



Pennsylvania
**Commission on Crime
and Delinquency**

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Commission on Crime and Delinquency Convenes over 200 Law Enforcement and First Responders for 2024 Statewide Crisis Intervention Team Symposium

Since 2010, PCCD has invested nearly \$2 million on the expansion, establishment, and assessment of CIT programs and trainings, and establishment and expansions of co-responder model programs across Pennsylvania.

PCCD presents awards for CIT Police Officer, CIT Behavioral Health Practitioner, and CIT Coordinator of the Year.

State College, PA — Today, the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)**, in collaboration with the **Department of Human Services (DHS)** hosted more than 200 attendees during the 2024 Statewide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Symposium. Attendees spanned across law enforcement, first responders, correctional facility personnel, probation and parole officers, mental health professionals, and advocates— all dedicated to supporting individuals in mental health crises through CIT programs throughout Pennsylvania.

“When someone is going through a mental health crisis, it’s essential that first responders—law enforcement, emergency dispatchers, or others—possess the tools and skills needed to effectively communicate with them and connect them to the right community services. CIT programs can truly change lives,” said **PCCD Executive Director Mike Pennington**. This symposium offers a valuable opportunity for jurisdictions that are either interested in or currently implementing CIT programs to network and share insights with others across the Commonwealth. PCCD is proud to support the growth and establishment of CIT throughout our state.”

The one-day event featured informative sessions from experts in the field including Major Sam Cochran (Ret.), nationally known for his work developing the CIT model, and Dr. Tom Kirchberg, who provided personal anecdotes and advice for CIT officers and mental health professionals interested in becoming future CIT trainers. Other presenters included individuals with lived experience, who shared their journey to and through recovery, and retired San Antonio Police Officer, Ernest Stevens who provided an overview of how his police department implemented crisis intervention training, and a brief screening of his HBO documentary “Ernie and Joe: Crisis Cops.”

PCCD also presented the following awards, recognizing the accomplishments and leadership of individuals making a difference in the CIT space across Pennsylvania:

CIT Behavioral Health Practitioner of the Year: Dr. Todd D. Negola

Dr. Todd D. Negola has been a clinical/forensic psychologist for the U.S. Federal Government for the past 27 years. He presently serves as the Psychology Director of Training for the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona. Beyond his employment in Altoona, he conducts training internationally and consults regularly with federal, state, and local law enforcement as well as public and private educational institutions, community programs, and mental health personnel on areas including personal/officer safety, CIT Training, gangs and gang activity, and psychopathy.

CIT Team Coordinator of the Year: Tracy Small, Centre County CIT Coordinator

Tracy Small, has provided guidance, leadership, and support to not only the more than 460 officers trained in Centre County, but across the state. Tracy has played a critical role in Centre County CIT earning a reputation as a robust program which serves as a model for other Pennsylvania jurisdictions for diverting citizens from incarceration toward mental and behavioral health services. Tracy's commitment to the CIT training is evident as she consistently reviews the evaluations and adapts the trainings based on the needs of our community, all while honoring the core of CIT Training.

CIT Police Officer of the Year: Patrolman First Class Orion Hippensteel

PFC. Hippensteel served with the Chambersburg Police Department, where he completed the 40-hour South Central CIT training in 2017 and has remained steadfast in his commitment to CIT through demonstrated crisis response and advocacy in the community. As a Peer Support Officer, PFC. Hippensteel, uses a holistic approach, combining behavioral health and law enforcement skills to relate to individuals in crisis, always keeping safety a priority. In 2024, PFC. Hippensteel joined the South Central CIT training staff.

CIT is a collaboration of local law enforcement personnel, first responders, correctional facility personnel, probation and parole officers, mental health professionals, and advocates who work collectively to help individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis toward appropriate treatment and resources and away from the criminal justice system.

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Photos from the event can be found on [PACast.com](https://www.pacast.com).

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