb. 20, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 9, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Coordinators	Wednesday, March 26, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 11, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Veterans	Monday, March 10, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 24, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
New Judges	Friday, Feb. 28, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Friday, May 16, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Judges	Friday, March 21, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 18, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Mental Health	Monday, April 14, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 29, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Drug and Human Trafficking	Tuesday, June 17, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Specialized Docket Managers	Thursday, April 3, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Veterans Mentor Roundtables	Thursday, Jan. 16, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 9, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 7, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 15, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Coordinator Support Meetings	Friday, Feb. 14, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Friday, May 9, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Friday, Aug. 22, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

for OVIs

by: Hon. Patrick Carroll (Ret.), Lakewood Municipal Court

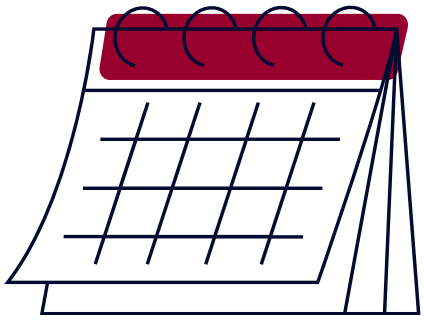
Treatment court judges are familiar with the use of oral fluid testing as a tool for substance use monitoring. Oral fluid testing, though, has additional yet complex other uses. On December 19, 2024, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed a critical piece of legislation, S.B. 100, which included oral fluid testing as part of the Ohio implied consent law. Along with chemical testing for breath, blood, or urine, refusal to submit to an oral test when the officer has reasonable suspicion of impairment will result in a one-year license suspension for a first offense OVI and a two-year license suspension if the defendant was previously convicted of an OVI offense within the past ten years.

Also significant, the new law expands the admission of evidence for oral fluids and any other accepted test for whole blood, blood serum or plasma, blood, breath, or urine from "concentration" to "presence and concentration" of alcohol, drugs of abuse, controlled substances, metabolites of a controlled substance, or a combination of them at the time of the alleged violation as shown by chemical analysis of the substance withdrawn, or specimen taken within three hours of the time of the alleged violation. R.C. 4511.19(D)(1)(b). The addition of the term "presence" is important with the increased access and use of marijuana which may have a low content but may be combined with other impairing substances. SB 100 goes into effect March 20, 2025.

In a separate bill, S.B. 37, signed into law on January 8, 2025, OVI penalties, including the minimum period of incarceration and fines were increased. This law go into effect on April 9, 2025. The Ohio Highway Patrol is currently using oral testing, but with the new legislation, local police departments will also start using this procedure.

While the impact of the new legislation remains to be seen, and the results of any court challenges will be some time in coming, we will continue to provide updates in future editions of the newsletter.

SAVE THE DATE



All Rise Treatment Court Institute 2025 Practitioner Training

at the Sheraton Oklahoma City Downtown | 1 N Broadway Street, Oklahoma City, OK

Registration is open.

- Court Coordinators | March 18-21, 2025
- Judges | Aug. 19-22, 2025
- Defense Attorneys | Sept. 23-26, 2025

National Judicial College 2025 Courses

Registration is open.

- Drugged Driving Essentials | March 17-19, 2025 | Indianapolis, IN (Funds are available through NHTSA to pay for travel costs)
- Becoming Trauma Informed: An Important Consideration in the Courtroom | March 20, 2025 | Webinar
- Operation Safe Arrival: Impaired Driving Interventions for Service Members | April 10-11, 2025 | San Antonio, TX
- Drugs in America Today: What Every Judge Needs to Know | June 16-19, 2025 | Sioux Falls, SD
- Impaired Driving Case Essentials | July 21-23, 2025 | Phoenix, AZ (Funds are available through NHTSA to pay for travel costs)

All Rise RISE25 Conference

2025 RISE will be held in Orlando, Florida, May 28 - May 31, 2025.

The 2025 National Alliance on Mental Illness Conference (NAMICon 2025)

NAMICon will be held virtually, June 11 - 13, 2025.

The 2025 Ohio Specialized Docket Conference | October 28, 2025

at the Ohio State University | The Ohio Union at 1739 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio

Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards: New Changes at a Glance

By: Jessica Lange, MBA
Project Director All Rise
Impaired Driving Solutions

W**hat's Changed? While no provision from the first edition has been retracted or found to be erroneous in subsequent studies, some recommendations or benchmarks have been modified. Below are brief summaries of the major revisions to Standards I-VI, VIII, and X.**

I. Target Population

Treatment courts are most effective and cost-efficient when they serve high-risk and high-need persons who require an intensive combination of treatment and supervision. This finding has been reported in all treatment court models examined to date. The definition of high need has, therefore, been broadened to apply to all adult treatment courts and includes not only a compulsive substance use disorder but also a serious and persistent mental health or trauma disorder and other significant treatment or social service needs, such as traumatic brain injury, insecure housing, or compulsive gambling.

Treatment courts are also discouraged from imposing unwarranted admissions requirements that do not improve outcomes or protect public safety and disproportionately exclude members of some sociodemographic or sociocultural groups.

II. Equity and Inclusion

Ensuring equitable access, services, and outcomes for all sociodemographic and sociocultural groups is a critical obligation of treatment courts. Research conducted in the past decade provides substantial guidance for treatment courts to monitor and rectify unwarranted cultural disparities. Examples of effective practices include removing invalid eligibility restrictions that needlessly exclude some cultural groups, engaging in proactive and culturally congruent outreach efforts, delivering culturally proficient treatments and complementary services, and avoiding monetary or other resource requirements that do not improve outcomes or protect public safety.

III. Roles and Responsibilities of the Judge

Research underscores the critical impact of the judge in all treatment court models and for all sociodemographic groups examined thus far. Although biweekly court status hearings (every 2 weeks) produce superior outcomes in the first phase of adult drug courts, new evidence suggests that weekly hearings may be required in the first phase for participants needing greater structure and consistency, such as persons with a co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder or those lacking stable social supports. Studies of procedural fairness also offer updated guidance to help treatment court judges enhance participants' motivation for change, provide needed support and encouragement, avoid shaming, stigmatizing, or retraumatizing participants, and enhance sociocultural equity.

ADULT TREATMENT COURT BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS: NEW CHANGES AT A GLANCE (cont.)

by: Jessica Lange, MBA, Project Director All Rise Impaired Driving Solutions

IV. Incentives, Sanctions, and Service Adjustments

Delivering fair, effective, and safe responses for participant performance is critical for successful outcomes in treatment courts and one of the most difficult challenges for staff. Careful guidance is provided to help staff classify the difficulty level of participants' goals, and to deliver incentives or sanctions to enhance their attainment of achievable (proximal) goals and service adjustments to help them develop the skills and resources needed to achieve difficult (distal) goals. Cautious advice is provided to help treatment courts avoid serious negative side effects from the misapplication of high-magnitude sanctions, especially jail detention, and practical suggestions are offered to help programs deliver a creative range of low-cost incentives to maximize success. Finally, an example of an evidence-based phase structure with appropriate phase advancement criteria is provided to help treatment courts avoid placing premature demands on participants and address their goals in a manageable and effective sequence.

V. Substance Use, Mental Health, and Trauma Treatment and Recovery Management

Treatment courts serve high-need persons with serious and persistent substance use, mental health, and/or trauma disorders. Achieving successful outcomes for these individuals requires treatment courts to deliver services that are desirable and acceptable to participants and adequate to meet their validly assessed treatment needs. This includes:

- Collaborative, person-centered treatment
- Psychiatric medication and medication for addiction treatment (MAT)

Recovery management interventions should be core components of the treatment court regimen and delivered when participants are motivated for and prepared to benefit from the services.

VI. Complementary Services and Recovery Capital

Complementary services are strengths-based and help participants to develop the personal, familial, social, cultural, financial, and other recovery capital needed to help them sustain indefinite recovery and enhance their overall quality of life. Treatment courts should routinely assess participants' recovery capital and deliver desired complementary services to enhance their long-term adaptive functioning and life satisfaction. Importantly, complementary services also include health-risk prevention measures that are proven to reduce overdose and death rates, transmission of communicable infections, and other serious health risks. Treatment courts should not interfere with participant access to statutorily authorized and evidence-based health-risk prevention measures, which may include safer-sex education and training on and distribution of condoms and other safer-sex products, naloxone overdose-reversal kits, fentanyl and xylazine test strips, and unused syringes.

VIII. Multidisciplinary Team

A dedicated multidisciplinary team of professionals brings together the diverse expertise, resources, and legal authority required to improve outcomes for high-risk and high-need participants. Team members coordinate their roles and responsibilities to achieve mutually agreed upon goals, practice within the bounds of their expertise and ethical obligations, share pertinent and appropriate information, and avoid crossing boundaries and interfering with the work of other professionals. Reliable and sustained backing from governing leadership and community stakeholders ensures that team members can sustain their commitments to the program and meet participants' and the community's needs.

X. Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Improvement

The treatment court continually monitors its adherence to best practices, evaluates its outcomes, and implements and assesses needed modifications to improve its practices, outcomes, and sociocultural equity. A competently trained and objective evaluator employs scientifically valid methods to reach causal conclusions about the effects of the program on participant outcomes.

VIRTUAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



ALL RISE E-LEARNING CENTER

https://allrise.org/trainings/e-learning/

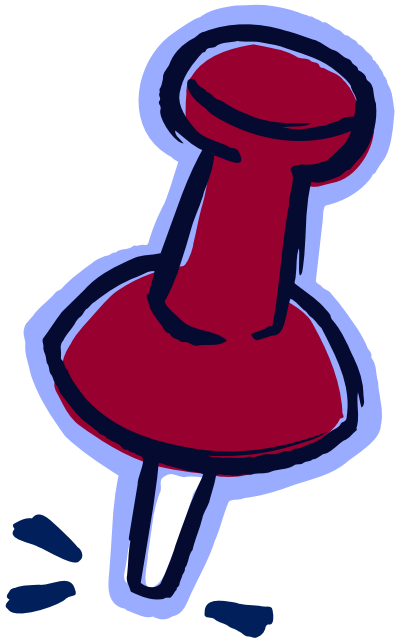
SAMHSA'S PRACTIONER TRAINING

SAMHSA's practioner training offers tools, training, and technical assistance to practitioners in the fields of mental health and substance use disorders.
https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/tta

2024 IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVENTION MONTH TOOLKIT FOR TREATMENT COURTS

https://allrise.org/publications/2024-impaired-driving-prevention-month-toolkit-for-treatment-courts/





GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

ODMHAS – SD Subsidy Project Funding
Link: Specialized Dockets | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ohio.gov)
Note: Cover payroll costs for specialized docket staff members or for clinical services provided by OhioMHAS certified addiction and/or mental health providers, medication assisted treatment (MAT) medications, urinalysis and recovery supports. Must be in the process of certification or certified by SCO.

ATP (Addiction Treatment Program) Funds
Link: Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ohio.gov)
Note: Contact your local ADAMH board for what is available to your court program participants.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
Link: Grants and Grantees | SAMHSA
Note: Search grants by state and type to see past funded awards. Deadlines vary.

NDRC (National Drug Court Resource Center)
Link: Grant Solicitations - National Drug Court Resource Center (ndcrc.org)
Note: Lists solicitations from various sources.

Grants.gov
Link: Home | GRANTS.GOV
Note: Search for local/private funding, state and national funding opportunities. Deadlines vary.

State Justice Institute
Link: State Justice Institute (sji.gov)
Note: Application deadlines are: November 1; February 1; May 1; and August 1, and correspond with the federal fiscal year quarters.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Link: Grant Information & FAQs - The Annie E. Casey Foundation (aecf.org)
Note: Funding opportunities for juvenile justice. Rolling deadlines.

Grant and Funding Webinars:
Funding Webinars | Bureau of Justice Assistance (ojp.gov)
Training Events, Videos, and Reference Materials for Applicants and Grantees | SAMHSA
Grant Writing Basics – Grants.gov Community Blog (wordpress.com)

