

## Goals for MHC

- Promote public safety
- Reduce criminal recidivism by promoting assessment, education, and treatment to criminal offenders with mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders
- Monitor treatment compliance through frequent court contact and supervision
- Engage and retain mentally ill offenders in appropriate treatment resources
- Require strict accountability from program participants and impose immediate sanctions for unacceptable behaviors and rewards for positive choices
- Reallocate resources to provide an effective alternative to traditional prosecution and incarceration of non-violent/non-sex offenders
- Reduce costs within the County's criminal justice system and jail by expediting, connecting, and re-routing eligible program participants to local community resources in lieu of incarceration

*The mission of MHC is to promote public safety, reduce criminal activity associated with offenders with a mental illness, and enable the participants to live productive and law-abiding lifestyles in our community.*



### For more information contact:

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### FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:

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## Clark County, WA

District Court

# Mental Health Court



*District Court — Wednesdays at 2pm  
Superior Court — Wednesdays at 3pm*

## What is Mental Health Court?

Mental Health Court (MHC) is a Clark County Therapeutic Specialty Court that treats both misdemeanor and felony defendants on a combined District/Superior Court docket. MHC offers eligible participants the chance to enter an alternative treatment program for defendants with serious and persistent mental illness. This intensive collaborative team approach is a partnership of people interested in supervising and assisting participants who are willing to make changes in their lives using best practice and evidence-based approaches.

As of January 1, 2018, MHC now includes a “pre plea” program that accepts both misdemeanor and felony offenses. The Court still accepts post-plea cases as well for District Court only. To participate on a pre-plea basis, the defendant must voluntarily agree to waive his or her rights to a speedy and jury trial. The participant will also agree to a stipulated facts trial in the event of termination or opting out of the program. Finally, the defendant agrees to enter and abide by the conditions set forth in the program contract. If a participant successfully completes the program (graduates), the pending charges will be dismissed, with prejudice.

*Starting 01/01/2019, the program may be completed in a minimum of 12 months.*



## Eligibility Criteria for Mental Health Court

The participant **must**:

1. Be a Clark County legal resident age 18 or older
2. Have a primary diagnosis of a major mental disorder and/or co-occurring substance abuse problem and voluntarily want this treatment option.
3. Have the mental capacity and ability to appreciate the consequences of the legal proceedings and fully understand the expectations and conditions of the Mental Health Court program and contract.
4. Be approved for the pre-plea program by the Prosecuting Attorney or Vancouver City Attorney’s Office.

The participant must **NOT** have:

1. Any serious violent offenses in criminal history
2. Any other pending charges/outstanding warrants in any other jurisdiction
3. Used a firearm in the commission of any crime



## Mental Health Court Benefits

### To the Community:

- Reduces costs to the community resulting from court and jail overcrowding
- Reduces criminal activity within the community
- Increases contribution to the community from program participants

### To the Participant:

- Ongoing support in achieving goals
- Increases stability
- Avoids recidivism
- Achieves a sense of dignity and self-worth