

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

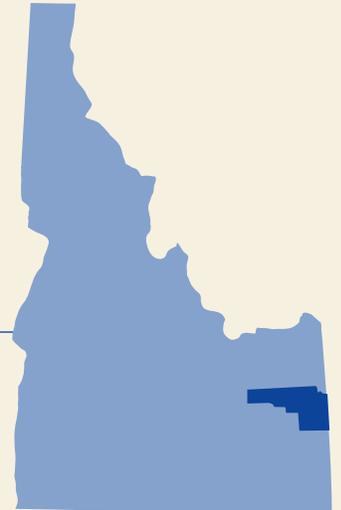
of State Governments (CSG)—has designated five MHCs as “learning sites.” Located across the country, these learning sites represent a diverse cross-section of perspectives and program examples. Learning sites will host visits to their courts and respond to telephone/email inquiries from the field.



Bonneville County, Idaho Mental Health Court

Established in 2002

Approximately 35 participants are under MHC supervision on any given day



NOTABLE FEATURES

- Targets individuals with more serious charges and lengthy criminal records
- Operates in a small rural jurisdiction where intensive, evidence-based services are available and a misdemeanor diversion project has been established
- Assigns all participants to an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team
- Collaborates with the jail so that any MHC participant who is re-incarcerated can receive (or continue to receive) medications prescribed by the psychiatrist on the MHC team
- Employs a wide range of individually tailored sanctions, treatment modifications, and incentives
- Received funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Mental Health Courts Grant Program

ADMINISTRATION

- **Planning:** Designed by a committee comprising a wide array of criminal justice and mental health stakeholders
- **Ongoing oversight:** Advised by a committee that meets quarterly and includes a graduate of the program
- **MHC team:** Comprises a judge, a court coordinator, two probation officers (one felony and one misdemeanor), a vocational rehabilitation specialist, a graduate of the MHC, NAMI representative, prosecuting attorney, child support specialist, jail clinician, representative from inpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment facility, ACT team representatives, and the court clerk
—Meets weekly to discuss cases as well as treatment plans, sanctions, and incentives

ELIGIBILITY

- Accepts individuals charged with felonies or serious misdemeanors who have an Axis I serious and persistent mental illness and for whom community-based treatment would be appropriate and beneficial.

TREATMENT AND OTHER SERVICES

- Employs a participant-centered, evidence-based program of treatments and services delivered by a multidisciplinary ACT team
- Includes case management, medications, group therapy (including groups on moral reconnection therapy (MRT) and co-occurring disorders), individual psychotherapy sessions with social workers, assistance with rent, childcare, benefits applications, transportation, housing, legal advocacy, vocational rehabilitation, educational assistance, job searches, and transportation to appointments
- Emphasizes securing basic needs like housing, medical care, and medications
- Ensures that participants utilize community supports and self-help resources

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Secured state legislation that funded the MHC coordinator's position and other resources for the development of new mental health courts within the state
- Receives significant support from elected officials who are interested in making the MHC part of a more system-wide response to people with mental illness involved with the criminal justice system

To learn more about the Bonneville County Mental Health Court, see the program's long overview at: <http://csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health/learning-sites/> or contact:

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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://csgjusticecenter.org/courts/>.

To learn more about the Mental Health Court Learning Sites, visit <http://csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health/learning-sites/> or contact:

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To download other mental health court resources, please visit <http://csgjusticecenter.org/courts/publications-library/>:

- *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*

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