

2026 Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) Conference

Driving Change Together

AGENDA

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Presidents Hall

- *Kirsten Kenyon, Executive Director, PCCD*
- *Jennifer Lopez-Cerrato, Chairperson, Mental Health and Justice Advisory Committee*

Find Your Voice – Reclaim Your Power

- *Allan Kehler, BEd, BPhEd*

Keynote

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Presidents Hall

In this powerful and deeply personal keynote, Allan Kehler challenges the cultural myths around mental health, resilience, and emotional expression. Drawing from his own lived experience with mental illness, addiction, and suicide, Allan empowers people to find their voice and step into their power. He shares an unfiltered look at what it means to live behind a mask – and what it takes to finally remove it.

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

First Set of Breakout Sessions

Track 1: Behavioral Health & Justice

Addressing Competency Crisis Using an Innovative Local Mobile Treatment Model

- *Brandi Harrison, BSW, MS, CCHP, Project Manager, Allegheny County Department of Human Services Justice Collaborations*
- *Renee Madden, LCSW, CCHP, Program Manager, Mobile Competency Restoration Support Team, Centurion Health*
- *Chris Shanley, Director, Allegheny County Pretrial Services*

This panel will address the urgent need for local competency restoration services by sharing the innovative approach developed in Allegheny County. It will cover why local competency restoration is crucial, and how to partner with stakeholders to ensure these services are accessible. The presentation will detail the mobile treatment focused model – Mobile Competency Restoration and Support Team – from origin through implementation. Panelists will share outcomes and how data is tracked through data dashboards.

Self-Care Isn't Selfish – It's Essential

- *Allan Kehler, BEd, BPhEd*

This is your invitation to slow down, reconnect with yourself, and explore how caring for your own well-being makes you even more powerful in your work. Through Allan's deeply human stories of resilience and healing, you will be guided through a holistic approach towards wellness. Get ready to recharge with a mix of reflection, laughter, and connection – including an interactive quiz and creative hands-on activities.

Track 2: Gun Violence Reduction

Strengthening the Front Lines: Collaborative Models Between Domestic Violence Centers, Courts and Law Enforcement to Safeguard Offices, Victims and the Community

- *Richard A. Goldinger, District Attorney, Butler County*
- *Kenneth R. Harris, Jr., Attorney*
- *Sheriff Michael T. Slupe, Butler County*
- *Tracy Veri, Chief Executive Officer, VOICE*

Domestic violence incidents remain a leading threat to the safety of victims, law enforcement officers, and communities. This workshop explores public-safety-focused collaboration between domestic violence centers, courts, and law enforcement to reduce lethality, improve outcomes, and enhance officer safety. Participants will learn how evidence-based risk assessment tools, judicial strategies, and multi-agency coordination can prevent escalation and support survivors, law-enforcement officers, and the community.

Act 79 Implementation: Why is There Such Variance Among Commonwealth Counties?

- *Melody J. Slashinski, PhD, MPH, Qualitative Methodologist*
- *Elizabeth Van Nostrand, Associate Professor, Temple University's Barnett College of Public Health*

Johns Hopkins University reports that almost 50% of women murdered in the US are killed by a current or former intimate partner. Of these homicides, more than half are by firearms. In October 2018, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf signed Act 79 into law - a law that requires judges to order a defendant to relinquish their firearms, other weapons, and ammunition following a final protection from abuse order. A previous quantitative study conducted by Indiana University of Pennsylvania found wide variance in the implementation of Act 79 across Pennsylvania counties. Through a grant funded by PCCD, researchers from Temple University's College of Public Health are currently conducting a new study to evaluate differences in the county-level implementation of Act 79 in Pennsylvania. In addition to discussing the study's design, commentary from participants will be elicited regarding preliminary findings and trends.

Track 3: Reentry

Revving Up Reentry: How York's Reentry Opportunity Center is Fueling Community Partnerships & Cross-Intercept Innovation

- *Amy Evans, Diversion & Reentry Administrator, York County Probation Services*
- *Chawna Griffith-Myers, Executive Director, York County Reentry Coalition*

Take a look under the hood of York County's Reentry Opportunity Center (the ROC)—a first-of-its-kind, community-focused reentry hub led by Probation Services. Learn how York County is using reentry to fuel innovation, strengthen community partnerships, and align justice, health, and human services at all sequential

intercepts. Discover actionable strategies to replicate this “beyond the walls” model in your own jurisdiction.

Indigent Defense Advisory Committee & Grant Fund Update

- *Kathryn Cacciamani, Esq., Criminal Defense Practitioner*
- *Sara Jacobson, Executive Director, Public Defender Association of PA*
- *Jordan Lewis, PhD, Senior Policy Advisor, PCCD*

In this presentation we will talk about the work of the Indigent Defense Advisory Committee (IDAC), and the ways that IDAC grant funding can be used to strengthen access to behavioral health and reentry services. We will first cover why the IDAC was needed. We will talk about the IDAC's work and what the IDAC statute requires. The panel will highlight the importance of conflict counsel in the work while explaining the ways that IDAC expands county Public Defenders' capacity to refer clients to reentry & behavioral health supports. We will also cover our 2025 end-of-year report on indigent defense and where the work is headed in 2026.

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Presidents Hall

Lunch

1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Second Set of Breakout Sessions

Track 1: Behavioral Health & Justice

Lived Experience in Action: County Innovations in Peer-Integrated Initiatives

- *Lauren Henderson, Associate, Justice System Partners*
- *Dr. Jennifer Lerch, Senior Associate, Justice System Partners*

Across Pennsylvania, counties are transforming reentry, recovery, and overdose prevention through the power of lived experience. Supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance's COSSUP Program, this session spotlights county initiatives in Allegheny, Fulton, and York where Certified Recovery Specialists provide critical support as people transition from incarceration back to their communities. Presenters will share how embedding peers in settings like jails and Public Defender's offices builds trust, engagement, and meaningful recovery and reentry connections.

From Intake to Impact: Bridging Systems and Transforming Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System

- *Stephanie Black, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*
- *Bill Keim, Program Manager of Strategic Operations, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*
- *Jay Leamy, Deputy Chief Probation Officer, Chester County Juvenile Probation*
- *William Rumbaugh, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*
- *Angel R. Stewart, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*

- *Michael Yoder, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission*

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system integrates research-driven practices and stakeholder engagement to foster systemic improvement. A standardized, evidence-informed intake process leads this transformation by employing structured decision-making tools that empower system professionals to make consistent, effective, and equitable decisions for system-involved youth. This session will explore how this approach connects system partners for effective collaboration. Attendees will learn about its practical application, its impact on youth outcomes, and strategies for sustaining collaboration that drives continuous systemic improvements.

From Silos to Coordinated Systems: How to Leverage and Connect Parallel Justice Initiatives to Advance Local Priorities

- *Devon Chianos, Deputy Chief Co-Responder, Stepping Up Co-Chair/Certified CIT Coordinator, Dauphin County District Attorney's Office*
- *Megan Davidson, Program Director, Behavioral Health Division, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center*
- *Lahiz P. Tavárez, Project Manager, Behavioral Health Division, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center*

While counties across Pennsylvania are investing in Stepping Up, crisis response, and other justice initiatives to get more people connected to treatment, too often these efforts run on parallel tracks, creating silos, duplication, and missed collaborative opportunities for real impact. This session provides a solution for that complexity by outlining ways that counties can braid their initiatives into a unified, strategic system. With practical strategies and real examples from a Pennsylvania county that has successfully aligned its goals, streamlined efforts, and connected the dots across initiatives, participants will discover how to reduce redundancy, strengthen collaboration, and improve outcomes.

Track 2: Gun Violence Reduction

Violence Intervention Prevention: Navigating Firearm Safety and Weapons Relinquishment Orders

- *Caroline Charles, Legal Advocacy Service Coordinator, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh*
- *Lynn Kacsuta, Senior Criminal Justice Coordinator, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh*
- *Nicole Molinaro, President and CEO, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh*

During this session, Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh's Firearms Safety Team will discuss their new approach to firearms safety awareness related to intimate partner violence. Their work is grounded in the Lethality Assessment Program as well as Protection from Abuse Weapons Relinquishment Orders. This presentation will also include an open discussion format with attendees in the hope of continuing to gather and share information to support intimate partner violence safety needs and their potential impacts on our communities.

Track 3: Reentry

Work Matters: Creating a Talent Pipeline Through Probation, Workforce, Trades Alignment

- *Sanjeev Baidyaroy, Deputy Director of Evaluation, Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania's Criminal Division*
- *Hillary Lyle, Director, Work Matters, REFORM Alliance*
- *Ashlee Lynn, Deputy Director of Operations, Allegheny County Adult Probation*
- *Shá Sanders, Legislative Manager, REFORM Alliance*

Across the U.S., 3.7 million Americans are on community supervision—twice the size of the prison population—and 51% of people on probation lack full-time employment, even as employers face persistent labor shortages. REFORM's Work Matters Initiative addresses this gap through a systems-level approach that aligns county workforce and probation agencies with the skilled trades industry. This session will highlight how the Work Matters pilot was designed and launched in Pennsylvania and Virginia, examine the roles of key ecosystem partners, and share lessons learned to support replication and scale nationwide. Attendees will leave with practical employment-service best practices for engaging and supporting individuals on supervision, as well as insights on building cross-system partnerships that meet employer demand.

Rethinking Probation in Pennsylvania: The Promise of Act 44

- *Brian Crow, Senior Director of Implementation, REFORM*

Probation is designed to help guide participants in a positive direction, but those on probation often encounter needless barriers to reentry. To address this, a coalition of advocates worked collaboratively to pass Act 44, a law that has transformed probation in Pennsylvania. This session explores the evidence-based policies behind Act 44, how they impact people on probation, and have shifted probation's focus to supporting individual success and well-being.

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Afternoon Break

Expanding the Frame: Advancing Intersectional Approaches to Community Violence Intervention

- *Dr. Sylvia C. Washington, Director of Community Engaged Research and Partnerships, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Bloomberg School of Public Health*

Keynote

2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Presidents Hall

Dr. Sylvia C. Washington is a public health researcher and advocate whose work centers the experiences, leadership, and resilience of Black women and girls. In this keynote, she challenges us to expand our understanding of Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) not just as a matter of policy, but as a public health imperative rooted in equity, prevention, and collective care.

Community Violence Intervention (CVI), a key strategy within GVP, has proven effective when it is trauma-informed, community-driven, and sustainably funded. Programs that invest in credible messengers and support wraparound services have helped reduce shootings and build trust in communities most affected by violence. But for CVI and GVP strategies to fully live up to their promise, they must also be intersectional, recognizing and responding to the unique ways violence affects Black women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Dr. Washington offers an urgent and hopeful call to action. By applying a public health lens grounded in intersectionality, she urges researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to expand who is seen, heard, and included in the work of violence prevention and to build systems that reflect the full humanity of every community member.

4:00 p.m.

End of Day One

2026 Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) Conference

Driving Change Together

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

8:45 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Presidents Hall

Welcome and Opening Remarks/Awards Ceremony/Closing Remarks

- *James Turner, Chairperson, Criminal Justice Advisory Committee*

Missing Persons: Reentry, and the Aftermath of Incarceration

- *El Sawyer, Co-founder, Media in Neighborhoods Group (MING)*

The Missing Persons keynote address reframes reentry by naming what is consistently left out of public health, justice, and service-provider conversations: the lasting psychological and neurological impact of incarceration itself.

Keynote

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Presidents Hall

Drawing from lived experience, documentary storytelling, and emerging research, El Sawyer will outline how social isolation, chronic stress, loss of agency, and institutional trauma fundamentally reshape behavior, identity, and decision-making, long after a person returns home. The talk challenges the assumption that people coming home from prison can simply “pick up where they left off,” and instead asks what reentry looks like when we acknowledge the full human cost of incarceration.

This keynote invites practitioners, service providers, funders, and community members to rethink reentry not as a compliance problem, but as a trauma / neuro-informed public health issue, and to consider how systems might respond differently if they truly understood what has been missing all along.

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions

Track 1: Behavioral Health & Justice

Veterans Response Team

- *Matthew Allen, Director, Veteran Affairs for Bucks County*
- *Major Dennis Basmajian, Compliance Officer, Philadelphia VA Medical Center Police*
- *Erin O'Donnell, Wellness Manager/CIT Coordinator, Philadelphia Police Department*
- *Gregory Wright, Jr., Director, Office of Philadelphia Veteran Affairs*

The Bucks County Veterans Response team is a dedicated network of Law Enforcement Officers with Military service working together with social services to support them and their families. It is designed to partner LE with Veteran Affairs, BH/DP and other county services to help veterans in crisis and steer them away from the Criminal Justice System. PA has the 4th largest Veteran Population in the United States and chances of Police Officers responding to a veteran are high.

Shifting Gears: Rebuilding Your CJAB's Momentum

- *Hon. Jean Foschi, Commissioner, Cumberland County*
- *Erin M. Gardner, Director of Criminal Justice Services, Cumberland County*
- *Bobby Juip, CCAP Criminal Justice Advisory Board Specialist*
- *Scott Kerstetter, Chief Probation Officer, Union County*
- *Kim Mackey, CCAP Criminal Justice Advisory Board Specialist*
- *Marisa K. Miller, Lead CJAB System Specialist, Dauphin County*
- *Christopher Murphy, CCAP Criminal Justice Advisory Board Specialist*

In this interactive session, a panel of CJAB leaders and coordinators will share a practical "roadmap" for optimizing performance by moving beyond regular meeting schedules toward a continuous cycle of growth and strategic alignment. Drawing on personal experience in fine-tuning their own boards, panelists will share innovative tools for jump-starting your CJAB through revamped committees, recharged membership, and the realignment of strategic priorities. Attendees will learn how to synchronize data-driven goals for the road ahead while using innovative approaches as a catalyst to bring key decision-makers back to the table and maximize productivity.

Track 2: Gun Violence Reduction

Working Together to Create a Coordinated, Countywide Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

- *Ann Colella-Murray, Violence Intervention Prevention Coordinator, Women's Center of Beaver County*

What happens when police, prosecutors, health professionals and social services are committed to working together to provide a trauma informed response to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault? This team-based approach has been proven to identify risks earlier, reduce trauma, build stronger cases, strengthen health and recovery outcomes and enhance survivors' trust in the system.

Built in the Storm: Standing Up a Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program During Historic Gun Violence

- *Scott Charles, Trauma Outreach Manager, Temple University Hospital*

This session examines PCCD's investment in the development of a hospital-based violence intervention program (HVIP) within one of the state's busiest trauma centers during a period of historic gun violence. It explores how sustained investment and community-based victim services strengthened responses to gun violence in a city that has since seen drastic reductions in violent injury. The focus is on practice, partnership, and how early, values-driven decisions laid the groundwork for continued innovation and expansion.

Track 3: Reentry

Unity Recovery MOUD Reentry Program at Allegheny County Jail

- *Coleen Crisci, Certified Recovery Support Supervisor, Reentry Support Services for Unity Recovery*

- *Abdul Dominick, Forensic Peer Support Specialist, Unity Recovery*
- *Jasmine Hayden, Certified Recovery Specialist, Certified Family Recovery Specialist*
- *Dr. Bryan L. Kline, Director, Reentry Support Services for Unity Recovery*

Founded in 2023, the MOUD Unity Recovery Peer Re-Entry Program at the Allegheny County Jail is a pioneering program that provides peer-led support services within the criminal justice system for individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs). This presentation will examine creative approaches employed within this program to engage participants, enhance recovery capital, and decrease recidivism, giving special emphasis to the roles of peer support in promoting recovery and a successful reintegration with the community. This workshop will also discuss the financial impact of peer-run services, as well as how this model serves community public health and safety by preventing re-arrest.

Veteran Services within the PA DOC

- *Michael Carrington, Statewide Veterans Coordinator, PA Department of Corrections*

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections proudly employs approximately 5,000 veterans. Additionally, the agency houses approximately 2,300 veteran reentrants. Over the past five years, DOC leadership has invested in a Veteran Services Team to connect veteran staff and inmates with the services, benefits, and information they need in order to receive the care warranted to them. Currently, the PA DOC has five specialized veteran service units housing more than 600 inmates and a dedicated veteran services team of seven employees working to ensure all veterans, staff and inmate alike, are not forgotten.

12:00 p.m.

Presidents Hall

Boxed Lunch Available