

MINUTES
**PROBLEM SOLVING IN FAMILY SUPPORT MAGISTRATE COURT
NEW HAVEN PILOT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM**
JANUARY 05, 2010

The Problem Solving in Family Support Magistrate Court New Haven Pilot Implementation Team met at 414A Chapel Street, New Haven, CT.

Members in attendance: Chief Family Support Magistrate Sandra Sosnoff Baird (Chair), Ms. Dalia Panke (Vice-chair), Family Support Magistrate Linda T. Wihbey, Family Support Magistrate Christopher Oliveira, Mr. Blannie Bostic, Atty. Alice A. Bruno, Mr. Joseph Greelish, Mr. Thomas Horan, Mr. David M. Iaccarino, Atty. Kristina MacPhail, Ms. Sherman Malone, Ms. Belinda Noebel, and Ms. Yosley Saxton.

Guests in attendance: Mr. Brian Coco, Chief Probation Officer, CSSD; Mr. David Healey, Lead Support Enforcement Officer - New Haven; Mr. Bryan Norwood, Supervising Support Enforcement Officer – New Haven; Ms. Joyce Pellegrino, Court Service Centers – Bridgeport; Ms. Lindsay Ruffolo, Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, CCSU; Ms. Sandra Velky, Support Enforcement Officer – New Haven; Ms. Blair Watton, Support Enforcement Officer – New Haven; Mr. Allan Williams, New Haven Family Alliance/Male Involvement Network.

Members of the public in attendance: Ms. Tamika Brabham and Mr. Derrick Gordon, Ph.D. from Yale University; and Atty. Lucia Ziobro, Assistant Attorney General.

1- Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 2:09 p.m. by CFSM Sosnoff-Baird who thanked everyone for attending. Special thanks to the Support Enforcement Services office staff for facilitating the meeting at their location. All members and guests present introduced themselves. CFSM Sosnoff-Baird stated January 27, 2010 is the first date the Problem Solving court will be in session. She also expressed her appreciation to all members for the great work performed in light of the limited financial resources. The committee's work has provided the framework for accomplishing the goal of this pilot.

2- Approval of minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on December 01, 2009 were approved by the committee as amended.

3- Update – Court Logistics Work Group

Mr. David Iaccarino reported on behalf of this work group. He stated room 301 is the courtroom designated as the Problem Solving Court. It has been equipped with the necessary resources such as 2 computers, 2 printers, and panic button. The group was faced with two options as methods to differentiate the new docket – using a prefix or a new legend code. The creation of a new legend code has been chosen. All cases will appear on the main courtroom docket. There will be a shorter list printed for the Problem Solving court. The interim report was amended as discussed at the previous meeting. Magistrate Wihbey urged the group to keep in mind the e-filing system when creating the docket legend.

A discussion ensued regarding the informational notice section. It was decided that the “show up” time can be added to the notice on the docket but have not decided until feedback from the public is received. It will be left up to the clerk's office to coordinate with the Case Management and Evaluation work group. It was also stated that it is sufficient to add the stated notice to the docket to satisfy Practice Book rules.

CFSM Sosnoff-Baird said she spoke with Judge Quinn regarding the record issue. Judge Quinn wants to be consistent with statutes that govern Family Matters. The Problem Solving Court will maintain this consistency when conducting its business. Ms. Noebel offered

to manually add a PS code next to the docket number in the meantime. Mr. Iaccarino clarified that the legend is ready and that there is a sort capability in Edison to list by Magistrate or by courtroom, for internal purposes only. He also stated the docket to be mailed has a list of cases and will also notify the person if they need to report somewhere else. It was understood that all cases will remain in the contempt calendar.

The group's report will be posted on the Judicial Branch website as amended.

4- Report – Case Management and Evaluation Work Group

Magistrate Wihbey reported on behalf of this work group. She handed out a copy of the group's report. She began by reviewing the group's goal. Then, reported on their work. The following was accomplished: identified and recommended the criteria eligibility; drafted a proposed script to be used by the magistrates; created a "tear" sheet to be used as a referral form; Support Enforcement Staff drafted flowcharts to indicate how cases will move; developed internal screening and assessment tools; performance measures were developed. In the efforts to assist with the replication of the Problem Solving Court in other areas, the group has assembled a Problem Solving Manual. The manual includes an advisement, "tear" sheets, case flowcharts, and forms. Other items will be added to the manual as progress is made.

A meeting will be scheduled by this group to discuss performance measures in-depth and other details. The Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy from CCSU will assist with the evaluation piece. This Institute presently collaborates with the Branch in other endeavors. Ms. Ruffolo explained the Institute created a satisfaction survey which is 2 pages long and it contains questions such as "Do you believe you were treated fairly?", "Do you believe you received a fair outcome?", and it will contain demographic information. The Institute is currently working out some logistics – defining the survey and collection methods. They will administer to avoid conflict of interest. After the group's next meeting, a report will be turned in to be posted on the Branch's website.

5- Report – Development of Local Resources Work Group

Ms. Dalia Panke reported on behalf of this group. She handed out copies of the group's report. She then explained the group's focal point was to put together a network of services where Problem Solving clients could be referred to. The group identified two priorities – developing a plan to introduce the project to the community and its methodology; and developing a format to use a pre-existing network of community groups. Representatives from the group attended a Re-Entry Roundtable meeting. They were allowed 10-15 minutes to share key points and provide more information to the agencies. It was a good opportunity to get a feel for the community. The representatives are working on following up with the contacts made. In addition, the representatives will attend a Male Involvement Network monthly meeting on January 14th to discuss the benefits of the Problem Solving court. The meeting has been dedicated to the Problem Solving Court. Providers will have the opportunity to ask more specific questions. The group's representatives will be able to share more information and make face-to-face contact. The New Haven Family Alliance has personal and organizational relationships with the service providers and they have kindly agreed to act as liaisons. The work group will also outreach into the Latino community.

By spring 2010, the Problem Solving project will be re-evaluated in order to better balance the needs and resources of the court, if necessary.

Everyone was reminded that the common goal is to help individuals succeed so, in the end, their children and future generations will also succeed.

The discussion shifted to the use of a database which can be available statewide and will help to establish relationships. Ms. Joyce came up with a nice format of collecting data regarding the programs.

The group was commended for the excellent job performed in communicating and expressing the message and meaning of the program. Consideration is being given to expanding the outreach component through External Affairs.

The group's report will be posted on the Judicial Branch website.

6. Report – Interagency Resources Work Group

Mr. Joseph Greelish reported on behalf of this group. He explained the work of this group centers around identifying resources within the inter-governmental area. He stated the group will be meeting again. Some accomplishments have been made: DHMAS has provided an evaluation tool to screen for mental health and addiction issues; CSSD is providing knowledge on how a person moves if s/he is on probation. The group will be recommending that probationers or parolees will be referred back to CSSD from the Problem Solving Court to avoid interference and conflict with the conditions of the individual's probation. The group will be asking CSSD to provide any disclosable information that will be helpful to the Magistrates. In addition, CSSD has agreed to provide some available spaces through the employment program to Problem Solving clients even if they are not probationers. They will also recommend that the eligibility for Medicaid and state medical assistance be done first through DSS, since once a person qualifies for their services, they qualify for DHMAS services. The group is still working with the Social Security Administration and the local Bar Association. Even though this group's work is ongoing, a report will be completed after the next meeting and will be made available through the Judicial Branch's website.

7. Other Business

No other business was conducted.

8. Public Comment

Atty. Ziobro asked for clarification on the court procedure, and inquired about what happens to the child support order. It was explained that the Problem Solving Court will follow C.G.S. §09-175, the Fatherhood Statute. Programs and services will not be altered. The program's processes and procedures will follow existing law because the cases are still in the contempt calendar. It was explained that the advantage of having a second courtroom is to have a session to expose obligors to the benefits of the Problem Solving program, and allow more time to discuss the cases.

CFSM Sosnoff-Baird took the opportunity to thank all those present who have contributed to the conception of the Problem Solving Court. She expressed her sincere gratitude to the New Haven Family Alliance, the Support Enforcement Services staff, the Court Operations staff, the Court Service Centers staff for making this pilot possible in light of all the challenges and budgetary constraints the Branch faces. Other members present also stated their appreciation for the relationships developed and understand there is more work to be done. All members look forward to the Branch's first Problem Solving Docket on January 27, 2010.

9. Future Meetings

No future meetings are needed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55pm