

*40 Years Promoting and Supporting
Effective Community Corrections*



Mission:

To lead and unify Ohio's Community Corrections by promoting innovative, effective practices and policies that enhance public safety, improve lives, and strengthen communities.

Vision:

To be the cornerstone and voice of community corrections in Ohio

Officers:

Pres: Ro-Ellen Sinkewich

1st VP: Honorable Theresa Dellick

2nd VP: Terrance Hinton

Sec.: Katie Stenman

Treas.: Linda Janes

Table of Contents:

- 1 Pres. Message
- 3 New Bd Members
- 4 OJACC Conf.
- 5 Emerging Leaders
- 6 OJACC Retreat
- 7 Violence Reduction
- 9 OJACC Policy
- 10 Achievement

President's Message

Ro-Ellen Sinkewich, OJACC President

Hello everyone! I hope you're enjoying the summer season and finding ways to stay cool during this Ohio heatwave. Whether you're spending time outside, traveling, or simply soaking up the sunshine, I hope you're staying safe, hydrated, and comfortable.

It's been a busy time for OJACC! We are celebrating our 40th anniversary as a highlight of our 39th annual conference, "40 Years of Excellence: Building on Our Legacy and Leading into the Future," taking place on October 15th and 16th, 2026, at the Ohioan Conference and Event Center (formerly Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center)!

We are deeply grateful to our Executive Director, Gayle Dittmer, for taking us through the first 40 years and stepping out of retirement to guide us into the next 40 years! Gayle has been with OJACC from nearly the start and ensured our success every step of the way.

I'd like to thank the Board of Trustees for their commitment to our 2026 Strategic Planning Retreat facilitated by Maria Stevens. It was the most productive strategic planning session I've been to in my 25 years in community corrections. All attendees actively participated in defining our priorities, strengthening our shared vision, and setting a clear path forward for OJACC's next chapter. Your time, thoughtful input, and dedication to this work made the retreat a true success, and I am grateful for each Board member's leadership and continued commitment to advancing community corrections across Ohio.

The Board of Trustees is dedicated to the success of our selected priority initiatives for the next two years:

- 1. Create a Compelling Brand Story
- 2. Engage Juvenile Stakeholders
- 3. Develop a Leadership Succession Plan
- 4. Refine Organizational Structure
- 5. Implement a Strategic Communication Plan

SUBMISSIONS:

The OJACC Newsletter is a biannual publication of the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections. Subscription is free to all members.

The OJACC Newsletter encourages submission of articles relating to community corrections. Articles must be relatively brief, and OJACC reserves the right to edit articles for space considerations and to select which articles to publish.

Points of view expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJACC.

OJACC accepts paid advertising.

Article

Submission

& Advertising:

Gayle Dittmer
Executive Director
OJACC
P.O. Box 79
New Albany, OH 43054
(740) 420-6444
ojacc.director@gmail.com

President's Message (Con't.)

One of the most meaningful outcomes of the retreat was coming together to develop a renewed mission and vision statement that will guide OJACC into the next 40 years. These statements reflect both our proud legacy and our commitment to leading community corrections forward with purpose, unity, and innovation.

OJACC member agencies worked extremely hard during Ohio's 136th General Assembly, which introduced and advanced several bills addressing community corrections, with a focus on funding formulas, facility operations, and inmate support programs. I had the privilege of testifying, on behalf of my agency, Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana, on Ohio HB 393 to secure an amendment including Halfway Houses, as well as Community-Based Correctional Facilities (CBCFs), in the effort to assist inmates in obtaining a state ID card before release from the programs. Facilities must provide each eligible inmate without a valid ID card with the application and assistance needed to obtain one.

If you're not already an OJACC member, I encourage you to join now!

[https:// www.ojacc.org/membership-join/](https://www.ojacc.org/membership-join/)

I hope you all enjoy a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing you at the October conference as we celebrate OJACC's 40 years of excellence and continue building on our legacy together.

Welcome New Board Members

Please join us in welcoming the following individuals to the OJACC Board of Trustees:

Deputy Chief Tom Siedlecki of the Parma Police Department, representing the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police.

Madison Mackay, an attorney with Bowen, Scranton & Olsen, representing the Ohio Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

David Licate, Summit County Council, representing the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio.

To strengthen representation from the field of juvenile community corrections/community-based alternatives, the OJACC Board of Trustees approved three additional board positions at its June 2026 meeting.

The new positions include:

Juvenile Mental Health Treatment Provider – **Sarah Book**, Vice President of Residential Services at The Buckeye Ranch

Juvenile Medical Treatment Provider – **Megan Rosenfeld**, Project Manager, The Center for Safety and Healing at Nationwide Children's Hospital

Ohio Juvenile Detention Directors Association – **Jae Leeworth**, Superintendent of Portage County Juvenile Detention Center

We extend our appreciation to these new board members, as well as to all members of the Board, for their continued commitment to promote and support effective community corrections.

OJACC Trustees

Assoc. of Local Reentry Coalitions
Buckeye State Sheriffs' Assoc.
CorJus, Inc.
Corp. for Supportive Housing
County Commrs. Assoc. of Ohio
Juv. Justice Coalition
Juv. Medical Treatment Providers
Juv. Mental Health Treatment Providers
Ohio Assoc. of Chiefs of Police
Ohio Assoc. of Crim. Defense Lawyers
Ohio Assoc. of Court Admin.
Ohio Assoc. of Juvenile Ct Judges
Ohio Chief Probation Officers Assoc.
Ohio Common Pleas Judges Assoc.
Ohio Community Corrections Assoc.
Ohio Correctional and Court Svcs. Assoc.
Ohio Juv. Detention Dir. Assoc.
Ohio Municipal Attorneys Assoc.
Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Assoc.
Ohio TASC Assoc.
Ohio Victim Witness Assoc.
Specialty Dockets
Supreme Court of Ohio
Youth Advocacy Organization

Ex Officio

Office of the Oh Attorney General
Office of the Oh Public Defender
Ohio Dept. of Dev. Disabilities
Ohio Dept. of Job & Family Servs.
Ohio Dept. of Behavioral Health
Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation & Corr.
Ohio Dept. of Youth Services
Ohio Judicial Conference
Ohio Office of Crim. Justice Services

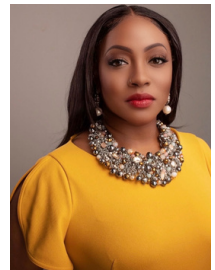
Plan to Attend as OJACC Celebrates 40 Years of Excellence at the 2026 Annual Conference

The Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections (OJACC) is pleased to present its 39th annual conference, “40 Years of Excellence: Building on Our Legacy and Leading into the Future”, as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the formation of OJACC!! The conference will be held at the Ohioan Hotel and Event Center (formerly Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center), Lewis Center, Ohio, on October 15th and 16th 2026. The conference will bring together community corrections/criminal justice professionals from across Ohio for a day and a half of learning, reflection, and practical skill-building.

The opening session Thursday morning features national speaker Maria Stevens, M.A., Executive Leadership Coach and Creator of the CORE Resilience Model™, presenting “Resilience Under Pressure: Staying Effective in a Job That Doesn’t Let Up.” Community corrections and criminal justice professionals work in high-pressure, high-stakes environments. This session focuses on redefining resilience not as simply enduring stress, but as a practical system for staying effective under pressure. Ms. Stevens will also present a workshop titled “Inspiring and Developing the Next Generation of Leaders.”



Ruchelle Pride, M.S., The Relationship Architect - Pride Coaching & Consulting, LLC, will present the second general session Thursday morning on “The Power of Restorative Practices in Individual & Organizational Health.” This dynamic session focuses on helping organizations build healthier, more accountable, and trauma-informed cultures and how restorative practices can strengthen relationships, improve communication, support well-being, and create a stronger sense of belonging while maintaining accountability.



The closing general session, “Mindfulness in the Workplace for Community Corrections,” led by Meriden McGraw, MPH, Meriden Mental Fitness and the Director of Workplace Mindfulness at the Osher Center for Integrative Health at the University of Cincinnati, focuses on helping community corrections professionals manage the chronic stress and emotional demands of their work. The session explains how mindfulness and mind-body practices can improve focus, self-awareness, resilience, emotional regulation, decision-making, and relationship effectiveness and will leave participants with practical tools.



Attendees will also be able to choose from a wide range of workshops designed to improve practices across the field.

The OJACC Achievement Awards and the ODRC Clifford Skeen Awards presentations will be held during the Thursday luncheon, recognizing excellence in community corrections.

CEUs have been applied for. Nine CLEs are approved. Changing Offender Behavior (COB) hours are approved as well. NEW THIS YEAR – OJACC will offer two Ethics Sessions, which have been applied for to satisfy licensing ethics requirements.

Please make plans to attend this highly informative conference. Registrations may be made at <https://www.ojacc.org/event/ojacc-annual-conference-the-ohioan-formerly-nationwide-hotel-event-center/> or contact Gayle Dittmer at ojacc.director@gmail.com to request a Conference Registration Brochure.

OJACC Seeks Emerging Leaders Ready to Strengthen the Future of Community Corrections in Ohio

Ohio remains at the forefront of community corrections. Sustaining that progress requires a strong pipeline of prepared, purpose-driven leaders. As a result, OJACC has worked with Maria Stevens, M.A., Executive Leadership Coach and Creator of the CORE Resilience Model™, to create a workshop at the 2026 OJACC conference to address “Inspiring and Developing the Next Generation of Leaders,” offering professionals an exceptional opportunity to explore what leadership can look like—and how they can help shape its future.

In high-stress environments, leadership roles can be viewed as simply adding more pressure and responsibility. This session challenges that perception by reconnecting leadership to purpose, impact, and legacy. Participants will consider how thoughtful leaders can make a lasting difference for colleagues, agencies, and the communities they serve. The number of participants in this workshop will be limited.

Through discussion and practical exercises, participants will learn to recognize leadership potential beyond day-to-day performance, begin meaningful development conversations, and create opportunities for people to build confidence and capability before stepping into formal roles or building on current roles.

By shifting the conversation from “more stress” to “greater impact,” community corrections professionals can cultivate a new generation of leaders who are ready to carry Ohio’s momentum forward.

Registrations may be made at <https://www.ojacc.org/event/ojacc-annual-conference-the-ohioan-formerly-nationwide-hotel-event-center/> or contact Gayle Dittmer at ojacc.director@gmail.com to request a Conference Registration Brochure.



OJACC Charts a Bold Path Forward - Launching a Strategic Plan Focused on Leadership, Engagement, Advocacy, and Innovation

The Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections (OJACC) emerged from the 2026 Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Retreat with renewed clarity, energy, and commitment. Following a comprehensive strategic planning process, OJACC has defined a focused roadmap designed to strengthen its role as the cornerstone and leading voice for community corrections across Ohio.

Guided by facilitator Maria Stevens, OJACC board members participated in a 1.5-day session to assess the organization's strengths, identify emerging challenges, and prioritize actions needed to build long-term impact. The result is a practical strategic plan centered on sustainability, advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement.

The planning process affirmed that OJACC benefits from a collaborative, diverse, and respected membership; strong communication channels; financial stability; and a credible advocacy voice. At the same time, the process surfaced important opportunities to strengthen leadership succession, clarify roles and responsibilities, expand member engagement, and better tell the story of community corrections.

Through this process, we identified the following Strategic Goals: (1) Enhance Organizational Capacity and Sustainability, (2) Strengthen Advocacy and Public Awareness, (3) Broaden Stakeholder Engagement and Representation, and (4) Promote Innovation and Best Practices.

Five Action Initiative Plans (AIPs) were then developed that will turn strategy into measurable progress: (1) Create a compelling brand story that uses data, success stories, and consistent messaging to strengthen advocacy with policymakers and partners, (2) Engage juvenile stakeholders by expanding outreach, representation, and participation among juvenile justice professionals, (3) Develop a leadership succession plan to support continuity, mentorship, and emerging leader development, (4) Refine organizational structure by clarifying committee roles, board expectations, and internal processes, and (5) Implement a strategic communication plan to increase visibility, engagement, and consistency across platforms.

Together, these initiatives are designed to strengthen organizational capacity, broaden stakeholder representation, and elevate the value of community corrections throughout the state. The Strategic Planning Retreat also resulted in updating the Mission and Vision to better represent the work of OJACC:

Mission: To lead and unify Ohio's community corrections by promoting innovative, effective practices and policies that enhance public safety, improve lives, and strengthen communities.

Vision: To be the cornerstone and voice of community corrections in Ohio.



Columbus Violence Reduction: A Community Corrections Approach to Saving Lives and Strengthening Communities

By Terrance Hinton, Ph.D.

Across the country, communities continue searching for effective solutions to address gun violence while simultaneously supporting individuals at the highest risk of offending and victimization. In Columbus, Ohio, the Columbus Violence Reduction (CVR) initiative has emerged as a comprehensive, evidence-informed strategy designed to reduce violence, improve public safety, and create meaningful opportunities for long-term behavior change among justice-involved individuals. At its core, CVR recognizes a simple but powerful reality: a relatively small number of individuals are responsible for a disproportionate amount of serious violence, and meaningful reductions in violence require both accountability and support. The initiative is modeled after the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform's (NICJR) Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), an evidence-informed approach that focuses on identifying individuals at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence and providing a coordinated response that combines accountability, support services, and community engagement (National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform [NICJR], n.d.).

The Columbus Violence Reduction initiative operates through the City of Columbus Office of Violence Prevention and utilizes a focused deterrence framework that combines community engagement, law enforcement and community corrections partnerships, intervention services, and intensive life coaching. The program specifically targets individuals identified as being at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence, many of whom are currently under probation or parole supervision, have extensive criminal justice histories, previous victimization experiences, gang or group affiliations, and significant barriers to stability and success. Rather than relying solely on enforcement strategies, CVR seeks to interrupt cycles of violence by addressing the underlying factors that often contribute to continued criminal justice involvement.

The structure of the program consists of two primary components: Intervention and Life Coaching. Interventionists serve as frontline outreach workers who identify, engage, and build relationships with high-risk individuals through direct community outreach, hospital responses, correctional facility engagement, shooting scene responses, and neighborhood-based violence prevention efforts. Once participants are engaged, they are connected with Intensive Life Coaches who provide individualized support focused on employment, education, housing stability, emotional wellness, conflict resolution, and long-term goal attainment. The program utilizes a highly structured engagement model that prioritizes consistent contact, accountability, and relationship building as the foundation for change. Participants also receive support through the Healthy, Wealthy, & Wise curriculum, a culturally responsive and trauma-informed cognitive behavioral intervention designed specifically for high-risk and hard-to-reach populations.

Recent national research has increasingly supported the types of strategies being employed through Columbus Violence Reduction. Studies have demonstrated that focused deterrence, community violence intervention (CVI), cognitive behavioral interventions, and credible messenger mentoring programs can significantly reduce shootings, homicides, and recidivism among high-risk populations. National reports released in 2026 noted that many of the cities experiencing the largest reductions in gun violence have invested heavily in coordinated violence prevention efforts, focused deterrence initiatives, life coaching, and community-based intervention strategies. Columbus was identified as one of the leading cities nationally, experiencing a 63.5% reduction in gun victimizations between 2021 and 2025 (Center for American Progress, 2026). Researchers and policymakers increasingly point to collaborative approaches that combine accountability, support services, and targeted intervention as critical drivers of these outcomes.

For those working in community corrections, the CVR model is particularly relevant because many program participants are actively under community supervision. Probation and parole populations often face numerous barriers, including unemployment, housing instability, untreated trauma, limited educational attainment, and strained social support systems. CVR complements traditional community corrections efforts by providing intensive relationship-based services that address these challenges while simultaneously promoting public safety. Through regular engagement, goal planning, workforce development, and cognitive behavioral interventions, participants are supported in building prosocial lifestyles while reducing their risk of future violence involvement.

Recent program developments demonstrate the continued growth and evolution of the initiative. In April 2026, the CVR Life Coaching Program officially launched, expanding the city's ability to provide individualized participant support and long-term stabilization services. As of spring 2026, the program was actively serving dozens of high-risk participants, many of whom remained consistently engaged in life coaching, workforce development, educational advancement, and community-based support services. Participants have secured employment, enrolled in educational and certification programs, completed workforce development training, obtained driver's permits, and achieved other significant milestones that contribute to long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

The program has also expanded its neighborhood-based outreach strategy by assigning intervention staff to geographic zones throughout Columbus, allowing for stronger community relationships, increased visibility, and proactive engagement before conflicts escalate into violence. Additionally, staff have successfully re-engaged previously disengaged participants, highlighting the importance of persistence and relationship-building when working with populations that have often experienced years of institutional distrust and inconsistent support. While challenges related to housing, transportation, workforce readiness, and participant engagement remain, the early outcomes of the Columbus Violence Reduction initiative provide encouraging evidence that comprehensive, community-centered approaches can improve both individual and community outcomes. By combining focused deterrence, intensive life coaching, cognitive behavioral interventions, and strong community

partnerships, Columbus continues to demonstrate how public safety and rehabilitation can work hand-in-hand.

As community corrections professionals continue seeking innovative strategies to reduce recidivism and violence, the Columbus Violence Reduction initiative offers an important example of what can be accomplished when accountability is paired with opportunity, support, and sustained human connection. Ultimately, the program's mission remains straightforward: helping participants remain safe, alive, and successful while contributing to safer and healthier communities throughout Columbus.

Bio

Dr. Hinton serves as Assistant Director of the City of Columbus Office of Violence Prevention, where he oversees the city's gun violence reduction strategy and works to reduce violence through evidence-based intervention, life coaching, and community partnerships. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Sociology Department at The Ohio State University.

References

Center for American Progress. (2026, April 7). *What city leaders say is helping drive down gun violence in their communities*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/what-city-leaders-say-is-helping-drive-down-gun-violence-in-their-communities/>

National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform. (n.d.). *Gun violence reduction strategy* (GVRs). <https://nicjr.org/GVRS>

OJACC Updates Policy Platform to Advance Community Corrections in Ohio

To promote and support effective community corrections, OJACC regularly updates its Policy Platform to reflect the organization's current priorities and guide its efforts. The OJACC Board of Trustees approved the latest updates on June 5, 2026.

Through its Policy Platform, OJACC urges Ohio's leaders to advance policies that strengthen adult and juvenile community corrections, expand effective community-based alternatives, improve data-driven decision-making, and reduce unnecessary reliance on incarceration. Strategic investments in evidence-based practices, treatment, reentry supports, workforce capacity, and equitable access to services can enhance public safety, improve outcomes for individuals and families, reduce long-term system costs, and help build stronger, healthier communities across Ohio.

To view the full Policy Platform, please visit: <https://www.ojacc.org/2026/06/30/ojacc-policy-platform/>



Achievement Awards

OJACC created four awards to be given to Ohioans whose work has contributed to the improvement of community corrections. Please consider nominating someone you feel is deserving of one of these awards. Below are the descriptions of each award. An Achievement Award Nomination Form is attached. The awards will be presented at the OJACC Annual Conference on October 15, 2026.

Representative C.J. McLin Award

The late Representative C.J. McLin, Jr., during his tenure in the General Assembly, actively worked to improve community corrections through funding and legislative change. The award is given annually to an elected official in Ohio who has worked towards the improvement of community corrections in Ohio.

Dr. Bennett J. Cooper Award

Dr. Bennett J. Cooper was the first Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction in Ohio. During his lifetime, he made many public policy corrections improvements and worked at the national level to try to institutionalize needed changes. This award is given to a correctional administrator or policymaker who has shown a lifetime commitment to the improvement of community corrections.

Dr. Simon Dinitz Award

Dr. Simon Dinitz, through his work at the Ohio State University, dedicated his life to improving the knowledge base of corrections. He served on state and national commissions whose purpose was to improve corrections. As an educator, he was also responsible for training many correctional practitioners in the state. This award is given to a community correctional practitioner who has made contributions to the improvement of community corrections in Ohio.

Wichtman/Gauntner Award

Jim Wichtman was one of the founders and a long-time board member of the Ohio Community Corrections Organization, now known as the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections (OJACC). Molly Gauntner faithfully served on the OJACC Board of Trustees for more than a decade. Jim and Molly dedicated their careers to the progressive development of community corrections with great passion and commitment. They were visionary leaders committed to transforming the field and improving the lives of those we serve. Their tireless work helped to strengthen OJACC and improve the field of community corrections overall. This award honors an OJACC Board Member who has dedicated themselves to OJACC's mission.

To see a listing of former recipients, go to www.ojacc.org/awards/



For questions, contact Gayle Dittmer at (740) 420-6444 or ojacc.director@gmail.com

Award: McLin: _____ Cooper: _____ Dinitz: _____ Wichtman/Gauntner: _____
(Please indicate which award you are nominating this person for)

Nominee: _____ **Position:** _____
Agency: _____ **Phone:** _____
Address: _____ **Email:** _____

Nominator:
 Agency: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ E-mail: _____

Please indicate why the nominee should receive the award (attach additional pages as needed)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.