

Juneau Coordinated Resources Project

Mental Health Court

What is the Coordinated Resources Project (CRP)?

The Coordinated Resources Project (CRP) - also known as the Juneau Mental Health Court - is a voluntary “therapeutic” or “problem solving” court located within the Juneau District Court that hears cases involving individuals diagnosed with mental disabilities who are charged with misdemeanor offenses and focuses on their treatment and rehabilitation. The CRP is a post booking diversionary response to the problem of “criminalization” - an increased likelihood that people with mental disabilities will be processed through the criminal justice system instead of the mental health system.

What is the mission of the CRP?

The mission of the CRP is to divert people with mental disabilities charged with misdemeanor offenses from incarceration and into community treatment and services and to prevent further contacts with the criminal justice system. Defendants who experience mental disabilities are more frequently jailed and detained longer than defendants who do not. Jail is rarely a therapeutic environment for people experiencing symptoms of mental illness. Those who are engaged in treatment have been found to cycle through jails and psychiatric hospitals far less often than others who are not engaged.

Additionally, the CRP acts to preserve the public safety; reduce inappropriate incarceration of mentally disabled offenders and promote their well-being; relieve the burden on the Department of Corrections presented by inmates with mental disabilities; reduce repeated criminal activity among mentally disabled offenders (legal recidivism); and reduce psychiatric hospitalization of mentally disabled offenders (clinical recidivism).

Who is eligible?

Anyone charged with a City and Borough of Juneau misdemeanor crime who is diagnosed with a mental illness or disability (defined as a beneficiary of the Alaska Mental Health Trust) who resides in Juneau, is eligible for treatment in the community and wishes to voluntarily participate in the treatment oriented court process in lieu of traditional district court criminal case processing will be considered for participation.

How are people referred to the court?

Anyone can refer a person to the CRP. Police, corrections staff, lawyers, friends, family members, community behavioral health providers, judges and court staff can refer a case simply by contacting the Project Coordinator and indicating that a Defendant may be eligible to have their case heard in the CRP.

How does the CRP work?

Designated and trained legal team:

Each Defendant is assigned to a Judge trained in the area of mental health.

The court utilizes the same specially trained prosecutor, defense counsel, case coordinators and court clerks to staff the project. This produces expertise in understanding mental health issues and develops a cohesive and cooperative team. Additionally, all active cases of a participant are pro-actively brought before their assigned judge to ensure all orders from the court are coordinated and consistent.

Case coordination services and linkage to community treatment:

The Court assigns each Defendant that participates in the project to a Case Coordinator. The Case Coordinator assists each Defendant to obtain assessments and links them to community services that will meet their individual treatment needs. The Case Coordinator - in collaboration with the community treatment providers and the Defendant - develop an individualized treatment plan to submit to the court that is ordered as conditions of bail and/or sentencing. Case Coordinators continue to monitor treatment progress and appear in all subsequent hearings with the Defendant.

Extra supervision and court monitoring:

In regular district court, there is no provision for active monitoring of regular misdemeanor probation. This court provides continued supervision

through hands-on monitoring of the defendant's treatment plan through regularly held post sentencing status hearings. During these hearings the court hears reports on the defendant's progress in treatment. If there are reported problems in their treatment, the court may adjust the plan to motivate compliance or employ non-jail-based sanctions or as a last resort, incarceration for non-compliance or risk to public safety.

Invitation:

The JCRP meets biweekly in the Dimond Courthouse, Courtroom B with Judge Keith B. Levy presiding. Court is open to the public.

For current CRP hearing dates, more information, or if you or someone you know might benefit from the program, contact the Project Coordinator.

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