

Washtenaw Equity Partnership (WEP) Court Process Subcommittee

September 15, 2022 5:00-6:30 pm

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Deb Labelle (Co-chair)
Judge Kuhnke (Co-chair)
Judge Connors
Nimish Ganatra
Peter Joseph Martel
Robert Burton-Harris
Ted Heaton
Joe Summers
Alex Roth (Vera)
Tara Dhanraj (Vera)

Notes:

- Goal for today is to discuss research on PSI's and specialty courts and particularly look at recommendations.
 - Subcommittee will be submitting draft recommendations to the WEP for October 18 meeting for the whole workgroup to review.
 - November subcommittee meeting will serve as time to finalize recommendations.
- Research summaries
 - Questions from subcommittee members about research summaries.
 - Co-chair sent request for additional information via email prior to meeting.
 - Co-chair stated they might have some information on trainings and qualifications of people conducting PSIs.
 - Important to know if staff is supposed to have certain training or educational background. Important to know demographics (age, race, gender) of staff conducting PSIs.
 - Vera staff member stated they would try to gather information but may not be able to obtain from MDOC.
 - Minimum qualifications might be publicly available.
 - Co-chair asked question about recommendations and actual outcomes? Vera staff stated the information is not documented in a database where it can be assessed overall.
 - Co-chair understands a performance measure of probation officers is tracking if the PSI recommendation is followed through by probation officer. Co-chair will follow up with person who shared this information with them.
 - Co-chair would like to know what training is referenced in the document. Vera staff clarified it is implicit bias training. All MDOC staff must take this training.
 - Subcommittee member wants to know if PSI research is only looking at probation not misdemeanor probation.
 - Recommendation for standard in writing PSIs for misdemeanor courts/charges??
 - Only two races in JIS, black or white. No ethnicity information. Many races are combined into a "other" category.

- Did not provide misdemeanor information because there isn't standard information on it.
- Co-chair expresses interest in having members who have to leave meeting early have access to the remainder of the meeting. Suggestion for Alex to set up an email system to have vibrant conversations about the recommendations.
- Bail – might not be able to do much because Vera will not be able to access district court data. Might be able to use time served variable from the court data.
 - Co-chair – settlement in Wayne County; terms of the settlement is something everyone should look at.
 - Vera can summarize national research on bail, best practices, MI bail laws pending legislation as examples of how Washtenaw County can improve bail conditions.
- Restorative Justice research summary will be ready early next week.
- Scheduling October meeting. Sounds like Wednesday October 5 at 5:30 will work for the majority of people. A room in the courthouse will be available to use. Co-chair will send Vera information about meeting space.
- Vera staff will send around an email and will send additional research summaries as they are complete.