FISCAL SNAPSHOT

PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

Date: July 2025 **Analyst: Robin R. Risko**

Summary

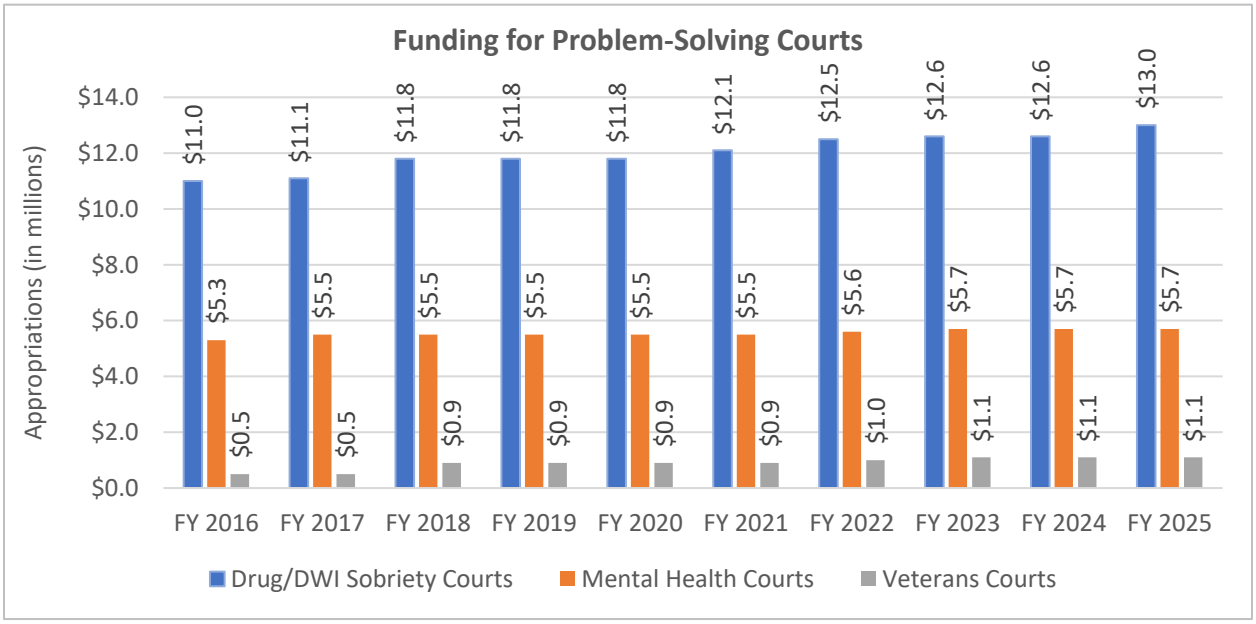
In the FY 2024-25 Judiciary budget, a little over $19.7 million is appropriated for problem-solving courts (PSCs). Specifically, $13.0 million is appropriated for drug treatment/DWI sobriety courts, $5.7 million is appropriated for mental health courts, and $1.1 million is appropriated for veterans treatment courts.

Background

PSCs were created in the Revised Judicature Act (1961 PA 236). Drug treatment courts were created in Chapter 10A, mental health courts in Chapter 10 B, and veterans courts in Chapter 12. Funding for drug treatment/DWI sobriety courts was first appropriated in FY 2000-01. These courts operate to rehabilitate offenders diagnosed with substance use disorders through a combination of therapeutic services and judicial supervision. Funding was first appropriated for mental health and veterans treatment courts in FY 2013-14. Mental health courts target offenders who have been diagnosed with serious mental illnesses, serious emotional disturbances, or developmental disabilities. Veterans courts use a hybrid integration of drug treatment court and mental health court principles to help address the particular needs of military veterans who become involved with the court system.

Recent Activity

PSCs offer opportunities to participate in court-based treatment programs to address substance use disorders and mental illnesses instead of sentencing nonviolent criminal offenders to lengthy jail or prison terms. As of March 4, 2025, there were 136 drug treatment/DWI sobriety courts (61 hybrid drug treatment/DWI sobriety courts, 42 DWI sobriety courts, 12 adult and 8 juvenile drug treatment courts, 9 family dependency courts, and 4 tribal drug treatment/DWI sobriety courts); 41 mental health courts (34 adult and 7 juvenile courts); and 27 veterans treatment courts operating in the state.

The Bottom Line

PSCs use therapeutic models that combine intense supervision and monitoring with treatment for substance use disorders and mental illness. Because ignoring the underlying reasons why people commit crimes typically results in a repeat cycle of criminal activity, PSCs were created to bring together the criminal justice and behavioral treatment fields so that treatment services address behaviors that lead to crime. PSC goals include reducing recidivism by addressing the root causes of crime among individuals using evidence-based practices.