

STEERING COMMITTEE ON DATA-BASED COURT PERFORMANCE AND DATA STANDARDS

September 3, 2025

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Hybrid Attendance - In Person and Zoom Webinar
MINUTES

Members Present: Hon. James Beene, Hon. Robert Brooks, Ms. Rachel Cameron, Hon. Thomas L. Chotena, Ms. Jennifer Curtiss, Ms. Niltza Flores, Ms. Shawn Friend, Ms. Tina Mattison, Ms. Donna McQuality, Hon. Douglas Metcalf, Hon. Michael Peterson, Ms. Nancy Rodriguez, Mr. Jeff Schrade, and Hon. Don Taylor

Members Absent: Hon. Heidi Owens and Hon. Trevor Ward

Presenters and Guests: Mr. Kip Anderson, Mr. Jon Bearup, Ms. Jennifer Ferguson, Mr. Jeff Fine, and Hon. Jerry Landau

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff: Ms. Jennifer Jones, Mr. Michael Malone, Ms. Laura Ritenour, and Mr. Michael Wise

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The September 3, 2025 meeting of the Steering Committee on Data-Based Court Performance and Data Standards was called to order by the Chair, Justice James Beene, at 12:00 p.m. Justice Beene conducted member roll call, established a quorum, and mentioned the meeting was being recorded. Justice Beene welcomed Judge Brooks to the committee. Judge Brooks will be representing the Maricopa County Superior Court bench and comes highly recommended from Presiding Judge Pamela Gates.

B. Approval of the June 4, 2025, Minutes

The draft minutes from the June 2025 meeting were presented for approval. Justice Beene called for any corrections to the minutes, and none were made.

A motion was made by Judge Michael Peterson and seconded by Tina Mattison to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

II. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Call to the Public

Justice Beene announced that the "Call to the Public" section has moved to the beginning of the meetings to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. Justice Beene made a call to the public for comments. There was no answer.

B. Update from DUI Time Standards Training Workgroup

Judge Jerry Landau and Laura Ritenour provided an update on behalf of the workgroup. Chief Justice Timmer will be issuing an Administrative Order requiring all Limited Jurisdiction Judicial Officers to complete DUI training. This includes watching an upcoming training video prior to attending one of the in-person sessions, which will be held at both the 2025 Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) Conference and the 2026 Judicial Conference. The next workgroup meeting is scheduled for September 17.

C. Updates from Court Administrators re: Felony Technical Assistance Project

In 2024, six county court administrators shared updates on the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) technical assistance project and the outcomes they aimed to achieve. Gila County and Mohave County reported on their implementation challenges and early results.

Gila County

Jon Bearup provided background on Gila County's efforts and key recommendations from the project. Initially, the Early Disposition Court (EDC) faced limited stakeholder engagement, but that improved over time. Challenges included inconsistent attorney participation, turnover in the public defender's office, and data integrity issues partially due to clerk staff turnover. Since implementing firm trial dates, trial activity has increased by 120% and hearings have become more focused, with expectations for continued improvements in case processing timeframes. The EDC, launched in June 2025 in collaboration with the Chief Deputy County Attorney, is expected to impact 10–15% of felony cases in its first year. Stakeholder engagement, particularly with attorneys and the bar, is viewed as essential to long-term success.

Mohave County

Kip Anderson shared that Mohave County has seen a recent decrease in trials after emphasizing early plea offers. While an Early Disposition Court has not been established, judges are working collaboratively and holding each other accountable to improve outcomes. The public defender's office has experienced high turnover, making sustained culture change difficult. A key takeaway has been the importance of tailoring reforms to local conditions rather than simply adopting external models. Although data is not currently shared publicly, judges are comfortable sharing performance

metrics internally using the AOC dashboard under the new felony case management plan.

D. Data Standardization Advisory Committee (DSAC) Update

Mike Malone presented the summary of the work done by the Advisory Committee over the past three months. A question was raised about tracking the number and types of search warrants noting that with some case management systems they're able to generate this data automatically, while others require manual collection. It was stated that entering that type of search warrant data into the CMS is not mandatory at this time but would be in the future. Laura commented that in AJACS, submitting the search warrant cover sheet prompts a form for entering search warrant details.

E. 2026 Steering Committee Meeting – Proposed Dates

Laura Ritenour presented the proposed meeting dates for calendar year 2026.

A motion was made by Nancy Rodriguez and seconded by Judge Michael Peterson to approve the CY2026 meeting schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Perceptions of Time Standards Report Accuracy and Proposal to Form a Workgroup to Recommend Strategies to Improve Accuracy of Time Standards Reports

Laura Ritenour and Jeff Fine presented findings from a survey sent to superior court administrators regarding their trust in the accuracy of time standards reports. It was noted that a common perception is that the reports do not always reflect actual court activity, partly due to events being recorded in ways that exclude them from time standards compliance. Staffing and training challenges in clerk's offices also impact the accuracy of data entry. Jeff stated he will meet with several courts to better understand their concerns and identify best places to put applicable resources.

The group discussed challenges in accurately capturing excluded time when minute entries lack specific detail. Clerk leaderships are hesitant to allow staff to interpret entries due to discretion, workload, and reliance on entry titles rather than content. While a cheat sheet was suggested to help standardize data entry, some felt it would add to already lengthy reference materials. Maricopa County noted most issues occur in family law and requested no additional language requirements for judges in those cases. Due to the need for ongoing discussions, the creation of a workgroup was recommended.

A motion was made by Judge Michael Peterson and seconded by Judge Don Taylor to approve the creation of a workgroup to improve accuracy of time standards reports. The motion passed unanimously.

G. FY25 Draft Statewide Time Standards Data

Laura Ritenour presented the annual time standards reports from all Arizona courts. She stated that the Supreme Court recently approved a change to Rule 18(a) for Guardianship and Conservatorship cases, requiring hearing dates to be requested within 30 days instead of 60, effective January 2026. The DUI time standards revisions were implemented this year, while the time standards revisions related to Criminal Felony, Juvenile Delinquency and Status Offenses, Dependency Hearings, and Termination of Parental Rights will be implemented in FY26.

H. National Center for State Courts, excerpt from August 14th Data Dives webinar on Data-Driven Leadership

Laura Ritenour showed an excerpt from a recent NCSC Data Dives webinar that discussed publishing court data publicly. Justice Beene began the discussion by noting that promoting transparency and trust in the judiciary is part of the Chief Justice’s strategic agenda. After the video, a committee member raised the possibility of private companies using court data and AI to generate reports, but Justice Beene stated he is not aware of any current efforts in that area. The committee discussed challenges in publishing accurate data due to limitations in case management systems, various data and record formats, and the need for manual document review. Questions were raised about whether data should be published by court, county, or judicial officer (JO), with some expressing concern about releasing individual JO data, particularly for those subject to retention elections. There was also concern about the disproportionate impact Maricopa County may have on statewide data.

I. Updates on Required Data Elements and Code Standardization

Laura Ritenour presented updates on required data elements and code standardization projects, noting that both initiatives are still in progress and will require several more years to complete.

J. Update on Meeting Goal 4.1 of the 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda

Laura Ritenour reviewed Goal 4.1 of the 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda and provided updates to the committee. She reminded members that last year they approved intermediate steps to ensure the agenda’s objectives are met by 2029, many of which are still in progress.

K. Updates and Comments from Members

There were no updates, comments, or questions.

L. Adjournment

Judge Michael Peterson made a motion to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

III. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

The next meeting is Wednesday, December 3, 2025, and is hybrid format, with attendees and members appearing either in-person at the State Courts Building or over Zoom webinar. In-person attendees and members should come to Room 331 at the State Courts Building, 1501 W. Washington, Phoenix AZ 85007.