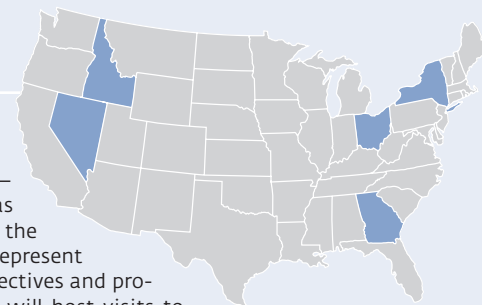


MENTAL HEALTH COURT LEARNING SITES

About the Mental Health Court Learning Sites. The number of mental health courts (MHCs) in the U.S. has grown exponentially over the past decade. State and local officials who have recently launched—or are considering whether to launch—such programs in their jurisdictions often seek out more experienced MHCs for guidance and advice.

To facilitate peer-to-peer assistance among jurisdictions that have established, or are planning to establish, MHCs, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)—through its technical assistance provider, the Council

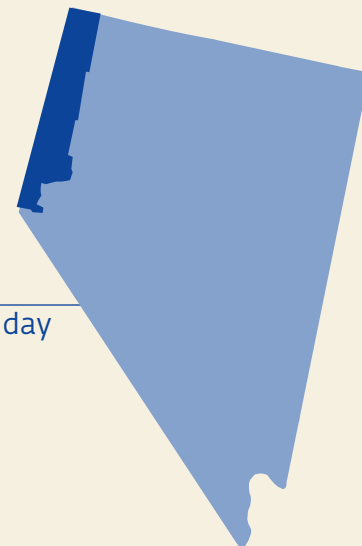
of State Governments (CSG)—has designated five MHCs as “learning sites.” Located across the country, these learning sites represent a diverse cross-section of perspectives and program examples. Learning sites will host visits to their courts and respond to telephone/email inquiries from the field.



Washoe County, Nevada Mental Health Court

Established in 2001

Approximately 200 participants are under MHC supervision on any given day



NOTABLE FEATURES

- Targets people with multiple offenses across a range of criminal charges in an effort to reduce jail overcrowding and recidivism
- Operates in a mid-sized jurisdiction that also has a adult criminal drug court, a family drug court, a homelessness court, an alternative sentencing department, a post-booking diversion program, and a crisis intervention team (CIT), but the availability of treatment and other services in the community are lacking
- Collects comprehensive data as part of regular operations
- Works closely with the local jail and pre-trial services agency, enabling early participant identification and diversion
- Provides formal training on mental health issues to probation and pre-trial services officers
- Received funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Mental Health Courts Program

ADMINISTRATION

- **Planning:** Designed over a year-long planning process before accepting participants
- **Ongoing oversight:** Advised by a committee that meets once per month
- **MHC team:** Comprises a judge, a private contract defense attorney, two pre-trial services officers, state mental health liaison, and probation officer
 - Meets weekly to discuss cases as well as treatment plans, sanctions, and incentives.

ELIGIBILITY

- Accepts participants with misdemeanors or low-level felony charges and a diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, or major depression

TREATMENT AND OTHER SERVICES

- Provided primarily through Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services

- Includes development of individual treatment plans that are reviewed (and if necessary, adjusted) every 90 days, case management, physical and mental health medical appointments, access to medications, supported housing, rehabilitation classes, vocational assistance, group therapy, and outpatient and inpatient dual-diagnosis treatment

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Engaged the state legislature to appropriate funds for their MHC and the Clark County (Las Vegas) MHC, and to increase the state's service capacity (Assembly Bill 175)
- Invites legislators to visit the MHC and routinely sends legislators information about the program
- Collects data to inform operational decisions
- Involved in a National Science Foundation study, to be completed in 2008, examining the voluntary nature of the court

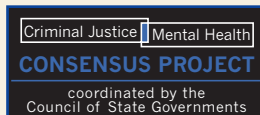
To learn more about the Washoe County Mental Health Court, see the program's long overview at: <http://consensusproject.org/mhcp/> or contact:

Julie Clements
Pretrial Services Officer
Multi-jurisdictional Mental Health Court
(775) 325-6641
Julie.Clements@washoecourts.us

The Mental Health Court Learning Sites are a part of the technical assistance offered by BJA's Mental Health Courts Program (MHCP). Information about the MHCP and mental health courts generally can be found at <http://consensusproject.org/mhcp/>.

To learn more about the Mental Health Court Learning Sites, visit <http://consensusproject.org/mhcp> or contact:

Lauren Almquist
Research Assistant
Council of State Governments
(646) 383-5743
lalmquist@csg.org



To download other mental health court resources, please visit <http://consensusproject.org/mhcp/info/mhresources/pubs/>:

- *The Essential Elements of a Mental Health Court*
- *A Guide to Mental Health Court Design and Implementation*
- *A Guide to Collecting Mental Health Court Outcome Data*
- *Navigating the Mental Health Maze*

This document was prepared by the Council of State Governments under grant number 2003DDBXK007, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.