

TASC: 40 Years of Promoting Health and Justice

Founded in 1976, TASC, Inc. of Illinois has facilitated access to community-based substance use and mental health treatment and recovery for tens of thousands of men, women, and youth.

As the agency begins its fifth decade of service, it does so at the forefront of local, state, and national efforts to improve criminal justice policies and access to quality care in the community.

A National Program Model

The name TASC refers to both a program model and an organization.

The TASC model (originally “Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime”) came about in 1972 with demonstration programs funded by the federal government, which sought a response to increasing numbers of heroin-addicted individuals entering criminal courts. The first TASC program was established in Delaware in 1972, and other pilot programs soon followed, designed to divert people with non-violent offenses out of court systems and into supervised drug treatment in the community.

Building on the original model, currently there are numerous entities across the United States called “TASC.” These programs operate independently of one other and are loosely affiliated via a membership association, National TASC.

In Illinois, TASC is a statewide, independent nonprofit organization. It is the largest TASC program in the nation.

Origins and Evolution of TASC in Illinois

TASC, Inc. of Illinois was founded in 1976 by Melody Heaps, who had been working for civil rights and social justice on the west side of Chicago, and had witnessed communities being torn apart by drugs and the criminalization of addiction.

Heaps partnered with Tom Kirkpatrick, who led the Illinois Dangerous Drugs Commission, and approached Cook County Chief Judge John Boyle with the idea to begin a TASC program in Cook County. Together, they applied for and received federal funding, creating an independent agency to provide treatment placement, clinical tracking, and monitoring services as an adjunct to traditional probation for people with heroin addictions.

From this small pilot program, TASC was born in Illinois.

Within five years, TASC had grown beyond Cook County to reach every jurisdiction in Illinois. Over the decades, TASC has expanded its services for people involved in the justice system, from prosecutorial diversion through reentry, and also has developed programs for juvenile justice, public health, and child welfare systems.

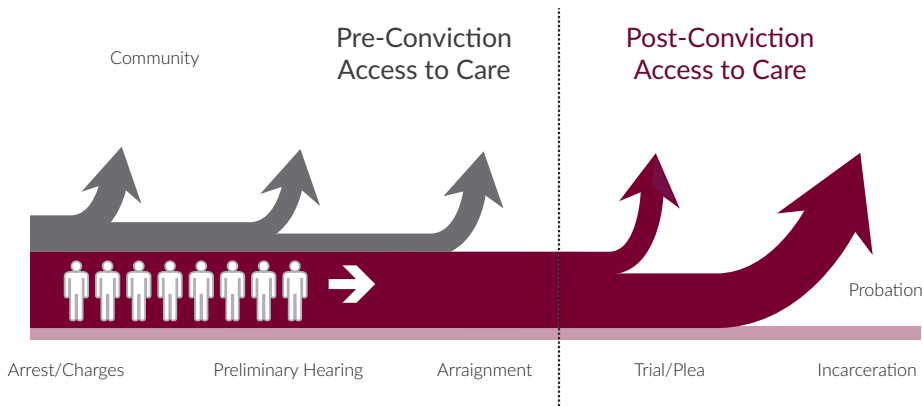


TASC President and CEO **Pamela F. Rodriguez** (left) and Founder and President Emeritus **Melody M. Heaps**

From the beginning, TASC’s core services have included clinical assessment, client advocacy, treatment placement, reporting to referral sources, and ongoing care coordination, all grounded in a steady commitment to diverting people away from government institutions and into health and recovery in the community. Recently, TASC also has begun providing substance use and mental health treatment services.

To help advance health and justice on a broader scale, in addition to direct services in Illinois, TASC also offers public policy, consulting, and technical assistance services nationally and internationally.

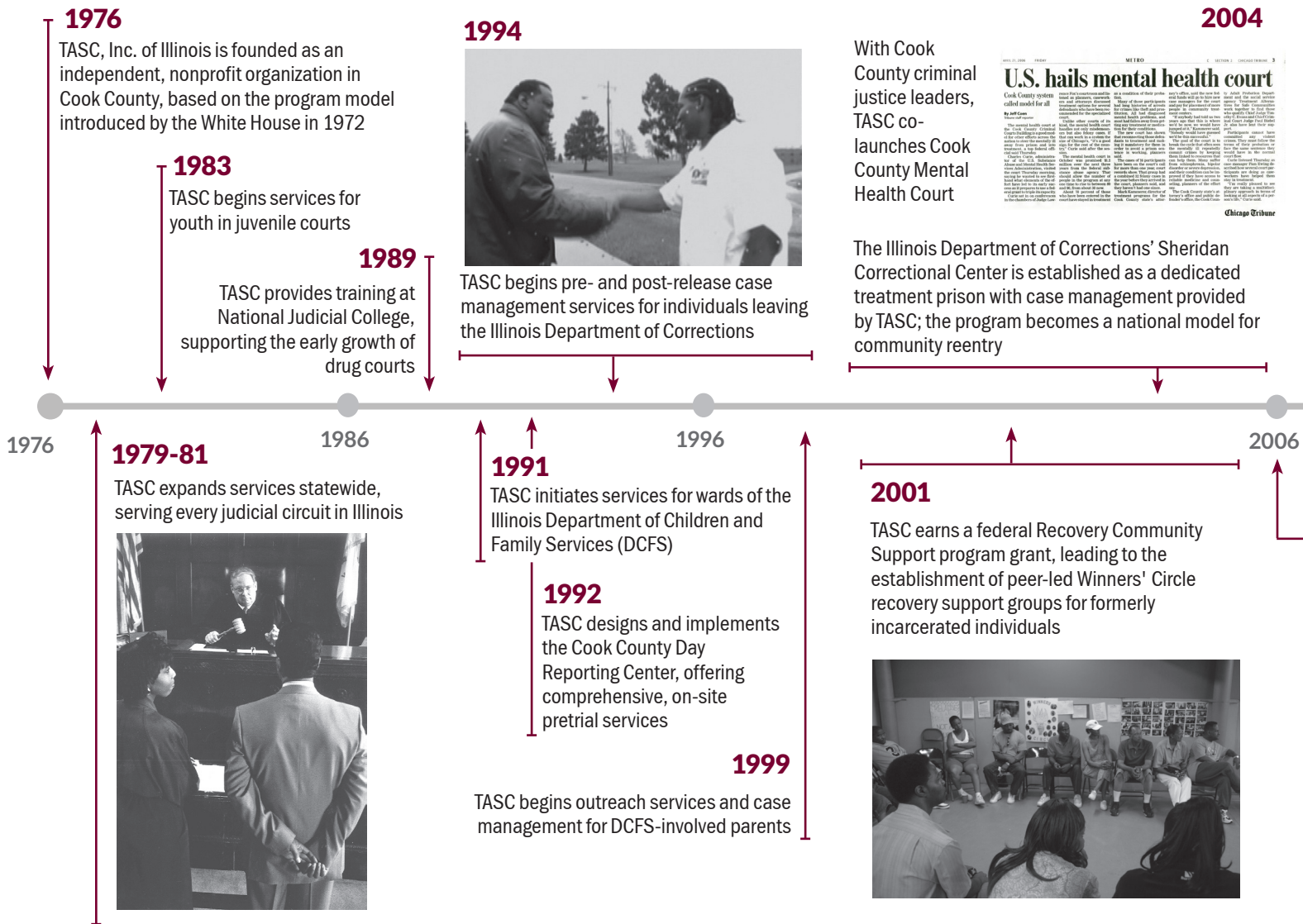
“Every point in the justice system—from arrest to community reentry—is an opportunity to identify and intervene with individuals who have substance use and mental health problems,” says TASC President Pam Rodriguez. “Our aim is to ensure that services and public policies are in place that will help people leave these systems and achieve health and full engagement within their families and communities. In this way, we help reduce crime, improve public health, and create a more fair and just society as well.” ❖



“Every point in the justice system—from arrest to community reentry—is an opportunity to identify and intervene with individuals who have substance use and mental health problems.”
— TASC President Pam Rodriguez

TASC Timeline: 40 Years of Promoting Health and Justice

Working in collaboration with numerous private and public partners at local, state, and federal levels, below are some of the milestones marking our progress in creating a more healthy and just society.



In Our Own Words

We asked TASC staff across Illinois to describe TASC. Here are some of our favorite answers:

“Our overall purpose is to help our clients restore their lives, and at the same time, improve the systems which they encounter. We give clients a voice. Nowhere have I run into an agency that can speak to so many issues—systemic or clinical—or help inform policy the way TASC does. We work with a pretty impressive bench of experts who always seem willing to address the tough subjects and problem solve when systems ask for our help.”

Phillip Barbour
Master Trainer
Center for Health and Justice at TASC

“We advocate on behalf of individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Working with the state’s attorney’s office, deferred prosecution programs are a great opportunity to educate, refer, and assist individuals as soon as they come into the system. With these programs, they can seek services that are beneficial, and have the opportunity to avoid the lasting consequences of having a charge on their record.”

Angela Resto-Ellis
TASC Program Supervisor, Cook County Deferred Prosecution Programs
Chicago

“Our Smart Start program saves babies and children by helping young mothers get the services they need. We change our clients’ perspectives on healthcare, school, careers, parenting, relationships, adversity, and much more, so they can create a better future for themselves. We instill hope and celebrate progress.”

Shundra Parker
TASC Area Administrator
Central Illinois

“TASC’s purpose is to meet the needs of clients in our own communities. We help clients who have had contact with the criminal justice system, and find themselves in need of intervention. TASC’s unique relationships

2007

Center for Health and Justice at TASC releases first *No Entry* report, highlighting the benefits and cost savings of diverting people with substance use disorders out of the justice system and into treatment



2012

TASC begins pre- and post-release services for Moms and Babies program at the Decatur Correctional Center

TASC and partners initiate the Madison County Opiate Alert Project, saving lives by closely tracking at-risk probationers who have opioid addictions

2014

TASC and Winnebago County Drug Court offer pilot program for opiate-addicted individuals to receive medication-assisted treatment along with TASC case management

2015

TASC President Pam Rodriguez is appointed to the Governor's Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform



2006

Under the leadership of the Illinois Department Juvenile Justice, TASC begins providing clinical reentry case management services across Illinois that help youth parolees successfully transition to their communities

Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC) expands as fully dedicated drug treatment and reentry program; TASC provides pre- and post-release case management

Center for Health and Justice at TASC is established, providing consulting, training, and technical assistance services nationally and internationally

2011

TASC initiates Illinois TECH Care program, using video technology to provide care coordination services for justice-involved adults in Clinton, Fayette, and Marion counties

2010

TASC staffs Illinois Disproportionate Justice Impact Study (DJIS) Commission, producing report on disproportionality in the prosecution and sentencing of African Americans for drug crimes



2013

In partnership with the Cook County Sheriff's Office and the Cook County Health and Hospitals System, TASC begins providing Medicaid enrollment assistance at the Cook County Jail, increasing access to health insurance for individuals who need treatment for substance use and mental health disorders



2016

TASC celebrates 40 years, begins 5th decade of justice advocacy and community-based services for people with substance use and mental health disorders



2017

within the community jails, courts, and prisons ensure that our clients' needs are assessed at their earliest contact with the justice system. This allows TASC to walk alongside our clients and divert them into care to address their addictions and/or mental health needs. At the Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center, the pre-release program includes a team of TASC case managers working with our clients as they make life-changing plans to transition back into the community. Our goal is to establish the best supports for our clients as they rebuild their lives."

Karin Mathews

*TASC Pre-Release Case Manager
Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center
East St. Louis*

"At the Sheridan Correctional Center, the TASC team prepares post-release/aftercare plans, and appropriately places clients with treatment agencies, recovery homes, and transitional living. What makes TASC unique is our ongoing case management to support clients in the community."

Steve Stocker

*TASC Case Manager
Sheridan Correctional Center
Sheridan*

"We provide case management service to individuals to help them get reintegrated back into society. TASC's role is to make sure clients are engaging in treatment to stop the recidivistic cycle. We work with our clients, parole agents,

and treatment providers to ensure that our clients have the tools and resources needed to be proactive in their lives."

Cassy Lamon

*TASC Case Manager, Corrections Transition Program
Chicago*

"Through our court services, we encourage our clients to make good decisions, keep them on task toward their own recovery, and support their positive changes."

Shelley Sears

*TASC Clinical Supervisor
Rockford*

Chris Foltz: Reinventing Life

When Chris Foltz was young, his parents were well known in the community as law enforcement professionals. Chris developed an early interest in civics and politics, and after college, he began a successful career running political campaigns.

Chris moved home when his mother fell ill. Not long after, he had oral surgery and was prescribed opioid painkillers, soon becoming addicted to Vicodin and OxyContin, and ultimately to heroin. His addiction was costing him \$300 a day. And then his mother passed away.

The next days were a blur, except for one moment that Chris remembers as he left the wake. He spotted a coin purse on the floor of the funeral home and picked it up, his thoughts jumping to where he could go to score some heroin. He walked outside and opened the coin purse to find that it contained 63 dollars, credit cards, a ring, and an ID: the coin purse belonged to one of the funeral staff members, someone Chris knew.

Chris decided he would return the coin purse to the funeral home the next day, and quietly leave it where someone else could find it. But by then, it already had been reported stolen. When Chris returned to pay expenses, he found himself eyeing the

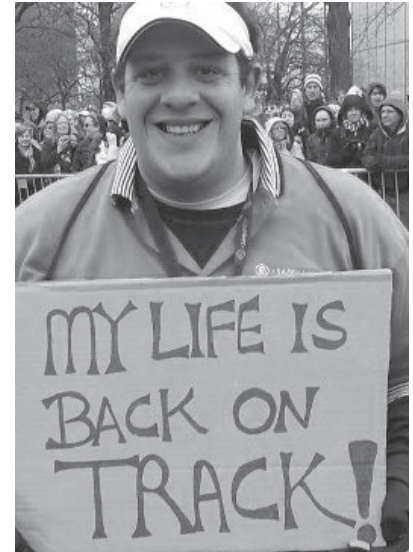
monetary donations left by mourners. That money could buy a lot of heroin.

“With everything I was going through, I was thinking of getting high that day and I would have probably died,” Chris says. If so, what happened next may have saved his life. The very police officers who had paid their respects to Chris’ mother at the wake now were there to arrest Chris for theft.

Chris spent 119 days in the Winnebago County Jail. During that time, he lost everything. His mother’s home and all his possessions were gone. Chris was devastated that he had disrespected his mother.

While in jail, Chris received a visit from Don Allen, a TASC case manager in Winnebago County. At first, Chris didn’t believe that he needed TASC’s help, but Don helped Chris understand that there was hope in treatment and recovery. Don helped Chris move into an independent living program in Waukegan, many miles from the jail. Over the next many months, Don helped Chris navigate clinical appointments, court appearances, and barriers that could have prevented Chris from succeeding.

Ten years after being a TASC client, the world is different place for Chris. Now active in social innovation, he and his team are



working on a project that will recycle non-potable and rain water into clean drinking water, while also reducing the amount of water used for appliances such as air conditioners and washing machines. Once this enterprise is fully developed, Chris would like to install these systems for social service organizations that could benefit from the cost savings.

Chris is passionate about working with nonprofits and with people who want to change the world, and often thanks the people who helped him turn his life around. “Don Allen cared about me,” says Chris.

“Without him and TASC, I don’t think I would be successful in my recovery.” ❖



10 Years After Being a TASC Client...

Chris builds innovative solutions for nonprofits and people who want to change the world.

Current projects include building a system that will recycle non-potable and rain water into clean drinking water (photos at left), and robots (photo below) that can assist with landscaping, snow removal and other community improvement needs.

