WASHINGTON
COURTS

October 23, 2024

TO: Data Dissemination Committee

FROM: Kevin Cottingham, AOC Data Dissemination Administrator

RE: Policy for Non-Court Community Court Staff

As part of a general statewide effort, many courts have developed various therapeutic courts—including community court, mental health court, drug court, and veteran's courts, among others—to "identify and address the underlying challenges of court participants that may contribute to further criminal activity. [Their] goal is to build stronger and safer neighborhoods and reduce recidivism"[1] and they are found at each level of trial court in the state.

Generally speaking, community courts are staffed by court personnel, but smaller jurisdictions might not have the funding to fully fund all roles. Even courts in larger jurisdictions benefit from the involvement of non-judicial staff in the process. King County describes their community courts as "collaborative effort between King County District Court, local cities, service providers and other public agencies."[2]

AOC has recently become aware that there is no uniform policy covering JIS access for non-judicial staff and I have been tasked with developing a policy and bringing it before the DDC.

The DDC previously approved a policy granting temporary RACFIDs for city and county-level IT staff who support the courts, broadening it from three six-month accounts to unlimited one-year accounts a few years ago. AOC recommends that the DDC further expand this policy to also cover city and county level community court staff who support the daily operations of the therapeutic courts. The proposed policy would read:

The Data Dissemination Committee has agreed to allow unlimited, up to AOC's discretion, temporary RACFIDs for ~~non-court~~ non-judiciary IT and therapeutic court

[1] https://kingcounty.gov/en/court/district-court/courts-jails-legal-system/therapeutic-specialty-courts/community-courts
[2] *Id*.

staff. All accounts must be end-dated to expire after 12 months, but renewal is permitted if site coordinators contact AOC.

JABS access here is useful, particularly determining the availability of services for a particular individual. Court staff conduct a “risk needs responsivity assessment”, taking into account an individual’s criminal history to determine the likelihood of success and whether they have been responsive to intervention in the past, among other indicators. Without JABS, personnel would have to route every request through court staff, who may be underfunded. An AOC staff member who supports therapeutic courts worked in one in the past and stated that her part-time position was funded by 17 different sources.

Governing these users through the courts specifically would also be useful, as courts are allowed to add users only through AOC’s web-based Manage User Form, which may only be submitted by designated site coordinators on each site. Each ticket is created in AOC’s internal ticketing system, and all requests will be visible and retained for audit purposes. Additionally, AOC’s security staff audit all accounts on a yearly basis, and these accounts would be subject to this audit.