

The Supreme Court of Ohio

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Justice Sharon L. Kennedy and Justices Patrick F. Fischer, R. Patrick DeWine, Jennifer Brunner, Joseph T. Deters, Daniel R. Hawkins, Megan E. Shanahan

CC: Bob Horner, Administrative Director
Gina Palmer, Deputy Administrative Director
Stephanie Nelson, Director Court Services Division

FROM: Judge Ian English, Chairperson of the Commission on Specialized Dockets
Sam Campbell, Manager of Specialized Dockets Section

DATE: January 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Commission on Specialized Dockets 2024 Annual Report

In accordance with Rule of Superintendence 36.11, please accept this annual report detailing the activities and accomplishments of the Specialized Dockets (Commission) for 2024.

The Commission on Specialized Dockets was created on November 13, 2012, with the adoption of Rule of Superintendence 36.02. The purpose and duties of the Commission are defined in Sup. R. 36.03(A):

The Commission on Specialized Dockets shall advise the Supreme Court and its staff on all of the following: (1) the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning specialized dockets in Ohio courts; (2) the development and delivery of specialized docket services to Ohio courts, including training programs for judges and court personnel; (3) the consideration of any other issues the Commission deems necessary to assist the Supreme Court and its staff regarding specialized dockets in Ohio courts.

The Commission is comprised of twenty-two members. Appointments were made based on specific roles defined in Sup. R. 36.04(A). The Commission met for the first time on April 10, 2013. During 2024, Judge Ian English of the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas, General Division served as the chair of the Commission and Magistrate Robert Rice of the Probate/Juvenile Division of the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas served as the vice-chair.

In 2024, the Commission met virtually three times on February 8th, June 14th, and December 13th, and once in-person on August 13th. The Commission activities included:

- recommending the certification of specialized dockets;
- planning and executing the Fall Annual Specialized Dockets Conference;
- discussing subcommittee roles and projects; and
- developing responses to local dockets pertaining to emerging issues.

Certification Recommendation

As of December 31, 2024, the Commission approved 53 specialized dockets for final certification during 2024. Re-certifications accounted for 45 of the dockets, and eight of the dockets were new programs. The eight new certified specialized dockets are as follows:

- Butler County Court #3 (Judge Courtney Caparella-Kraemer)
- Canton Municipal Court (Judge Kristen Guardado)
- Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, General Division (Judge Alison Hatheway)
- Medina County Court of Common Pleas, General Division (Judge William Hutson)
- Miami County Court of Common Pleas, General Division (Judge Stacy Wall)
- Mount Vernon Municipal Court (Judge John Thatcher)
- Trumbull County Court of Common Pleas, General Division (Judge Anthony Donofrio)
- Xenia Municipal Court (Judge David McNamee)

Currently, there are 255 operational specialized dockets in Ohio that have achieved either initial or final certification.

2024 Fall Annual Specialized Docket Conference

On October 25, 2024, the Annual Specialized Dockets Conference was held in person at the Ohio Union on the Ohio State University Campus. Approximately 575 specialized docket professionals and stakeholders attended from across Ohio. The Conference offered two plenary sessions and two breakouts where participants chose from 18 options. This one-day conference offered a total of 6.0 credit hours approved for CLE and CEU's for social workers, with 4.5 hours approved for COB hours for probation officers. The 6.0 credit hours for CLE meets the educational requirement for judges presiding over specialized dockets.

Reentry Task Force and Commission Subcommittees

The Supreme Court of Ohio Task Force on Reentry completed the work it began in 2023. The Final Report and Recommendations were released to the public in September 2024. It included numerous recommendations for the judiciary as well as the executive and legislative branches. The section worked with the Judicial College and several Task Force members to create an online course titled *Reentry Essentials*.

The Commission added a reentry implementation subcommittee focusing on the judicial branch recommendations from the Task Force on Reentry Final Report and Recommendations.

Emerging Issues

The Commission continued to explore specific guidance areas for Ohio's specialized dockets during 2024. The Commission released guidance on Concurrent Supervision in a Specialized Docket, completing work that began in 2023. The Commission also became familiar with the updated second edition of the All Rise Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. Other emerging issues considered by the Commission in 2024 include the proper use of peer supporters in treatment team meetings, blanket requirements for participation in 12-step groups, juvenile drug testing guidance, and the use of alternative tracks in treatment courts.

Thank you for your support and the continued opportunity to promote the advancement and provision of specialized docket services to Ohio courts. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on the work of the Commission.