

TASC

of the capital district, inc.

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Testimony

**Governor's Executive Budget 2026-2027: Public Protection
February 12, 2026**

**Jessica Song, Executive Director of Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities
(TASC) of the Capital District, Inc.**

Senate Finance Committee Chair Krueger, Assembly Ways and Means Chair Pretlow, Senate Codes Chair Myrie, Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Chair Salazar, Assembly Codes Chair Dinowitz, Assembly Correction Chair Dilan, and distinguished members of the Legislature:

My name is Jessica Song, Executive Director of Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) of the Capital District. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Public Protection Joint Legislative Budget Hearing regarding the critical role that Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and reentry services play in strengthening public safety in the Capital District.

WHAT WE DO

Every day, courts, probation departments, and DOCCS rely on community-based providers like TASC of the Capital District to assess and coordinate structured supervision and treatment without barriers like insurance.

For the past 42 years, TASC of the Capital District has been working with a specialized population who are court or other legal stakeholder referred. Participants are screened using validated tools, enrolled in evidence-based cognitive behavioral interventions, and connected to licensed treatment providers and recovery supports. Progress is documented and reported to referring stakeholders to ensure accountability.

WHAT WORKS

We know that stabilizing individuals with substance use and behavioral health needs reduces recidivism, improves compliance with court and probation mandates, and protects communities by addressing the underlying drivers of criminal justice involvement.

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As TASC-model programs operate uniquely based on regional needs, TASC of the Capital District aims to expand access to all legal stakeholders and provide an option to consider treatment for those who are eligible for community-based services. Individuals can be referred at any point including pre-trial, for diversion, as an alternative to or in conjunction with a violation, and reentry from state correctional facilities.

REENTRY

Over the past year, TASC of the Capital District worked with the Albany and Schenectady County Reentry Task Force, DOCCS Community Supervision and 13 DOCCS facilities to evaluate and coordinate community-based services for high risk/high needs populations including undomiciled sex offenders with co-occurring substance use, mental health, and/or medical disorders.

DOCCS facilities

Attica
Bare Hill
Cape Vincent
Clinton
Collins
Elmira
Fishkill
Franklin
Groveland
Lakeview
Mohawk
Woodbourne
Wyoming

ATI

Akin to resource coordinators in specialty courts, TASC is able to offer wraparound treatment planning services to courts in otherwise underserved upstate counties.

As mentioned in past testimony, the coordination of court, treatment, and social services requires a specialized combination of local expertise with justice stakeholders as well as with substance abuse, mental health, and social services communities. Using evidenced-based practices, TASC provides assessment, independent OASAS level of care planning, referrals to appropriate programs based on criteria, transport coordination, and progress monitoring for courts.

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No other agency in the Capital District provides TASC's continuum of care and wraparound services directly to criminal justice stakeholders.

More specifically, TASC assists criminal justice stakeholders in:

- balancing community-based treatment and accountability for offenders who are dually diagnosed with substance abuse and co-occurring mental health disorders (thereby providing the opportunity for treatment, reducing costs, recidivism and promoting community safety)
- providing an independent level of care determination by collaborating with community-based providers (based on criteria and matching the appropriate treatment dosage)
- serving as a vehicle for coordinating decision-making and intervention strategies for justice stakeholders (sharing treatment planning information is critical to moving a case forward and efficiently addressing all open matters including active warrants)
- and continuing case management support (including treatment monitoring and progress reports to all courts in multiple jurisdictions) during the entire continuum of care or until the underlying criminal justice matter is resolved.

When a justice stakeholder refers a defendant to TASC, the process is as follows:

- A Referral Form is received from a justice stakeholder (i.e., an interested legal party to the case)
- A RAP sheet is pulled through eJusticeNY to identify all open matters, all justice stakeholders, and any holds (that would prohibit release to treatment and need to be satisfied)
- An objective and comprehensive risks and needs evaluation is completed
- Possible barriers to treatment and gaps in services are identified (referrals often have complicated coordination needs)
- Records are obtained from prior providers (e.g., medical, mental health, substance use disorder treatment) for referral purposes
- Collateral Information from the supervision agency (if any) and emergency contact (often a family member) is obtained
- An evidence based OASAS Level of Care and Drug Treatment Referral (LOCADTR) review is completed with the County Drug & Alcohol Coordinator in the District of Fiscal Responsibility (if residential treatment is indicated)
- An ATI plan is submitted (to courts, attorneys, NYS DOCCS, and/or Probation as appropriate)

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- A global treatment related disposition must be approved by all interested parties
- Treatment Referrals are then submitted to programs based on the approved level of care
- Phone screenings with appropriate treatment facilities are coordinated
- Treatment bed is coordinated (including direct transport and a warm handoff to residential treatment facilities)
- Release from Custody is coordinated with releasing authority (if needed)
- A treatment mandate letter is obtained for insurance purposes
- TASC's team provides weekly Treatment Monitoring and Progress Reporting to all justice stakeholders
- Supervised Alcohol & Drug Testing is provided (as needed)
- A Higher Level of Care can be coordinated as a graduated sanction (if needed)
- Appropriate aftercare planning is coordinated for continuity of care

TASC's ATI model is based on critical elements fundamental to integrating criminal justice and substance abuse treatment systems, holding both defendants and systems accountable through the implementation of client-specific case management. The ultimate goal is to safely manage offenders in the community by balancing intervention opportunities with controlled supervision.

CONTINUED FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY

Importantly, ATI and reentry services are most effective when they operate as an integrated system. Coordination among courts, probation, DOCCS, local jails, treatment providers, and DCJS is essential to ensure continuity of care from incarceration to community supervision. Disruptions in funding destabilize that system and increase risk at precisely the point when individuals are most vulnerable to relapsing or reoffending.

For these reasons, we respectfully request sustained and increased investment in upstate ATI and reentry funding within the Public Protection budget. Funding should:

- Preserve and expand evidence-based cognitive behavioral interventions
- Support structured treatment coordination and supervision alignment
- Ensure continuity between probation supervision, local incarceration, DOCCS release, and community supervision

To maintain our critical services, TASC has received significant financial support from the New

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York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) with secondary financial support through subcontracts from the County of Rensselaer and the New York State Unified Court System (through 2022).

Several years ago, however, TASC faced a severe funding shortfall that jeopardized TASC's existence. Due to the tremendous efforts of the Legislature, TASC was temporarily able to address the funding shortfall. Securing this funding was critical in providing confidence that TASC could continue providing essential ATI and reentry services in the Capital District.

For 2026, TASC is again faced with the unfortunate predicament of financial uncertainty. TASC has received some recent financial support from DCJS, which it is extremely grateful for, but there remains a funding gap to ensure critical ATI and reentry services can remain operational through the end of the year.

As a result, TASC is again respectfully requesting that each house of the Legislature allocate \$300,000 in their respective one-house budget proposals and, ultimately, the enacted budget to TASC.

TASC also requests that this funding be authorized in such a way as to allow for flexibility in responding to unmet and emerging needs. This funding will ensure that TASC can continue to deliver its essential services to the Capital District in 2026 and avoid insolvency and the layoff of our six person team.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for allowing me to provide information regarding TASC of the Capital District - a proven ATI and reentry provider in the Capital District for 42 years.