



# County Criminal Justice Advisory Boards Minimum Operating Standards

## Introduction

For many years, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) has fostered the development and growth of county Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJABs)<sup>1</sup> by providing grant funding and promoting networking, collaboration, training, and technical assistance. CJABs have been instrumental in building collaborative approaches, developing strategic plans, and introducing innovative solutions. Going forward, PCCD expects CJABs to play an even greater role in local and statewide strategic planning endeavors, regional collaborations, and mentoring.

To support these critical efforts, PCCD is proud to highlight the work of CJABs and is committed to providing funding and training resources for projects and priorities across the Commonwealth. We believe that all CJABs should operate at a basic standard to help them grow and succeed.

## Background

A focus group with representatives from several established CJABs across the Commonwealth and other criminal justice practitioners met at PCCD on March 30, 2006, to develop standards. PCCD's Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, and Justice System Advisory Committee (HSLEJSAC) approved the initial standards on August 9, 2006, with further amendments to reentry and strategic planning approved by PCCD's Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) on February 13, 2013, and additional minor revisions to required members and activities approved at the November 10, 2015, meeting.

## Purpose of the CJAB Minimum Operating Standards<sup>2</sup>

The standards outlined in this document emphasize essential elements to facilitate the effective implementation and operation of County CJABs. In accordance with PCCD's CJAB Minimum Operating Standards, CJABs shall establish a comprehensive set of bylaws.<sup>3</sup> While CJABs are encouraged to incorporate the requisite standards in a manner that most effectively addresses their unique local needs and organizational framework, the core elements of PCCD's CJAB Minimum Operating Standards should be addressed within the CJABs' bylaws. These Standards are considered the minimum level of activity required of all CJABs.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about CJABs and related technical assistance, conferences, and events, please visit PCCD's [website](#) and select 'Criminal Justice System Improvements,' or click [here](#) to be redirected.

<sup>2</sup> Contact Michael Leister at (717) 265-8528 or [mileister@pa.gov](mailto:mileister@pa.gov) if you have questions or would like additional information concerning the CJAB Minimum Operating Standards.

<sup>3</sup> PCCD has developed [sample bylaws](#) to assist counties in establishing or amending CJAB bylaws.

**CJAB bylaws shall include the following required essential elements:**

Name	Meetings and Quorum	Staff Support
Authority	Agenda	Communication
Mission	Voting	Strategic Planning and
Role	Meeting Documentation	Performance
Membership	Committees	Reviews and Amendment of
Chair and Leadership	Grant Management	Bylaws

**Name and Authority:**

Bylaws shall set forth the name, the date, and the authority by which the CJAB was established. Any reorganizations should be documented for posterity.

**Mission:**

The CJAB shall create a mission statement that defines its fundamental purpose and serves as a guide for strategic decision-making. A CJAB’s Mission should define the Board's values, principles, objectives, and its approach to achieving them.

**Role:**

Define the role the CJAB will play within the county’s criminal justice system.

**Membership:**

CJAB membership comprises a diverse, broad-based representation of stakeholders. Boards should incorporate key stakeholders essential to the implementation and sustainability of CJAB and justice system initiatives. To ensure effective governance, required members, or their chosen designee, must be invited to participate. In counties with consolidated positions (e.g., one Chief or Director of Probation Services), that individual shall serve as the representative for both requirements and be entitled to one vote. Additional members may be added to address specific county programs and initiatives at the CJAB's discretion.

**Representatives from the following core group of community justice system stakeholders, or their chosen designee, shall be invited to serve as members of the CJAB and are entitled to a vote. (CJABs are encouraged to expand beyond the required core members to fulfill the Board's mission).**

**Required Members (If a formal invitation was extended, but the individual or department declined to participate in CJAB meetings, projects, and activities, the CJAB has met the requirement.):**

1. County governing body
2. Judiciary
3. Court Administration
4. District Attorney
5. Public Defender
6. Victims Service Provider(s)
7. Law Enforcement
8. Sheriff
9. Pretrial Services
10. Adult Probation
11. Juvenile Probation
12. Adult Corrections
13. Juvenile Detention
14. Single County Authority
15. County Mental Health and ID Office
16. Reentry Representative(s)

**The following individuals are strongly recommended as representatives essential to the operation, planning, and decision-making of the CJAB and the local justice system.**

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|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 17. Human Services Director    | 22. Children and Youth Services    |
| 18. Information Technology     | 23. Treatment Court Coordinator(s) |
| 19. Clerk of Courts            | 24. Other groups impacting the     |
| 20. Magisterial District Judge | justice system, as invited by      |
| 21. State Probation and Parole | the CJAB Leadership                |

CJABs are encouraged to develop a process for including non-voting guests, experts, or presenters to support the Board's work. Establishing a formal process for inviting and transitioning members during agency turnover will support the health and sustainability of the CJAB.

**Chair and Leadership:**

The CJAB shall determine the chair and leadership structure (please visit the [CJAB Resources](#) on PCCD's website for samples of CJAB leadership structures).

CJABs are encouraged to include succession planning as part of their leadership structure to ensure the long-term sustainability of operations.

The CJAB shall determine the leadership structure of the Board, including, but not limited to, the election or appointment of a CJAB Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. The CJAB shall determine the term during which leadership will serve in the positions above. Please see the [Sample Bylaws](#) for prospective language.

The CJAB shall determine and document the leadership structure within the Bylaws.

**Meetings and Quorum:**

Meeting frequency and quorum determination shall be outlined in the CJAB's Bylaws. CJABs are required to meet at least four (4) times annually. The CJAB's bylaws will establish the criteria necessary for a quorum to facilitate the conduct of the Board's business.

CJABs are encouraged to add special meetings or events to meet the Board's needs. Opportunities for virtual attendance have proven beneficial to ongoing membership engagement and attaining quorums.

**Agenda:**

CJABs shall establish a process for creating and distributing meeting agendas. Agenda topics will address the Board's goals and general business, including, but not limited to, periodic reviews of the CJAB's strategic planning initiative(s), approval of minutes or meeting summaries, committee reports, review of criminal justice data, and other items deemed appropriate to bring before the CJAB for discussion and consideration.

CJABs are encouraged to develop dynamic and engaging agendas with input from the membership (please see [CJAB Resources](#) for sample agendas and additional guidance).

**Voting:**

CJABs shall determine voting methods while ensuring fair and equitable solutions that facilitate timely decision-making.

To address time-sensitive matters that arise between regular meetings (such as requests for letters of support), CJABs are encouraged to include provisions for methods such as online voting or email polling to supplement and enhance member participation, enabling a more thorough review and response to voting requests. CJABs are also encouraged to develop a process and advise members on the utilization of abstention forms and/or disclosures of a conflict of interest.

**Meeting Documentation:**

CJABs shall establish a process for documenting and disbursing meeting minutes or summaries.

**Committees:**

The CJAB shall establish standing and ad hoc committees, as needed, to facilitate its business. The establishment and meeting schedule for Executive, Steering Subcommittees, and Ad hoc committees may be tailored to meet the needs of the CJAB.

**Grant Management:**

CJABs should include their roles and any requirements related to grants management.

CJABs are encouraged to include any processes for reviewing grant application plans, managing related data, and establishing procedures for accepting and reviewing letters of support.

**Staff Support:** CJABs should have dedicated staff support, such as a director, coordinator, facilitator, and/or secretary, to organize meetings, materials, and presenters. CJAB Coordinators are vital for maintaining the Board's health, function, and longevity, ensuring long-term success.

**Communication:**

The CJAB shall broadly communicate its goals and work to other local stakeholders, non-profits, local officials, and the community-at-large.

**Strategic Planning and Performance:**

CJABs shall develop and maintain a strategic plan that identifies the Board's goals. Plans should include input from the membership to incorporate strategies across intercept points that impact the justice system (e.g., diversion opportunities, alternatives to incarceration, and behavioral health initiatives). CJABs shall include a reentry component in their strategic plan.

Periodic review and maintenance of planning priorities should be incorporated into the CJABs meeting infrastructure to ensure members and committees have the resources and support necessary to complete assigned goals and objectives.

**Review and Amendment of the Bylaws:**

The CJAB shall establish a schedule for the periodic review of the Bylaws. This should include providing members with timely, advanced written notice of the intent to amend the Bylaws and proposed amendments. The CJAB bylaws should also specify the votes required for amendments.