



Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Evidence-Based Decision Making Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

In Person Meeting

State Bar of Wisconsin

5302 Eastpark Blvd, Madison

Co-Chairs Kelli Thompson and Ray Woodruff

Subcommittee Members Present:	Heather Kierzek, Nick Sayner, Emily Westover, Chloe Moore, Megan Kamien, Ray Woodruff, Amanda Hanson, Dillon Ksionek, Judge Elliott Levine
Subcommittee Members Not Present:	Kelli Thompson, Emily Westover, Brad Jago
DOJ Staff:	Ryan Anderson, Sabrina Gentile, Brad Kelly, Brittney Felton, Lara Kenny, Marsha Schiszik, Mike Derr, Mike Austin, Katie Snell, Ashley Billig

Welcome and Opening Comments

Subcommittee Co-Chair Ray Woodruff welcomed members to the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Quorum was present.

Co-Chair Woodruff asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the February 19, 2026, meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 19, 2026

Motion was made by Judge Elliott Levine and seconded by Nick Sayner to approve the February 19, 2026, Evidence-Based Decision-Making Subcommittee meeting minutes. The motion was passed on a voice vote.

Subcommittee Member Updates

Judge Elliott Levine reported that Effective Justice Strategies committee is advancing several initiatives, including updating treatment court standards, developing certification checklists, and revising family court standards. A key priority is reforming the competency process (WI Statutes 971.13/14), which has not been updated in over 20 years. Limited capacity at Winnebago Mental Health Institute has resulted in individuals deemed incompetent remaining in county jails while awaiting placement, placing significant strain on local systems, particularly in La Crosse County and Milwaukee County.

The committee is working with the Legislative Reference Bureau to clarify statutory language and address these system gaps. They are also evaluating evidence-based models, and they

looked into Colorado's Bridges Program as an example. A lot of jurisdictions are only focusing on deflection strategies at this time, but La Crosse County would like to leave it alone, due to ongoing statewide efforts. Additionally, work is underway to standardize memorandums of understanding (MOUs) across treatment courts to improve consistency and coordination.

Ray Woodruff provided an update on initiatives within the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in collaboration with the Falcon System, with a focus on strengthening security practices and improving operational consistency. Current efforts emphasize restrictive housing reforms, including increasing out-of-cell time and improving conditions for individuals, beginning at Redgranite Correctional Institution and expanding to Waupun Correctional Institution, Columbia Correctional Institution, and Stanley Correctional Institution.

System capacity remains a critical issue, with no available beds across facilities, leading to continued reliance on county jails for overflow populations. Additional priorities include expanding programming space and improving coordination for persons in our care (PIOC).

A major initiative involves revamping the mental health (MH) classification system to better identify and respond to varying levels of need:

- MH-0: No identified needs
- MH-1: Moderate needs requiring maintenance
- MH-2A / MH-2B: Higher acuity requiring intensive services

Limited space currently restricts the ability to expand services for higher-need individuals, though Falcon aims to support system-wide improvements.

Further efforts include improving data collection and consistency across sites, as well as strengthening human resources processes and staff training to ensure standardized practices (e.g., searches, pat searches, and security procedures). Despite ongoing population and staffing challenges, the focus remains on consistency, safety, and continued system-wide progress.

Discuss Priorities for JAG Funding

Lara Kenny, Bureau of Justice Programs Director, WI DOJ

Ryan Anderson, Criminal Justice Programs Supervisor, WI DOJ

Purpose of JAG Funding and JAG Programs in Wisconsin

Lara Kenny provided an overview of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, noting that Wisconsin's FY25 application was submitted on April 13, 2026. She reviewed the JAG funding purpose areas, highlighting that most Wisconsin-funded projects align with areas 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8, with area 1 being the longest-standing and most consistently funded. New additions for this year include purpose areas 10 and 11, such as funding for emerging needs like drone technology. However, while program demands continue to expand, overall funding levels have not kept pace.

Strategic Planning Efforts

Kenny also outlined key application components and the current 2021–2025 strategy framework. Wisconsin submits annual reports during this cycle to document progress, funding allocations, and any strategic adjustments. While the strategy provides guidance, it remains flexible and can be modified as priorities evolve. The state also continues reporting on Death in Custody Reporting Act implementation efforts as part of its accountability measures.

Kenny emphasized the need to revise and refine the current strategy. Ryan Anderson reviewed the executive summary and mission, emphasizing insights from 2021 local surveys related to grant administration and funding focus. As Wisconsin transitions into a new five-year planning cycle, there is an opportunity to reassess priorities. A comparison of 2016 and 2021 funding trends shows relative consistency over the past decade, prompting discussion on where strategic changes can be made. Notably, the focus has shifted from the 2016 evidence-based matrix toward a stronger emphasis on data and research-driven decision-making moving forward.

2025 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Stakeholder Input Survey Results

Anderson also presented key findings from the 2025 JAG Stakeholder Input Survey to help guide that process. Based on the survey responses from 141 unique stakeholders across Wisconsin, the results highlight a strong current focus on drug and opioid public health responses. Local agencies strongly favor expanding their existing initiatives over creating new ones, identifying mental health/crisis response and targeted law enforcement capacity as the highest-priority areas for future growth. Additionally, the survey revealed a significant gap in system capacity, noting that very few agencies possess a dedicated data analyst or evaluator. The strategic takeaway emphasizes repositioning JAG funds toward these future priorities while leveraging resources to build critical data and evaluation infrastructure.

The group discussed moving away from the traditional decision-point mapping framework toward the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), shifting from a process-focused approach to a more system-wide perspective. However, there was strong consensus that the core principles of evidence-based decision making (EBDM) should not be lost.

Judge Levine noted that EBDM was originally designed to guide where resources are most effectively allocated and stressed that maintaining structured decision-making processes is critical, cautioning that SIM alone does not fully address this. He emphasized that meaningful implementation requires more than a one-day training and should include ongoing education and use of data to support better decisions. Kenny acknowledged that past strategies were often too broad and primarily revisited during application cycles and proposed incorporating clearer goals within subcommittees to strengthen ongoing work grounded in EBDM principles.

The discussion between Judge Levine, Heather Kierzek, Nick Sayner and Marsha Schiszik also highlighted challenges with workforce changes and knowledge retention, with concerns that institutional knowledge has diminished since 2020. Participants noted the need to modernize training approaches to align with evolving learning styles, balancing in-person engagement with

more flexible methods. It was emphasized that successful implementation depends heavily on stakeholder buy-in and sustained commitment, not simply adopting a new framework. Subcommittees (including EBDM, Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD), Race Equity, Inclusion and Access (REIA), and Data Sharing/Outcomes, Trends and Indicators (Data Sharing/OTIs)) were identified as the primary drivers of this work, with increasing emphasis on data sharing, measurable outcomes, and cross-agency collaboration. Specific challenges were raised from Ashley Billig, including barriers to accessing data from Department of Health Services (DHS) and associated costs.

CJCC Subcommittees' Goals and Priorities 2023 – 2026

EBDM Subcommittee Goals and Priorities:

From 2023–2024, EBDM subcommittee goals focused on expanding the EBDM framework, supporting pretrial initiatives, promoting local CJCC development through system mapping, hosting a statewide summit, and improving data consistency. The 2024 goals largely remained unchanged from 2023, reflecting continued emphasis on these priorities.

In 2025, goals became more targeted and shifted in approach. Key changes included: moving from EBDM system mapping to SIM mapping to guide local system development; scaling back the planned summit to more feasible training and technical assistance; and, increasing emphasis on data use and program evaluation, rather than just data collection consistency. Overall, the transition reflects a shift toward a more strategic, realistic, and impact-focused approach.

TAD Subcommittee Goals and Priorities

From 2023–2024, TAD goals focused on building local capacity through training and technical assistance, identifying funding opportunities, supporting the State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) implementation, and improving data collection and consistency. There was also a growing emphasis on developing statewide performance measures and using data to guide policy and program decisions.

In 2025, the focus continued on training and program evaluation, with added emphasis on highlighting and learning from local innovations and strengthening connections between state and local CJCC efforts.

For 2026, goals largely continue this work—prioritizing feedback on grant implementation, ongoing training and technical support, and advancing data-driven policy and evaluation efforts. Overall, TAD priorities have evolved from capacity-building and data collection toward evaluation, knowledge-sharing, and sustained system improvement.

REIA Subcommittee Goals and Priorities:

From 2023–2024, goals focused on addressing barriers to jury inclusion and expanding education on race equity within the criminal justice system.

In 2025, the scope broadened with more specific and actionable priorities, including juror pay, diversity, and appreciation, as well as new focus areas like driver's license suspensions, culturally competent practices (e.g., plea colloquies), and bias reduction efforts.

For 2026, goals continue this work, emphasizing juror pay, diversity, inclusive practices, and juror engagement.

Data Sharing/Outcomes, Trends and Indicators Subcommittee Goals and Priorities:

From 2023–2024, goals centered on building data infrastructure and consistency, including developing performance indicators, improving data integration across systems, identifying data gaps, and supporting analysis needs across CJCC subcommittees. There was also added focus on supporting major initiatives like Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) and Justice Counts and addressing operational data-sharing challenges.

In 2025, priorities became more project-specific, including creating processes for cross-system data matching, collaborating with other subcommittees on data needs, and expanding datasets (e.g., incorporating death records) to improve analysis.

For 2026, goals focus on completing and delivering key outputs, such as publishing reports, updating demographic data, formalizing data-matching processes, and mapping criminal justice data to the SIM.

Other Agency Programs that Intersect with Criminal Justice:

Ryan reported DOJ works with multiple state agencies (DHS, DOC, and State Courts) and fund programs that intersect with criminal justice, focusing on treatment, reentry, diversion, and behavioral health, supported by both ongoing and federal grants (e.g., Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Second Chance Act). These efforts emphasize behavioral health, community-based diversion, and cross-agency coordination, including SIM workshops, judicial training, and crisis response.

Overall, they reflect aligned, complementary investments that support JAG priorities and broader system goals.

Kenny asked whether other agencies have received or are pursuing grants that intersect with criminal justice efforts. Chloe Moore shared that Dane County was awarded a SAMHSA grant focused on expanding treatment court capacity, transportation, and recovery housing, along with other supports to improve outcomes. She also expressed interest in exploring additional funding opportunities, including Medicaid, and strengthening partnerships within crisis systems to avoid duplication of services and better align efforts, such as pairing funding resources with training initiatives across agencies. Dillon Ksionek from Wood County reported that they have received multiple funding sources, including a DHS grant, opioid funding, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) funding, and TAD funding. He noted that two local grants have been

particularly useful in supporting peer support contracts and providing medication services within jails.

The subcommittee broke for lunch at Noon.

Program Summaries

JAG Drug Task Forces: Brittney Felton

Since 1988, JAG has been serving 18 multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Force teams focused on dismantling drug trafficking networks through coordinated enforcement efforts.

Drug Take Back: Lara Kenny

Since 2015, Wisconsin's biannual Drug Take Back events—run with the DEA—have cost-effectively collected over 1 million pounds of medications while expanding access through partnerships and disposal tools, highlighting the importance of continued investment in prevention and education alongside enforcement.

Law Enforcement Drug Trafficking Response: Brittney Felton

A competitive grant program supporting coordinated law enforcement strategies to combat major drug threats like opioids and methamphetamine. Since 2019, a total of 255 grants have been awarded statewide.

JAG EBDM Pretrial Pilot Program: Brittney Felton

A data-driven initiative promoting risk-informed pretrial decisions to improve fairness and reduce reliance on cash bail. Currently funding seven EBDM sites since 2019.

JAG Turnback Funds: Ryan Anderson

Reinvested funds from prior grants used flexibly to support high-priority needs like technology, training, and system improvements.

Wisconsin Deflection Initiative (WDI): Brad Kelly

A statewide program operated by WI DOJ since 2017, connecting individuals in crisis to treatment instead of the justice system, with strong growth and potential for broader impact.

Elder Justice Initiative: Mike Austin

A DOJ-led effort since 2017, addressing rising elder abuse through coordinated funding, partnerships, and a statewide coalition.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN): Mike Austin

A federally coordinated initiative that funds targeted, collaborative efforts to reduce violent crime at the local level since 2001.

State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP): Katie Snell

A federal grant program created in 2022, supporting community-based strategies for gun violence prevention, crisis response, and suicide prevention.

Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD): Marsha Schiszik & Mike Derr

A long-standing grant program funding treatment courts and diversion efforts since 2005, to reduce recidivism and system costs for individuals with substance use issues.

JAG Priorities Discussion

The discussion emphasized aligning JAG investments with evidence-based, data-driven strategies by prioritizing early intervention (SIM Intercepts 0 & 1), strengthening cross-system collaboration, and building capacity to address emerging needs, while balancing traditional enforcement priorities with prevention, behavioral health, and community-based approaches supported by improved data use and evaluation.

There are six priorities:

Priority 1 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Build a culture of evidence-based innovation and encourage data practices that can support continual improvement and attract long-term investment in programs.

- Change innovation to fundamentals
 - Kenny would like to add goals into this section, but how can we measure success? Ashley Billig emphasized the need for a five-year evaluation framework that measures success beyond DOJ data and recidivism, incorporating outcomes like employment and housing stability, while Judge Levine highlighted the importance of grounding evaluation in core evidence-based practices and a clear understanding of system fundamentals.
- Additional Comments from subcommittee members
 - Local CJCC needs to learn criminogenic needs, EBDM, and why they are important.
 - Need messaging to get buy-in to care about the points made and encouraging priority of resources.
 - Revive training for disciplines by building into their conferences.
 - Identify who really needs to be in training.
 - Fund a training officer (it's their whole job).

Recommended Language: Build a culture of evidence-based fundamentals and encourage practices that include data, that can support continual improvement and attract long-term investment in programs.

Priority 2 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Support the interest demonstrated by counties on working at Intercept points 0 & 1 of the SIM. Build knowledge and expertise to operate programs at the earliest possible points.

- Support county interest in focusing on early SIM intercepts (0 & 1) by clarifying the balance between community-based and criminal justice responses.
 - Do we determine whether to explicitly prioritize these intercepts or frame the approach more broadly under SIM?
- Comments from Subcommittee and DOJ staff
 - Mapping/look at data to be able to identify programs that want to operate.
 - Stay away from crisis services because lots of funding for that already. Focus on community services.
 - Think about the line of where someone is justice involved to align with JAG intent/law enforcement (LE) and not to bleed into it too soon.
 - Think about just saying deflection instead of intercept 0 & 1 OR just saying various points of the SIM model.
 - In development of intercept model that develops the model of EBDM making. (Notes are expressing that subcommittee members encouraged DOJ staff to say what we mean, if that is deflection, or say all points but have wording that encourages both SIM and EBDM because they are basically the same thing.)

Recommended Language: Support the interest demonstrated by counties on working at the SIM. Build knowledge and expertise to operate programs at the earliest possible points.

Priority 3 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Respond to changing demographics in the state and focus on building capacity to address those changes so that all the state’s citizens who interact with the criminal justice system receive proper services.

- Not much discussion here, only a word change – from receive proper services to receive appropriate services

Recommended Language: Respond to changing demographics in the state and focus on building capacity to address those changes so that all the state’s citizens who interact with the criminal justice system receive appropriate services.

Priority 4 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Support efforts to foster a strong connection between all criminal justice partners, including between the state, tribal, and local jurisdictions. Enhance the ability of all partners to adapt to changing trends and emerging topics.

- Comments from Subcommittee and DOJ staff
 - The group agreed this was a good starting point.
 - Create an atmosphere of being vigilant because it will help you notice what the data is showing you. Be attentive.
 - Dashboards could be a goal under this priority.
 - CJCC goal – live up to EBDM policy #3. Discuss hard things in the CJCC even if means calling each other out. Subcommittee members noted some

conversations may not happen in the CJCC because they are being dealt with between agencies already at a lower level.

Recommended Language: Support efforts to foster a strong connection between all criminal justice partners, including between the state, tribal, and local jurisdictions. Enhance the ability of all partners to adapt to changing trends and emerging topics. (same as proposed)

Priority 5 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Sustain long-term efforts to combat pervasive problems historically addressed by JAG: drug enforcement and violent crime. Focus on both prevention and response and coordinate with traditional and non-traditional partners to address the problems in a comprehensive manner.

- Comments from Subcommittee and DOJ staff
 - Address key drivers of criminal behavior by prioritizing behavioral health and responsivity needs alongside traditional enforcement approaches.
 - Focus on mental health and substance use which are drivers of criminal behavior.

Recommended Language: Sustain long-term efforts to combat pervasive problems historically addressed by JAG: drug enforcement and violent crime. Focus on both prevention and response and coordinate with traditional and non-traditional partners to address the problems in a comprehensive manner. (same as proposed)

Priority 6 – PROPOSED LANGUAGE – Encourage a community centered approach for those who have contact with the criminal justice system that includes a support network for family members and victims, and emphasizes programs like peer support, restorative justice, and programs that educate and end cycles of violence and substance use disorder.

- Encourage a community-centered approach that emphasizes prevention, post-intervention, and sustained community-based support.
- Comments from Subcommittee and DOJ staff
 - “prevention” including family members of those who committed crimes.
 - Suggestions about wording change in the priority. Community intervention approaches are focused on the person committing the crime and postvention is for others in the community/circle of that person.
 - Types of programs that we could have goals for include peer support, restorative justice, and postvention/prevention. In an original version of this priority, DOJ staff named these specifically.

Recommended Language: Encourage and support a community intervention and postvention approach for those who have contact with the criminal justice system that

includes support network for family members and victims and emphasizes programs that educate and end cycles of violence and substance use disorder.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Co-Chair Woodruff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion was made by Heather Kierzek and seconded by Amanda Hanson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed on a voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

2026 Meeting Dates

June 18, August 20, Oct 15, Dec 17