FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 831	**COMPANION BILL:** CS/SB 820 (Bradley)
TITLE: Problem-solving Court Reports	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Cassel	**RELATED BILLS:** None

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 114 **Y's** 0 **N's** **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill requires the Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA) to report additional data in an annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives related to problem-solving courts. Additionally, the bill:

- Provides that OSCA's annual report on problem-solving courts is due no later than January 31 of each year for the previous fiscal year.
- Adds a dependency drug court and an early childhood court to the definition of "problem-solving court," and removes a community court from the definition.
- Amends statutes related to early childhood court programs and veterans treatment court programs to require the collection of certain data and information for the purpose of program evaluation.
- Requires mental health and treatment-based drug court programs to collect specified data and information, including the number of program admissions and terminations.
- Requires OSCA's annual problem-solving court report to provide specified uniform aggregate data within certain timeframes, subject to specified appropriations.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on OSCA and local government by requiring specified information to be included in problem-solving court reports.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

HB 831 passed as CS/SB 820.

The bill requires the Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA) to report additional data in an annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives related to problem-solving courts, which is due no later than January 31 of each year for the previous fiscal year. (Section 1)

The bill adds a dependency drug court and an early childhood court to the definition of "problem-solving court," and removes a community court from the definition. Thus, OSCA will be required to annually report specified data related to dependency drug courts and early childhood courts, but will no longer be required to annually report specified community court data. (Section 1)

In addition to the current requirement for OSCA to report information for each problem-solving court relating to the number of participants for the fiscal year, the types of services provided, each source of funding for the fiscal year, and information on the performance of the court based upon outcome measures established by the courts, the bill requires OSCA's annual report to include uniform aggregate data for each court that describes:

- The number of participants.
- Participant primary offense that resulted in the court program referral or sentence, if applicable.
- Treatment compliance.

- Program completion status and reasons for any failure to complete.
- Offenses committed during program participation, if applicable.
- Frequency of court appearances.
- Units of service.
- Participant changes in the status of employment, housing, and child custody during program participation.
- Other uniform information that demonstrates the effectiveness of the program. (Section 1)

The bill specifies that the above reporting requirements apply to early childhood court programs, veterans treatment court programs, and mental health and treatment-based drug court programs. The bill also:

- Amends statutes related to early childhood court programs and veterans treatment court programs to require such courts to annually report the number of:
  - Admissions and terminations.
  - Referral and screening procedures.
  - Eligibility criteria.
  - Type and duration of treatment offered.
  - Residential treatment resources (Sections 2 and 3)
- Revises reporting requirements related to mental health and treatment-based drug court programs so that such programs must annually report the number of program admissions and terminations in addition to referral and screening procedures, eligibility criteria, type and duration of treatment offered, and residential treatment resources to OSCA. (Sections 4 and 5)

The bill creates the following reporting deadlines for OSCA's annual problem-solving court report:

- For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, OSCA must provide the required uniform aggregate data for at least 30 percent of problem-solving courts funded by the state courts system's problem-solving courts appropriation.
- For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, OSCA must provide the required uniform aggregate data for every problem-solving court funded by the state courts system's problem-solving court appropriation.
- For the 2027-2028 fiscal year, and every fiscal year thereafter, OSCA must provide the required uniform aggregate data for all problem-solving courts. (Section 6)

The bill specifies that changes made to early childhood court programs, veterans treatment court programs, mental health court programs, and treatment-based drug court programs will apply to court programs funded by the state courts system's problem-solving court appropriation on July 1, 2026, and will apply to all other court programs on July 1, 2027. (Section 7)

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 12, 2026, ch. 2026-139, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2026. (Section 8)

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on OSCA by requiring specified information and data to be included in an annual problem-solving court report, beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on local government by requiring all problem-solving courts to report to OSCA specified information and data to be included in an annual problem-solving court report, beginning July 1, 2027.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Problem-Solving Courts

Problem-solving courts are designed to address the root causes of a person's involvement with the justice system.[1] Such courts do this by utilizing specialized court dockets, multidisciplinary teams, and a non-adversarial approach to ensure a person receives the individualized treatment he or she needs to successfully leave the justice system.[2] As of October 2025, there were at least 180 problem-solving courts in Florida.[3] The most common types of problem-solving courts include:

- Adult drug courts;
- Dependency drug courts;
- Early childhood courts;
- Juvenile drug courts;
- Mental health courts; and
- Veterans courts.[4]

Annual OSCA Problem-Solving Courts Report

Under s. 43.51, F.S., the Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA) must provide an annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which:

- Details the number of participants in each problem-solving court for each fiscal year the court has been operating;
- Lists the types of services provided;
- Identifies each source of funding for each court during each fiscal year; and
- Provides information on the performance of each court based upon outcome measures established by the courts.

As it relates to the reporting requirement, the term "problem-solving court" includes, but is not limited to, specified:

- Drug courts;[5]
- Veterans treatment court programs;[6]
- Mental health court programs;[7]
- Community courts;[8] and
- Delinquency pretrial intervention court programs.[9,10]

According to OSCA, although not statutorily required, its annual report provides data for the number of admissions to certain types of problem-solving courts. Since 2008, OSCA has collected this data by calendar year for adult drug courts, dependency drug courts, DUI courts, and juvenile drug courts. Thereafter, OSCA began collecting such data for:

- Veterans courts, in 2015;
- Mental health courts, in 2016;

---

[1] OSCA, *Florida Problem-Solving Courts Report*, https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/2448144/file/2024%20Florida%20Problem-Solving%20Courts%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf (last visited Mar. 25, 2026).
[2] *Id.* at 2.
[3] *Id.*
[4] *Id.* at 5.
[5] Ss. 397.334, 948.01, 948.06, 948.08, 948.16, or 948.20, F.S.
[6] Ss. 394.47891, 948.08, 948.16, or 948.21, F.S.
[7] Ss. 394.47892, 948.01, 948.06, 948.08, or 948.16, F.S.
[8] S. 948.081, F.S.
[9] S. 985.345, F.S.
[10] S. 43.51(2), F.S.

- The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's Marchman Act drug court, in 2018; and
- The Eleventh Judicial Circuit's domestic violence drug court and domestic violence mental health court, in 2018.[11]

OSCA's most recent annual report states that "[t]he most common types of outcome data reported are recidivism and retention rates."[12] However, OSCA noted how "several problem-solving courts lack established outcome measures to assess performance, making them unable to provide performance information. Additionally, problem-solving courts have adopted their own outcome measures, as referenced by s. 43.51, F.S., leading to differences in measurement practices."[13]

Treatment-Based Drug Court and Mental Health Court Programs

Sections 397.334 and 394.47892, F.S., authorize each county to fund a treatment-based drug court and mental health court program, respectively, to appropriately address persons in the justice system assessed with a substance abuse problem or mental illness through treatment services tailored to the individual needs of the person.[14] A treatment-based drug court or mental health court program may be offered as a voluntary pretrial program or as a postadjudicatory program as a condition of probation or community control.[15,16]

Notwithstanding s. 921.0024, F.S.,[17] the sentencing court may place a defendant into a postadjudicatory treatment-based drug court program if the:

- Defendant's scoresheet total sentence points are 60 points or fewer;
- Offense is a nonviolent felony;[18]
- Defendant is amenable to substance abuse treatment; and
- Defendant otherwise qualifies under s. 397.334(3), F.S.

Notwithstanding s. 921.0024, F.S.,[19] the sentencing court may place a defendant into a postadjudicatory mental health court program if the:

- Offense is a nonviolent felony;
- Defendant is amenable to mental health treatment, including taking prescribed medications; and
- Defendant is otherwise qualified under s. 394.47892(4), F.S.

Entry into any postadjudicatory treatment-based drug court or mental health court program as a condition of probation or community control must be based upon the sentencing court's assessment of the defendant's criminal history, substance abuse or mental health screening outcome, amenability to the services of the program, total sentence points, the recommendation of the state attorney and the victim, if any, and the defendant's agreement to enter the program.[20]

For both postadjudicatory drug court and mental health court programs, the defendant must be fully advised of the purpose of the program and agree to enter the program. The original sentencing court must relinquish jurisdiction of the defendant's case to the postadjudicatory drug court or mental health court program until the defendant is no

---

[11] *Supra* note 1, at 4.
[12] *Id.* at 5.
[13] *Id.*
[14] Ss. 397.334(1), F.S., and 394.47892(1), F.S.
[15] Ss. 397.334(2) and (3), F.S., and 394.47892(2)-(4), F.S.
[16] When a court adjudicates a child to be dependent, the court may require the person who has custody or who is requesting custody of the child to participate in and comply with a treatment-based drug court program, and may impose appropriate available sanctions for noncompliance. Ss. 39.507 and 39.521, F.S.
[17] S. 948.01(7)(a), F.S. This section is effective for offenses committed on or after July 1, 2009.
[18] The term "nonviolent felony" means a third degree felony violation under chapter 810, F.S., or any other felony offense that is not a forcible felony as defined in s. 776.08, F.S. Ss. 948.01(7)(a), F.S. and 948.01(8)(a), F.S.
[19] S. 948.01(8)(a), F.S. This section is effective for offenses committed on or after July 1, 2016.
[20] Ss. 397.334(3)(a) and 394.47892(4)(a), F.S.

longer active in the program, the case is returned to the sentencing court due to the defendant's termination from the program for failure to comply with the terms thereof, or the defendant's sentence is completed.[21,22]

A defendant who is sentenced to a postadjudicatory drug court or mental health court program and who, while a participant in such program, is the subject of a violation of probation or community control under s. 948.06, F.S. must have any violation of probation or community control heard by the judge presiding over the postadjudicatory drug court or mental health court program. The judge must dispose of any such violation, after a hearing on or admission of the violation, as he or she deems appropriate if the resulting sentence or conditions are lawful.[23]

Data and Programmatic Information Reporting Related to Drug Court and Mental Health Court Programs
Each drug court and mental health court program must collect sufficient client-level data and programmatic information for purposes of program evaluation. Client-level data includes:

- Primary offenses that resulted in the drug or mental health court program referral or sentence;
- Treatment compliance;
- Completion status and reasons for failure to complete;
- Offenses committed during treatment and the sanctions imposed;
- Frequency of court appearances; and
- Units of service.[24]

Programmatic information includes:

- Referral and screening procedures;
- Eligibility criteria;
- Type and duration of treatment offered; and
- Residential treatment resources.[25]

The programmatic information and aggregate data on the number of drug and mental health court program admissions and terminations by type of termination must be reported annually by each drug and mental health court program to OSCA.[26]

Veterans Treatment Court Programs
Section 394.47891, F.S., authorizes a court with jurisdiction over criminal cases to create and administer a veterans treatment court (VTC) program.[27] Modeled after treatment-based drug court programs, VTCs divert eligible veterans[28] and servicemembers[29] into treatment programs for service-related conditions or trauma, including:

- Traumatic brain injury;
- Substance use disorder;
- Psychological problems; and
- Military sexual trauma.[30]

---

[21] Ss. 948.01(7)(b) and 948.01(8)(b), F.S.
[22] The satisfactory completion of a drug court or mental court program must be a condition of the defendant's probation or community control. Ss. 948.01(7)(a) and 948.01(8)(a), F.S.
[23] Ss. 397.334(3)(b) and 394.47892(4)(b), F.S.
[24] Ss. 397.334(6)(b) and 394.47892(5)(b), F.S.
[25] *Id.*
[26] *Id.*
[27] S. 394.47891(3)(a), F.S.
[28] "Veteran" means a person who has served in the military. S. 394.47891(2)(d), F.S.
[29] "Servicemember" means a member of the active or reserve components of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard; a member of the Florida National Guard; a current or former contractor for the United States Department of Defense; or a current or former military member of a foreign allied country. S. 394.47891(2)(c), F.S.
[30] S. 394.47891(8)(a)1., F.S.

Under s. 394.47891(3)(d), F.S., the chief judge and state attorney of the judicial circuit that creates and administers a VTC program have the exclusive authority to determine whether veterans who have been dishonorably discharged may participate in the program within the circuit. Diversion to a VTC program may occur at any stage of a criminal proceeding.[31] A defendant who seeks to participate in a VTC program must submit an application to the state attorney, who in turn must review each application and determine whether the defendant meets specified eligibility requirements.[32]

Veterans Treatment Court Eligibility Requirements

Section 394.47891(8), F.S., outlines the eligibility requirements for VTC programs. A defendant may participate in such a program if he or she is approved by the state attorney, in consultation with the court, and meets the following criteria:

- The defendant has a service-related mental health condition, service-related traumatic brain injury, service-related substance use disorder, or service-related psychological problem or has experienced military sexual trauma.
- The defendant's participation in the VTC program is in the interest of justice and of benefit to the defendant and the community.[33]

Community Court Programs

Under s. 948.081, F.S., each judicial circuit may establish a community court program for defendants charged with certain misdemeanor offenses. Each community court must, at a minimum:

- Adopt a non-adversarial approach;
- Establish an advisory committee to recommend solutions and sanctions in each case;
- Provide for judicial leadership and interaction; and
- In each particular case, consider the needs of the victim, consider individualized treatment services for the defendant, and monitor the defendant's compliance.

Additionally, the chief judge of the judicial circuit must, by administrative order, specify each misdemeanor offense eligible for the community court program. In making such determination, the chief judge must consider the particular needs and concerns of the communities within the judicial circuit.[34] A defendant's entry into any community court program is voluntary.[35]

The chief judge must also appoint members to an advisory committee for each community court which includes, at a minimum:

- The chief judge or a community court judge designated by the chief judge, who must serve as chair;
- The state attorney or his or her designee;
- The public defender or his or her designee; and
- The community court resource coordinator.[36]

Each judicial circuit must report client-level and programmatic data to the Office of the State Courts Administrator annually for program evaluation. Client-level data includes:

- Primary offenses resulting in the community court referral or sentence;
- Treatment compliance;
- Completion status and reasons for failing to complete the program;
- Offenses committed during treatment and sanctions imposed;
- Frequency of court appearances; and

[31] S. 394.47891(4), F.S.
[32] *Id.*
[33] S. 394.47891(8)(a), F.S.
[34] S. 948.081(2), F.S.
[35] S. 948.081(3), F.S.
[36] S. 948.081(5), F.S. The committee may also include community stakeholders, treatment representatives, and other persons the chair deems appropriate.

- Units of service.[37]

Programmatic data include referral and screening procedures, eligibility criteria, type and duration of treatment offered, and residential treatment resources.[38]

Delinquency Pretrial Intervention Court Programs

Felony Offense Intervention

Under s. 985.345(1), F.S., a child is eligible for voluntary admission into a delinquency pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program, including a treatment-based drug court program established pursuant to s. 397.334, F.S., approved by the chief judge or alternative sanctions coordinator of the circuit, if the child:

- Is charged with a felony of the second or third degree for purchase or possession of a controlled substance under ch. 893, F.S.; tampering with evidence; solicitation for purchase of a controlled substance; or obtaining a prescription by fraud; and
- Has not previously been adjudicated for a felony.

However, if the state attorney believes that the facts and circumstances of the case suggest the child's involvement in dealing and selling controlled substances, the court must hold a preadmission hearing and must deny the child's admission into a delinquency pretrial intervention program if the state attorney establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that the child was involved in dealing and selling controlled substances.[39]

While enrolled in a delinquency pretrial intervention program, a child is subject to a coordinated strategy developed by a drug court team under s. 397.334(4), F.S., which may include a protocol of sanctions that may be imposed upon the child for noncompliance with program rules. The coordinated strategy must be provided in writing to the child before the child agrees to enter the pretrial treatment-based drug court program or other pretrial intervention program, and a child whose charges are dismissed after successful completion of the treatment-based drug court program may have his or her arrest record and plea of nolo contendere to the dismissed charges expunged under s. 943.0585, F.S.[40]

Mental Health Court Intervention

Under s. 985.345(2), F.S., a child is eligible for voluntary admission into a delinquency pretrial mental health court intervention program, established pursuant to s. 394.47892, F.S., if the child is charged with:

- A misdemeanor;
- A nonviolent felony, as defined in s. 948.01(8), F.S.;
- Resisting an officer with violence under s. 843.01, F.S., if the law enforcement officer and state attorney consent to the child's participation;
- Battery on a law enforcement officer under s. 784.07, F.S., if the law enforcement officer and state attorney consent to the child's participation; or
- Aggravated assault, if the victim and state attorney consent to the child's participation.

Disposition of Cases in Delinquency Pretrial Intervention Court Programs

At the end of the delinquency pretrial felony offense or mental health court intervention period, the court must consider the recommendation of the state attorney and the program administrator as to disposition of the pending charges. The court must determine, by written finding, whether the child has successfully completed the program. If the court finds that the child has not successfully completed the program, the court may order the child to continue in an education, treatment, drug testing, or monitoring program, if resources and funding are available, or

[37] S. 948.081(7), F.S.
[38] *Id.*
[39] S. 985.345(1)(a), F.S.
[40] S. 985.345(1)(b), F.S.

order that the charges revert to normal channels for prosecution. The court may dismiss the charges upon a finding that the child has successfully completed the program.[41]

Early Childhood Court Programs

Under s. 39.01304, F.S., a circuit court may create an early childhood court program to serve the needs of infants and toddlers in dependency court. If a circuit court creates an early childhood court program, it may consider all of the following factors:

- The court supporting the therapeutic needs of the parent and child in a nonadversarial manner.
- A multidisciplinary team made up of key community stakeholders to work with the court to restructure the way the community responds to the needs of abused or neglected children.
- A community coordinator to facilitate services and resources for families, serve as a liaison between a multidisciplinary team and the judiciary, and manage data collection for program evaluation and accountability.
- A continuum of mental health services that includes those that support the parent-child relationship and are appropriate for the children and family served.

OSCA must contract for an evaluation of the early childhood court programs to ensure the quality, accountability, and fidelity of the programs' evidence-based treatment, and may provide or contract for the provision of training and technical assistance related to program services, consultation and guidance for difficult cases, and ongoing training for court teams.

[41] Ss. 985.345(1)(c) and 985.345(2)(b), F.S. A child whose charges are dismissed after successful completion of the delinquency pretrial mental health court intervention program may have his or her criminal history record for such charges expunged under s. 943.0585, F.S. *See* S. 985.345(2)(c), F.S.