

# COUNTY OF BERKS & THE 23<sup>RD</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

### STRATEGIC PLAN



Approved by CJAB General Membership July 21, 2011.  
Adopted and amended May 2024

# BERKS CJAB History, Membership, Completed Projects

## Establishment:

- **1992** - Criminal Justice Policy Group – this was required under state legislation for intermediate punishment
- **2008** - CJAB created- transitioned with PCCD guidance into local planning and problem-solving group to allow for
  - Communication of goals, initiatives, roadblocks of wide number of agencies
  - Steady opportunity for familiarity of all personnel and agencies in the system
  - Cross – agency analysis of problems
  - Reduces need for other task forces – utilize CJAB sub-committees for unity and continuity
  - Support of and collaboration with PCCD & CCAP
  - More effective allocation of resources

## 28 Members:

- Court: Judges, DA, Court Administrators, PD, Clerk of Courts
- Jail: Berks County Jail System
- Law Enforcement: Chiefs of Police, PA State Police, Detectives, Sheriff
- Adult and Juvenile Probation: County & State
- Health and Human Services Agencies: Council on Chemical Abuse, County Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities, Connections Work, TASC
- Victims' services agencies: DA's Victim/Witness Supervisor, SAFEberks
- Local Government Executive Branches: Commissioners, Mayors, County Chief Information Officer, RSD, and BCIU

## Subcommittees:

- PFA – Chaired by Judge Boyd
- Stepping Up – Chaired by MH/DD
- Reentry – Chaired by Connections Work

## **Successes/Goals Achieved:**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> county in PA to integrate Stepping Up Initiative: MHDD, Information Systems, COCA
2. Mental Health Cross Systems Mapping: Multi-agency: including all criminal justice and county mental health departments
3. Court Hearing Notification Program: Courts, Court Administration, PD, DA, APO, Information Systems
4. Truancy Reduction Program: JPO, Court Administration, Courts
5. Graffiti Abatement: APO, Townships
6. Reentry Strategic Plan: CW, APO, Court Administration, BCJS
7. Court notifications – defendants now receive court reminders and have transitioned from receiving them through APO's program to AOPC's program
8. Implemented video conferencing technology in Courtrooms; used largely for incarcerated individuals
9. Developed and implemented the use of Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) as an approach in the treatment of drug addiction.
10. Expanded the acceptance and usage of Naloxone as a county-wide approach in the prevention of opioid deaths.
11. Improved access to employment enhancing opportunities while incarcerated at BCJS (Evidence based employment targeted group, short term certification programs)
12. Improved pre and post release engagement with community reentry through the development/expansion of a peer/mentoring program.
13. Expanded the capacity of current community reentry services
14. Advanced the six program objectives of the Stepping Up Initiative.
15. Became Trauma Informed – CIT Trainings 2x year for county PD, led by County agencies.
16. Implemented and validated risk-needs assessment tools, including ODARA, and WRNA.
17. Supported growth and expansion of treatment court programming including the Mental Health, Drug, DUI, and Veterans Courts.

## BERKS CJAB MISSION STATEMENT & GOALS FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

### Mission Statement:

*“To enable criminal justice agencies and related agencies to work together to improve the quality of life within Berks County.”*

### 7 Goals Identified by the Berks CJAB:

1. Develop a systematic approach to respond to and to reduce violent crime and drug-related crime, with a focus on young adult gun violence; 2014, 2024
2. Increase juvenile programming for youth violence and truancy; 2014
3. Develop evidence-based approaches, including the Stepping Up initiative, which respond to the prevention, intervention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. 2015/2016
4. Utilize the Data Driven Justice Initiative to review and analyze aggregate data for each intercept and profile/model consumption across all systems. 2018, 2024
5. Develop a system-wide, evidence-based approach to **sentencing, supervision, and treatment**; 2014
6. Reduce recidivism and jail overcrowding, and increase public safety using cost effective and efficient reentry initiatives; 2015
7. Support the implementation and enhancement of criminal justice technology initiatives; 2014

# Goal 1: Develop a systematic approach to respond to and reduce violent crime and drug-related crime, with a focus on young adult gun violence

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Develop & utilize cognitive and behavioral based programs and/or curriculum for incarcerated adults and juvenile offenders	A. Implement 2 programs - Interpersonal Violence Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Program & <i>Commonwealth Clinical</i> .	Ongoing via 3 yr grant	APO, BCJS, COCA, department heads	ongoing  <i>APO Received Violence Intervention and Prevention Award/Grant effective 07/2024. It pays for two officers to supervise offenders who have committed offenses with/pertaining to firearms. APO developing an educational curriculum to coincide with the supervision of this population one will start this summer .</i>
2. Develop county-wide targeted enforcement programs to target high crime areas and violent offenders.	A. Coordinate County/city/state officials to develop strategies and programs to carry out targeted enforcement.	Ongoing	APO, DA, Police Chiefs,	ongoing <i>Operation Night Light</i>  <i>City of Reading's Neighborhood Gun Violence Detail, the Berks County District Attorney's Office Gun Crime Unit, and Berks County Probation and Parole's Firearms Suppression Unit.</i> <i>Two of these units are supported by grants from PCCD.</i>
	B. Develop high/very high-risk caseload for adult offenders who have committed non-DV, violent/firearms offenses.	Ongoing		Started
3. Implement data sharing initiatives to assist in the identification and enumeration of violent criminals, crime trends, and crime mapping.	A. Continue data sharing between police, probation and all criminal justice agencies.  <i>B. 2026 Goal –integrate RPD data into CODY system. All other Berks PD are integrated.</i>	Ongoing  <b>12/31/26</b>	DA to coordinate; Chief County Detective, Chief of Police Association President	ongoing: <i>Berks County participates in PA's CODY Systems SuperCOBRA network, a statewide initiative that allows nearly 200 police departments to share records in near real-time.</i>
	B. Educate public to prevent people from becoming crime victims	Ongoing		Ongoing <i>07/2024 - District Attorney circulated media notice warning Berks residents of rise in phone scams</i>  <i>Northern Berks &amp; Reading each host National Night Out events</i>  <i>DA participated in Crime Victims' Rights Week</i>  <i>DA's office collaborates with PCCD's Victims Compensation Assistance Program</i>

## GOAL 2 : Increase juvenile programming for youth violence and truancy

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Support ongoing initiatives within JPO, Youth Shelter and Detention Center.	A. Assist in data collection for youth violence and truancy and help establish benchmarks	ongoing	JPO, BCIU, RSD, Police Departments	ongoing <i>2024 Regrouping efforts with the reorganization of RPD.</i>  <i>Will continue to work towards this goal of RSD program with DA to implement gang resistance and education</i>  <i>Roadblock – number of police officers, esp. to enact special programs</i>
	B. Network with PCCD's EPIS center to vet proposed programming for each initiative	ongoing	JPO	ongoing <i>Still engaged – continuing to measure outcome of programming</i>
	C. Support Youth Detention Center programming (diversion needs, family reunification detention needs, and after care needs)	<b>Detention opening date - goal of Jan 2026</b>	General Membership and County Executives	<i>Detention Center @ 1261 County Welfare Road - tri – county effort; Dauphin, Lehigh, and Berks Counties; still working on securing funding with and from state as of March 2025</i>
2. Coordinate with RSD and BCIU on early intervention in crime, truancy, but also mental health, and substance use disorders	Identify families needing services, connect regarding truancy program (SAM - funding via CYS)	12/31/26	JPO, MHDD, CYS, RSD, other providers	2025: JPO and APO have been attending events, including regarding truancy and school safety at Reading and Schuylkill Valley
	<i>b. training with MDJs on truancy</i>	<i>12/31/2025</i>		<i>Identification of issue. Must connect with CYS – there are sources/alternatives for the MDJs than incarceration</i>

**GOAL 3 : Develop evidence-based approaches, including the Stepping Up initiative, which respond to the prevention, intervention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders**

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Determine success of Mental Health Diversion Program and need for expansion.	<p>A. Track recidivism of individuals completing the Mental Health Diversion Program.</p> <p>B. Determine factors that increase likelihood of success.</p> <p>C. Explore/Secure funding to expand program as they become available.</p>	12/31/26	MH/DD, CW, COCA, BCJS, APO	<p><i>Ongoing collection and review of 4 key Stepping Up Data Metrics: Bookings for individuals with SMI into the jail, Average Length of Stay for SMI, Connections to Care at Release and Recidivism back into the jail. Additional measures specific to Berks County trends identified ongoing.</i></p> <p><i>Forensic Diversion Program at Connections Works currently undergoing restructuring CIT Program development initiated with grant funding and continued with ongoing funding from MH/DD Program.</i></p>
2. Explore alternative strategies and approaches for incarcerated and non incarcerated individuals who suffer from MI and SUD	<p>A. Investigate alternative services for individuals which would be provided by other secure facilities in the community.</p> <p>B. Investigate alternative strategies and services that are available for <b>non-incarcerated</b> MI and SUD individuals.</p>	12/31/25	<p>A: MH/DD, BCJS, Commissioner, SAM</p> <p>B: MHDD/ BCJS/ TASC, CW, DA, PD, Commissioner / APO/</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p><i>Update: A. Step by Step contracted as LTSR provider. Projected open date approximately 1/26</i></p> <p><i>B .Weekly coordination calls with partners to identify diversion alternatives for newly committed inmates with identified behavioral health concerns.</i></p>

## GOAL 4: Utilize the Data Driven Justice Initiative to review and analyze aggregate data for each intercept and profile/model consumption across all systems.

*DDJI: 2016 national initiative "to divert low-level offenders with mental illness out of the criminal justice system and change approaches to pre-trial incarceration, so that low-risk offenders no longer stay in jail simply because they cannot afford a bond."*

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Gather the data necessary to access, quantify and articulate the service delivery and consumption of behavioral health, emergency medical services and criminal justice services in Berks County.	A. Create a map of data systems, data elements and stakeholders	Complete	IS, MH/DD, BCJS , Chiefs of Police, DA, COCA	Complete
	B. Create a data governance strategy.	Ongoing		Ongoing
	C. Create a data sharing framework.	Complete		Complete
	D. Review data analytics	Ongoing		Stepping Up Steering Committee Reviews Data Quarterly, SOS Task Force reviews EMS data routinely
2. Identify measures of success for each component of emergency medical services, behavioral health and criminal justice.	A. Implement top consumer reports for each system and cross system (de-identified).	Ongoing	IS, MH/DD, BCJS, CW, Chiefs of Police, DA, PD, COCA; MH/DD, BCJS, APO, COCA, Connections Work, PD, DA	Quarterly reports with cross system, deidentified Information at the aggregate level is utilized to identify trends and opportunities for alternative interventions, procedural changes, etc.
	i. Identify and expand the intercept mapping and map measures of success.	July 2026	MH/DD, Connections Works, Crisis Intervention Provider	<i>Forensic Diversion Program is currently being restructured.</i>  <i>Future effort to include focused diversion effort at Intercept 1 with Police (CIT trained and rapid referral process) and continued efforted at Intercept 2- MDJ, etc.</i>
	ii. Share success measures for each intercept.			
	iii. Document and track success by intercept			



## GOAL 5: Develop a system-wide, evidence-based approach to sentencing, supervision, and treatment

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Expand and improve inmates' access to Medical Assistance in preparation for release from Berks County Jail.	A. Expand and improve inmate's access to Medical Assistance in preparation for release from Berks County jail.	Ongoing 12/31/25	BCJS, COCA, CW, TASC, APO,	Fall 2024 BCJS began reviewing all sentenced inmates and completing MA applications for all who request it prior to release.  <i>BCJS is developing a plan for individuals who are unsentenced but released on bail or for other reasons – target 12/31/2025</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop an expansion plan based on the "Jail Program" model for inmates being released to environments other than residential rehab facilities.</li> <li>ii. increase use of community-based ambulatory including but limited to medication assisted treatment options.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	BCJS, APO, COCA	<p>Ongoing</p> <p><i>Individuals released from BCJS on MAT have MA activated prior to release.</i></p> <p><i>Activation for other community-based services is a target for this year.</i></p>
	B. Ensure that Medical Assistance and prescriptions are available immediately upon release to address physical health needs as well as mental health/substance use treatment needs.	Ongoing	BCJS, CW, COCA, MH/DD, SAM, TASC,	<p>Ongoing</p> <p><i>Inmates are leaving with 7 day supply of prescription. Meetings with tower health – will be partnering with them – will have to go their campus pharmacy</i></p>
	C. BCJS will identify an in-house MA Navigator to manage MA applications for inmates with verified release dates but are not served by other programs who complete MA enrollment. Individuals with chronic health conditions will be given priority.	Ongoing	BCJS, COCA, TASC	Ongoing

## Goal 6: Reduce recidivism and jail overcrowding, and increase public safety using cost effective and efficient reentry initiatives

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Launch Reentry Strategic Plan	<p>A. Present plan to BCFTF membership</p> <p>B. Follow plan action steps for the three identified strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Networking/Partnerships</li> <li>ii. Coordinating Services</li> <li>iii. Community Education/ Communication/ Stigma Bashing</li> </ul>	June 2025 Ongoing	<p>BCFTF Exec Committee</p> <p>BCFTF Exec Committee and Membership</p>	<p><i>Berks County Forensic Task Force (BCFTF) meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM</i></p> <p><i>DA will start a new program to avoid 2 and 3 day sentences; largely DUI; – offer an option to service that on scram (payment will have to be made upfront) – should take effect June 2025 – 10 days of scram and 14 days of scram in lieu of 2 and 3 days incarceration</i></p>



## GOAL 7: Support the implementation and enhancement of criminal justice technology initiatives

Objectives	Action Steps	Target Dates	Accountability	2025 Progress
1. Implement existing court tech and documentation tech to increase efficiency between criminal justice agencies and the Courts	A. Use Criminal Court E-filing and e-signatures by Judges for Criminal Complaints Search Warrants Arrest warrants	12/31/25	Court Admin/ IS/ Clerks/ DA	<i>Need to expand use to judges for search warrants and arrest warrants.</i>
2. Initiate data sharing to facilitate greater information access to criminal justice agencies as well as support agencies	A. Implement a data warehouse to share criminal justice information and metrics. B. Create dashboards for key performance indicators for criminal justice outcome measures.	12/31/26	IS, DA, APO, JPO, CJ Department Heads	
3. Use GIS and Land Records information as resources for APO, JPO, Law Enforcement	A. Interface case management systems to GIS/911 Centerline information B. Engage Director of Emergency Services	12/31/26 06/30/25	EMS, APO, JPO	