



Supreme Court of Illinois

November 22, 2016

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT CERTIFIES 3 NEW PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

The Illinois Supreme Court has announced the certification of three new problem-solving courts in Kendall, Peoria and Tazewell counties. These problem-solving courts – the Kendall County Drug Court, the Peoria DUI Court and the Tazewell County Mental Health Court – are the first to go through the Supreme Court's application and certification process. The more than 100 problem-solving courts already in operation will also go through the process.

In November 2015, the Supreme Court adopted statewide Standards to bring uniformity, accountability and administrative oversight to problem-solving courts in Illinois.

Also known as specialty or therapeutic courts, problem-solving courts provide an alternative forum for certain individuals in the criminal justice system, such as those with mental illness or substance abuse disorders. Problem-solving courts utilize a collaborative, therapeutic approach with justice professionals partnering with community treatment providers to address an individual's underlying behavioral health issues.

"The Illinois court system continues to expand its offering of problem-solving courts," Chief Justice Lloyd A. Karmeier said. "These courts give individuals access to a problem-solving, rather than a punitive, justice system. Helping these individuals get their lives back on track not only helps them, it also improves the lives of their families and the community as a whole."

The Standards and certification and application process were developed by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) and the Special Supreme Court Advisory Committee for Justice and Mental Health Planning. The Advisory Committee was established in 2010 and charged with development of uniform Standards and a certification and application process for all problem-solving courts in Illinois.

Appellate Justice Kathryn E. Zenoff of the Second Appellate District serves as chairperson of the Committee. Prior to joining the Appellate Court, Justice Zenoff established one of the first mental health courts in Illinois as chief judge of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit in Rockford.

"It is gratifying to see the goals of the Court and the Committee being realized with the establishment and certification of these three problem-solving courts to positively serve the participants and public," Justice Zenoff said.

Kendall County began exploring the need for a drug court in March 2014 at the request of Hon. Timothy McCann and in response to the growing number of accidental deaths due to drug overdose in the county. The Kendall County Drug Court will utilize grant funding to serve its target population.

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The Tazewell County Mental Health Court was developed by a team that completed a national program entitled *Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum* created by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The team reviewed current data from the county jail, the court administrator, probation services and the state's attorney to demonstrate the need for the proposed court.

The goal of the Peoria County DUI Court is to make the community safer by providing a collaborative intervention program designed to provide restorative care, treatment and legal accountability to DUI offenders in Peoria. The Peoria problem-solving courts team attended training through the National Center for DWI Courts to prepare for serving a population of 60 participants who have at least three prior drunk driving offenses and are at a high risk to reoffend.

The [Standards](#) for problem-solving courts, as well as documents for the [application and certification process](#), can be found on the Supreme Court's website at www.illinoiscourts.gov under the Problem-Solving Courts section in the 'Information' Tab.

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