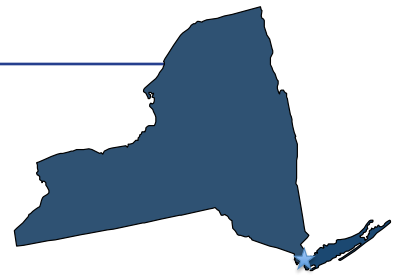

NEW YORK CITY

EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION PROGRAM



Approximately 630 participants are under Education & Assistance Corporation (EAC) case management per year across its four participating boroughs:

Bronx, established in 2002 | Brooklyn, established in 2000 | Queens, established in 2005 | Staten Island, established in 2013

NOTABLE FEATURES

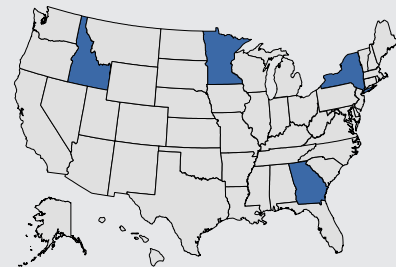
- Employs Clinically Informed Judicial Supervision, which considers a person’s assessed risk of reoffending and violence, as well as mental health and substance use or social service needs, to inform judges’ responses
- Uses the Clinically Informed Judicial Supervision model across four boroughs in New York City, not only within mental health court settings, but throughout the courts
- Emphasizes clinical understanding of behavior by including licensed clinical psychologists on the diversion program team, who serve as a consultative liaison with social service providers

MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION PROGRAM TEAM

Judges and court staff work with the EAC team, which comprises: clinical directors, who perform or supervise the clinical evaluations and risk assessments for new clients and for clients in the community when reevaluation is required; program supervisors and senior case managers, who supervise the case managers, coordinate the court calendar, and oversee referral and placement, client support, and crisis intervention; case managers, who are the direct providers of the above services as well as of initial intake screening, preliminary psychosocial evaluations, and office-based recidivism-focused interventions; peer, entitlement, and health home specialists; and people with vocational evaluation expertise, who are available to provide client support.

MENTAL HEALTH COURT LEARNING SITES

A mental health court (MHC) is a courtroom-based program that brings together members of criminal justice and behavioral health systems, among others, to work with people with mental illnesses who face criminal charges. MHCs modify traditional court processes to start participants on a therapeutically oriented path of court supervision and behavioral health treatment. MHC teams generally hold meetings prior to each court convening, with participant referrals coming from district attorneys, defense attorneys, judges, community supervision, other court partners and jail staff, as well as family or community members.



MHCs are just one type of mental health diversion program (MHDP). MHDPs exist in many different forms throughout the criminal justice system, and generally provide alternatives to typical criminal justice procedures in an effort to improve outcomes for people with mental health issues. The number of MHCs and MHDPs in the U.S. has grown exponentially in the past two decades. 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 or MHDPs for guidance and advice. To facilitate peer-to-peer assistance among jurisdictions that have established or are planning to establish MHCs or MHDPs, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), through its technical assistance provider, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, has designated four jurisdictions as MHC “learning sites.” Located across the country, these MHC Learning Sites represent a diverse cross-section of perspectives and program examples. MHC Learning Sites host in-person visits to their courts and respond to telephone and email inquiries from the field.

WHOM DOES THIS PROGRAM SERVE?

Program eligibility is open to people who are charged with misdemeanor and felony offenses (both violent and nonviolent) and who suffer from a mental illness, with or without a co-occurring substance use disorder. The level of severity of the mental illness can range from a serious mental illness—a psychiatric disorder that results in significant impairment in different areas of functioning—to a mental health condition that results in less severe impairment of functioning.

HOW DOES THIS PROGRAM WORK?

EAC's Clinically Informed Judicial Supervision model brings together the best practices of judicial decision making with a comprehensive approach to structured risk assessment; systematic review of mental health, substance use, and general health needs and social service challenges; and flexible but consistent use of rewards and sanctions. Case managers are trained in motivational interviewing and interactive journaling, and clinical directors provide case managers with support for dealing with clients whose behavior is challenging.

EAC uses up-front assessment at intake and ongoing clinical evaluation to maximize participants' successful engagement and to link them to appropriate services. Treatment is modified as needed throughout each client's period of participation in the program. The program also allows for communication between participants and court personnel, which creates the foundation for constructive judicial responses, such as the appropriate application of sanctions and rewards.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

EAC has utilized federal and state grants both to sustain program activities and to expand the scope of evaluation and interventions. EAC has also collaborated with city, state, and federal agencies in research, evaluation, and training activities. In collaboration with colleges and universities, EAC runs a training program for college students to increase the capacity of the program and introduce people to the field.

HOW TO LEARN FROM THIS SITE

Each of the four EAC locations hosts site visits and answers questions about its operation and best practices via phone and email.

To learn more, contact:

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Mental Health Court Learning Sites are a part of the technical assistance offered by BJA's Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program. Information about Mental Health Court Learning Sites can be found at csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health/learning-sites. To download the following other mental health court resources, please visit csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health-court-project:

A Guide to Collecting Mental Health Court Outcome Data
Mental Health Courts: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice
State Standards: Building Better Mental Health Courts
Improving Responses to People with Mental Illnesses: The Essential Elements of a Mental Health Court

Improving Responses to People with Mental Illnesses at the Pretrial Stage: Essential Elements
Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum
Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum; Handbook for Facilitators