

# Department of Public Advocacy



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March 2018

## DEFENDER SERVICES BRANCH ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING WORKER PROGRAM Available Statewide, from Pikeville to Paducah



### Alternative Sentencing Workers will be there



**Chris Cohron**

"Ms. Clement has built an excellent track record on finding treatment options for defendants that had exhausted all traditional avenues. Her work has provided all parties and the Court another viable option to appropriately address the issues of the defendants."

Chris Cohron  
Commonwealth's Attorney,  
Bowling Green

"I love the DPA Alternative Sentencing Social Worker, Joanne Sizemore. If we had more Joanne Sizemores we could do so much more about drugs and other problems that plague those on court dockets. Having a social worker involved is making a difference, leading to genuine reform in people's lives, which is what we want."

John Paul Chappell, Chief Judge  
Knox and Laurel District Court



**John Paul Chappell**

# National Center for State Courts Sentencing Attitudes Survey Findings

## FINDING

Americans think rehabilitation is a more important priority than punishment and overwhelmingly believe that many offenders can, in fact, be successfully rehabilitated. But most see America's prisons as unsuccessful rehabilitation.

## FINDING

High levels of public support are found for alternatives to a prison sentence like probation, restitution, and mandatory participation in job training, counseling, or treatment programs, at least for non-violent offenders. The public is particularly receptive to using such alternatives in sentencing younger offenders and the mentally ill.

Sentencing Attitudes Survey (2006 National Poll of 1,502 randomly selected adults).

For Full Report: <http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Microsites/Files/CSI/The%20NCSC%20Sentencing%20Attitudes%20Survey.ashx>



"The DPA alternative sentencing social workers provide much needed individualized sentencing options to prosecutors and judges. The DPA program is a proven way to help defendants change behavior and not reoffend, saving the state significant incarceration costs. If the program is expanded, more defendants would be helped and more savings would result."

**Van Ingram, Executive Director**  
Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy

## Why DPA?

A common thread spreading through most departments in the Cabinet for Justice and Public Safety is vested interests in reducing incarceration. While the Department of Corrections, judges, prosecutors, and parole officers can all set up compulsory participation in community-based interventions, the defense can provide a unique role in doing this.

- Given a relationship built on trust, the defense's Alternative Sentencing Workers (ASWs) can gain the clients' active decisions to participate in rehabilitative interventions.
- Our ASWs use this defense advantage to get client buy-in rather than mere compliance with court orders.
- ASWs use Motivational Interviewing, an evidence-based practice, to facilitate the client's readiness to start the treatment process.
- With an ASW's involvement the court can mandate some form of supervised release following a defense motion rather than a governmental punishment.



# Alternative Sentencing Workers Enhance the Criminal Justice System by ...

- Facilitating collaboration among agencies within the criminal justice system to support rehabilitation, reduced recidivism, and promote public safety.
- Providing relevant mitigating information about the defendant's physical health, mental history, and social history.
- Conducting comprehensive assessments and making referrals to address all the defendant's multiple needs beyond those apparent on the surface.
- Providing additional alternatives to incarceration.
- Creating individualized plans to address the defendant's unique characteristics and needs.
- Providing more detailed information about community resources, services, and programs including eligibility guidelines and process to obtain services.



**Kita Clement** of the Bowling Green Trial Office is the DPA's ASW Specialist. In addition to maintaining a caseload, Kita provides assistance to other ASWs including job shadowing and training in the field.

Kita is also a liaison for ASWs with questions regarding medical insurance. Kita assists program leadership, by attending meetings and conferences at both the state and national level, presenting at training events, and is currently our lead ASW participating in the National Center for State Courts' Holistic Study of Defense.

**Courtney Ham** of the Louisville-Jefferson County Public Defender's Office provides supervision to five other ASWs in Louisville, in addition to maintaining her caseload. As a liaison for her office, Courtney builds and maintains relationships with service providers in the community. She also tracks the data regarding office caseloads and provides the DPA with caseload data as requested.



## DPA Alternative Sentencing Workers are focused on creating positive lasting changes by...

- Breaking the cycle of substance abuse and jail.
- Diverting adults and juveniles with addiction and mental illness, to community based treatment which in turn saves incarceration costs.
- Connecting clients to services and treatment to successfully transition into their communities and become productive citizens.
- Increasing clients' economic self-sufficiency so they may work, pay taxes, provide child support, pay restitution, and pay court costs.
- Reducing recidivism and promoting public safety.
- Changing lives by investing in human capital.





In 2017, DPA's Alternative Sentencing Worker Program was presented the Jefferson B. Fordham State and Local Government Law award for Law Office Accomplishment by the American Bar Association.

# ALTERNATIVE Advancing Public Safety SENTENCING Saving County & State Incarceration Costs WORKER Working with Community Partners PROGRAM Promoting Rehabilitation



**Sarah G. Johnson** returned to the DPA Alternative Sentencing Program she helped create. Sarah holds a BSW from Morehead State University and a Masters of Social Work with a mental health concentration from the University of Kentucky. Mrs. Johnson started her career as a mental health and substance abuse treatment provider. She was one of the three original social workers hired for the DPA Social Work Pilot Project in 2006 and worked five years in that capacity. During her previous time with DPA, Sarah was instrumental in establishing our social work program. Sarah excelled in leadership by helping to show the value of the program. In August 2011, Mrs. Johnson was appointed to the Kentucky Parole Board. She returned to DPA in December 2015 and is excited to be back to help lead our program as the Defender Services Branch Manager.

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