

Draft - Meeting Minutes (to be voted on at the 9/29/26 meeting)
Task Force on Removing Barriers to Jury Service

Date: September 1, 2026

Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Location: Virtual via WebEx Webinar

Members in Attendance: Derek Sangston, Chair Kimberly McCullough, Tim Dooley, Representative Tom Andersen, Royce Williams, Kia Tolbert, Nansi López, Honorable Tucker Rossetto, Aaron Felton, Representative Kim Wallan, Keren Farkas

Members Not in Attendance: Senator James Manning, Jr., Senator Kim Thatcher, Honorable Matthew Shirtcliff, Honorable Chanpone Sinlapasai

Quorum: Yes (9)

Ratify Prior Meeting Minutes

- Aaron Felton replaced Bryan Brock as a task force member
 - Polk County District Attorney since 2013
- Chair McCullough asked if anyone had any changes to the 8/12/26 meeting minutes
 - There were none
- Chair McCullough asked if there were any objections to ratifying the 8/12/26 meeting minutes
 - There were none
- Chair McCullough ratified the 8/12/26 meeting minutes

Trauma

- Chair McCullough noted that in a future meeting it would be a good idea if the task force could have some past jurors speak to their experiences with jury service
- Matti Girardi, Trauma-Informed Equity & Inclusion Director, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, presented on Multnomah's secondary trauma support program for grand jurors
 - Multnomah County had received feedback that jurors were experiencing distress from jury service
 - Girardi was asked in January of 2025 to try to develop ways to better support grand jurors
 - What happens to grand jurors when their service ends and what are some ways we can help to reduce or mitigate distress they may feel when they finish with their service?
 - What happens internally to a juror as they are experiencing or participating in jury duty?

- Invisible experiences and hidden trauma can have a deep impact
- We can't prevent or remove difficult or traumatic material from jury service, but we can look at some of the conditions that allow people to go through their service without being further harmed by it
- Four things to help: prepare jurors for potential impact, equip jurors with practical tools to use, develop relationships with jurors to stay present and connect with them during and after their service, support jurors and be responsive as needs arise
- Important to convey that experiencing secondary trauma is normal and that any distress they may feel is not a personal weakness, and it can impact individuals differently depending on their lived experiences
- Compassion satisfaction
 - Grand jurors have said they wanted to be dismissed from the trial because the case was overwhelming, but feeling supported helped them feel compassion satisfaction and feel the importance of their jury service
- Support involves multiple small points of check-ins with support and resources
 - Start with a flyer to prepare jurors on how they may be affected by jury service and how being a juror can take an emotional toll
 - 20 minute training on what jurors may experience and symptoms that may follow
 - Provide tangible tools, a self-care plan, evidence-based and discreet somatic practices, and fidgets
 - Check in with jurors weekly so they don't have to reach out themselves and don't feel alone
 - Additional peer support, depending on juror needs
- Support needs to be layered and not one single resource
- Support doesn't end when the training ends
 - Many jurors have shared that just knowing Girardi is available helps ease their anxiety
- Looking at barriers before jurors even get to the courthouse is crucial
- What happens when all this is done but the experience itself of being a juror is distressing and becomes its own barrier?
- What can be done on a statewide level?
 - Normalizing the possibility of jury service having an emotional impact before jurors encounter it
 - Build support into the jury service process

- Be a consistent source of support for jurors throughout their service and after
- If jury service is a civic responsibility, what responsibility does the system have to the people who perform it?
- Chair McCullough asked Girardi has spoken with other counties/courts about providing these services?
 - Girardi noted that research has shown that they're currently the only court in offering in-house support, but some courts offer counseling sessions after jury service
 - Girardi has had several counties (Columbia, Clackamas, Washington) reach out to ask about these services, and on occasion an individual juror from another county has reached out seeking services/help
- Representative Andersen asked if, in individual counties, especially smaller counties, whether there's enough of a budget to support these services? If there is not, is this something we should look to the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) to have as a statewide function (providing the financial resources and perhaps the staff who might work directly with jurors as Girardi has been)?
 - Girardi noted it would be ideal to implement these supports statewide and noted that, when looking at the diverse pool of jurors, we want to ensure institutional trauma based on identity is being addressed properly
 - When we do this we get a more diverse jury pool that wants to engage in service
 - Girardi suggested having a psychological aide who has an understanding of identity, as opposed to needing a psychologist
 - When people are grounded and regulated their decision making is more grounded and less biased as well
 - Girardi did not think that scaling and implementing would cost too much and that it's doable
- López asked what the makeup of the staff who have been doing this work is? And who are they working with to ensure the most vulnerable communities that participate as jurors are getting the services they need?
 - What is being done to ensure immigrant communities receive the care they need, particularly when it doesn't always involve Western care?
 - Girardi noted that while there is various cultural and racial representation among grand jury staff, it is still a challenge

- We need to do a better job with representation in staff, especially in Multnomah County, that could be more proactive on how we are protecting immigrant populations as they move through the system
 - It's an area for further development and needs to be embedded in the trauma work/support being done
- Chair McCullough noted that there are different organizations that could give feedback or be part of the process for designing these resources
 - Those doing work with juries could potentially include those organizations on a resource list or ask them to work with the courts to help provide jurors with a warm hand off to them
 - López noted that Adelante and Latino Network are both good resources to connect with for trauma support
 - Girardi noted that it would be good to speak with a pool of jurors directly to help understand their experiences
 - It won't be one resource that will solve all the issues, it will be multiple resources
- Felton noted that since many counties have tight budgets and grand juries are a judicial function that it would make sense for funding to come from OJD
 - In Polk County they provide an outline as part of jury orientation about how the work is hard and the topics can be tough, and you may not know when you get triggered and they discuss the importance of open communication about this
 - Some jurors don't return to service after hearing this and they're not sure why
 - Felton wants to look at Multnomah County's written materials that Girardi talked about
 - The hope is that all juries can access these support resources
 - We should find a way for staff, in all counties, to become trauma informed and trained in how to initiate talking about the topic
- Chair McCullough contemplated what scaling what Multnomah County has done statewide would look like
 - A legislative directive to OJD to develop materials or work with Multnomah County and others to develop materials to distribute
 - Maybe training videos, but having a person talk to jurors seems better
 - The counties provide most of the funding for district attorney offices, but the state provides some things for district attorneys

- Additional staffing could be helpful (we'd want to know how much time and staffing it would take)
 - Girardi noted that even just knowing someone is available to help, even if they don't take that help, and having those connections built over time is helpful and also helps show where the gaps in needs are
- Girardi stated that any implementation should be slow and iterative to maintain equitability and inclusivity and to ensure it remains responsive and trauma-informed
- Representative Andersen suggested that jurors who found the resources helpful could be asked if they want to volunteer to come back and talk to future grand jury panels about their experience
 - We could develop a discussion template
 - Could there be a bipartisan bill to allocate the resources and responsibility between OJD and the counties?
 - Chair McCullough noted that OJD currently has a placeholder bill related to jury service for the 2027 legislative session
 - It may be helpful to have more than one vehicle for this, one with a fiscal and one without
 - The task force may discuss this idea further at future meetings
 - Representative Andersen asked Chair McCullough to discuss the idea further with his Chief of Staff Andrew Smith
- López asked if there's a survey for jurors to fill out after jurors use these support resources (something that's not filled out immediately after service is done)?
 - Girardi has been gathering anecdotal feedback from jurors, judges, and district attorneys by asking questions directly, but they are starting to use a pre- and post-service survey
 - For a post-service survey that has a gap of time between the end of service and the survey, it would be meaningful to collect that data but it's unclear how much engagement there would be
 - López noted that when Centro Cultural does community engagement involving surveys, they make sure they are making the calls and providing staff to reach out
 - It's important to tell jurors the reasons we want to collect this information so they're more likely to complete the surveys

- Girardi noted the importance of human connection when doing that outreach/engagement
 - They could build that relationship in-house with grand jurors by telling them there's a survey that can be taken a month after service
 - Chair McCullough noted that the task force can have conversations about how the group can help with Girardi's efforts to expand these resources
- Molly Harvis, Statewide Jury Coordinator, OJD, provided an overview of OJD's Trauma Pilot program for petit juries through the vendor Canopy
 - OJD submitted a proposal last year, modeled after the federal court program, to provide mental health resources to jurors
 - Launched in May 2026 in 15 counties and will run for 12 months with a review in October 2026
 - The pilot provides access to behavioral health resources through Canopy (REVIVE) to jurors seated on felony and qualifying domestic violence related misdemeanor trials (any jury trial in which there's at least one felony charge and any trial in which there is at least one misdemeanor that has a qualifying domestic violence modifier on it)
 - Limited to certain trials due to budget restrictions and because the research on these programs and models shows those are the cases most likely to have graphic images/testimony
 - Services provided at no cost to juror or pilot courts
 - It's a similar model to the ones in Pennsylvania, Washington, and Colorado
 - Evaluations of these programs show promising results regarding juror perception of the judicial system and reduced symptoms of secondary and vicarious trauma
 - Jurors receive up to three phone calls to a confidential hotline to speak to a behavioral health professional
 - Available in any language as long as there's a translator available
 - They may receive a referral for continued care if it's suggested or requested
 - Canopy has resources to help jurors find and connect to a referral at a price point and in a language that's accessible to them
 - Services are available for up to three months after the last day of jury service
 - Critical incident stress debriefing sessions

- If a critical incident occurs during a trial, there is support from an in person in clinician for everyone affected and that clinician is brought in within 72 hours
 - Not just for jurors, but for anyone who was in the room during the incident
- Research shows that even just knowing support is available helps jurors
- Goals of the pilot:
 - Offer support and resources to individuals who may be exposed to traumatic/graphic material as a result of jury service
 - Improve jury service to promote equitable service and participation
- Evaluating the program:
 - We are offering a survey to anyone who is provided the service, including alternate jurors
 - Comparative study with the federal court program at the end of the pilot
 - Impact evaluation
- So far, survey responses have been positive and show the benefit of having the program in place (e.g., reduces juror stress knowing the resource is available even if it wasn't used)
- The pilot includes a judge ran judicial training for the people at the courts to understand vicarious trauma, therapeutic jurisprudence, what jurors may be asked to do, and the judicial role
 - We are requiring the judges to be the ones to offer the resources
 - Judges have a model script that normalizes and validates juror reactions, informs them of the available pilot resources, assures their confidentiality and access to the resources, and directs them to the survey
 - For alternate jurors the script is a little different since they don't want to affect deliberation
- The meeting materials include a brochure and wallet card with information about the pilot program that were made in tandem with Canopy
 - Those are available in all common Oregon language and are physically provided to all of the pilot courts
- Representative Andersen noted that while the pilot helps with trauma after jury service, we may want to have something on the front end that addresses it as well

- Harvis agreed and noted that there are areas in the jury trial process where that information can be discussed beforehand so if someone doesn't think they can do jury service due to the potential trauma they may experience, they have an opportunity to address that early on
- López asked what happens if Canopy cannot connect someone to help from people with similar backgrounds/experiences?
 - Harvis receives monthly feedback results from Canopy and asks for acknowledgments of areas where there are gaps in their services
 - Since May, Harvis has not received any information that Canopy has been unable to fulfill a need for a service, any issues have been about delays in receiving services rather than lack of available services
- López noted that she has heard stories about how witnesses and family members are affected by trauma in court and asked if these services available to them as well?
 - Harvis replied that they are only available to them in the event of a critical incident stress debriefing session
 - The pilot only offers the phone hotline to jurors sitting on the trial, however, OJD employees do have access to the same resources by virtue of being an OJD employee
 - Harvis has received requests to expand the pilot to grand jurors
 - Waiting till the pilot's six month review to see if the funding is available for that
- Chair McCullough asked Harvis for updates on the pilot program as it progresses so they can be shared with the task force
 - Chair McCullough and Harvis will talk further to determine what the budget to expand the pilot to all counties would be and how it would impact the biennial budget
- Chair McCullough asked if Harvis had heard of courts doing a post voir-dire but pre-trial discussion on what vicarious trauma is to help jurors identify what it is so they better know if they may need the services and to have an awareness of what's happening
 - Harvis replied that there's a statewide vicarious trauma brochure for jurors (common signs and symptoms, normalizing reactions, state/nationwide resources)
 - Last year Harvis customized those with free/low cost resources specific to each county
 - Some courts have those out in their jury room and many point it out in juror orientation

- Some courts offer it as a resource when jurors are sworn in
- Some courts have decided to keep their vicarious trauma and mental health resources to post-trial to not impact the trial
- OJD also encourages, and provides materials if judges would like to offer, a post-trial debriefing
- Felton asked how all of this is actually working in practice? How much of it just devolves into just saying there's a brochure available? And how many people actually read them?
 - Harvis agreed that we don't know how much people actually pay attention to the juror orientation video or read the brochures
 - Adult learners need repetition for information to stick, so having these repetitive resources can be helpful so they know they have it in case feelings of trauma arise later
- California Bill AB 2357 (Courts: Mental Health Pilot Program)
 - Similar to OJD's pilot program
 - No cost mental health services to jurors and alternate jurors following the verdict in violent felony cases
 - Didn't specify how many sessions people would get, but it would be a contract between their judicial department and county behavioral health providers to provide services and that would specify how many sessions there were
 - Didn't make it through California's Ways and Means process, but it could be a model we may want to look at
- North Dakota Jury Counseling Bill (Passed)
 - 10 hours of free post-trial psychological counseling
 - Provided if the jury trial involved extraordinarily graphic, gruesome, or emotional evidence or testimony
 - Limited to certain serious offenses (likely to try to contain costs)
- Federal Courts and Mental Health
 - There are services provided through the federal employee assistance program
 - A trial judge has to order, before the end of trial, that they are extending the jury's term of service for administrative purposes for long enough for them to obtain counseling (up to 6 counseling session each)

- Chair McCullough noted that the above examples are focused on post-jury service counseling compared to Multnomah County providing more comprehensive intervention at different stages of the process

Where We Are Going From Here

- September 29: Public education, importance of jury service
 - There is work OJD and other states have been doing
 - Chair McCullough will talk to the National Center for State Courts to see if they want to present on what other states have been doing
- For future meetings, we can circle back to do a deeper dive on previously discussed topics
- The Task Force's report to the legislature is due December 15, 2026
 - Chair McCullough plans on working on a draft and then getting feedback from the Task Force at future meetings
- Chair McCullough proposed asking the legislature to extend the Task Force through 2027 to give more time to discuss the policy options, engage stakeholders (especially impacted individuals), and give more time to build a budget ask for a jury compensation increase
 - If current members wouldn't be able to continue their service, then Chair McCullough could potentially do a debrief with everyone to make sure their thoughts/ideas have been accurately captured in the recommendations and we could find someone else to serve
 - Due to the 2027 long legislative session, the Task Force would also likely need to be paused until July
 - The Task Force will discuss this idea further at the next meeting

Public Comment

- Chair McCullough noted that the Task Force received a public comment pertaining to something that occurred in Wasco County where the local court practice varies from much of the state
 - That comment is being shared with Wasco County
 - The Task Force may want to consider a change to address the idea of having orientation be on the same day as the first day of service for petit juries

Next Meeting

- Date: September 29, 2026
- Time: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Via: Webex Webinar