

LEGAL SERVICES MEETING  
MEETING 11.2.21 @ 11:45 AM

SUMMARY:

Judge Quartermaine's presentation spurred a great discussion on our current specialty court system and whether a CTC, such as the one established in Sarasota, would make sense here. We all agreed that gathering some additional data would help the subcommittee better evaluate that question and would also help with a grant application if the subcommittee determines that a CTC makes sense and if the First Judicial Circuit is interested in establishing something similar in Escambia County. Our discussion also highlighted an overall need for more mental health services/beds for homeless, particularly given that under program requirements, homeless may be unable to participate in certain specialty court programs while unhoused. We hope to explore these issues further at future subcommittee meetings.

We also talked about other pre/post diversion programs that we should explore as part of the subcommittee's work and plan on setting up several guest speakers over the next few months. Specifically, we hope to hear from both Okaloosa County Law Enforcement and the Administrator for the One Hopeful Place Shelter (also in Okaloosa County) to find out more about that program and the "hot beds" that they have established for individuals who are picked up and are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We are also reaching out to a few current/former local Judges for their input on many of the issues we are discussing and to get their thoughts on best practices/gaps. In addition, we are going to schedule some time to hear about other jail diversion programs and alternative approaches to prosecution of the homeless in other Florida counties that have led to successful results.

We are grateful for everyone's time and input on these issues and will send out information on our December meeting agenda as we get closer. Also, please add the new invite series to your calendars so that we have as many of you in attendance as possible at future meetings.

MEETING ADJOURNED 1:00 PM