

# Starting and Sustaining a Specialty Court

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# Specialty Courts

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# OBJECTIVES

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**Explain how specialty courts differ from traditional courts**

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**Describe the different court types authorized by statute, and which ones serve juveniles**

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**Learn what is required to register a new specialty court**

4

**Identify different funding avenues to support a specialty court**

# WHAT IS A SPECIALTY COURT?



Non-adversarial approach that involves collaboration between the Court and partner agencies.



An alternative to traditional case processing that focuses on addressing the root cause of criminal behavior.



Combines long-term treatment, ongoing judicial interaction, and intensive supervision



Specialty Courts often provide case resolutions that support lasting recovery and stability, helping participants retain employment and strengthen family relationships.

# THERE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENT SPECIALTY COURT TYPES IN TEXAS

Chapter 121 of the Texas Government Code generally defines specialty courts, prescribes their oversight, and outlines the requirements for establishing and operating them. The chapters that follow authorize the seven different types.

Ch.  
122

## Family Drug Courts

Target those who have had a child removed by DFPS **AND** are suspected of have a substance abuse problem

Ch.  
123

## Adult/ Juvenile Drug Courts

Target those charged with criminal offenses in which substance use played a substantial role

Ch.  
124

## Veteran's Treatment Courts

Target veterans or current military service members charged with criminal offenses that are connected to service-related injuries or MST

Ch.  
125

## Mental Health Courts

Target those charged with criminal offenses that are suspected of having a mental















# Identifying the Need: Juvenile Specialty Courts in Bexar County

## Drug Courts

- Post-Adjudicated Drug Treatment Court (2005)
- Pre-adjudication Drug Court (2006)

Crossover (CPS Dual Status) Court (2009)

Family Enrichment Court (2011)

Restore (Anti-Human Trafficking) Court (2013)

## Mental Health Courts

- Crossroads Court for Girls (2012)
- Mind Court for Boys (2016)

Strive (Education) Court (2018)

Grit (Anti-Gang) Court (2019)

Re-Entry Court x 3 (2022)

















## Considerations

Challenging to summarize results as some of our courts have been in effect for many years, so we are comparing participants within the same decade cohort

Pre and post tests and surveys of the youth are helpful as you can see the improvements in their individual self concept, relationships with family and friends and their behaviors

Recidivism will always be an important data point, but it does not tell the whole story

Judges, prosecutors, defenders and probation officers engage and enjoy their work more when they are involved in the full process

































# Court structure

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1st Cohort of ten kids (12 to 17.3 years) started February 26, 2026

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2nd Cohort (9 pending Aim for Change program) – Started July 29, 2026

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Orientation & Assessment

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Speakers from the Community:

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Retired Law Enforcement Officer shot in the line of duty (March 26th, 2026)

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Emergency Medicine doctor (April 23, 2026)

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Peace Officer/Veteran of Afghanistan Conflict (May 7, 2026)

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Corpus Christi Police Department Senior Officer (Gang Task Force) – May 21, 2026

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Multiple parents of shooting victims (June 18 and July 16, 2026)

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Parents of offender and victim spoke together with Parent Group (May 20, 2026)

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Death Investigator presentation (July 30, 2026) and tour of the Nueces County Medical Examiner's Office (early-mid August 2026)

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# 2026 JCJJ

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SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Thank you!