



**Merced County Mental Health
Expansion of Community Services
and Support**

**Adult Mental Health Court and
Re-entry Program**

May 4, 2012

Mental Health Services Act Community Services and Support Expansion Plan

| Community Services and Support Work Plan Summary | | |
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| County Merced | Fiscal Year: 2012/2013 | Program Name: Adult Mental Health/Re-Entry Program |
| Description of Program | <p>The Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will provide intensive case management to eligible adult probation clients. One (1) Mental Health (MH) Clinician will be assigned to provide intensive case management to up to 20 defendants who have been diagnosed with an Axis I mental illness and are subject to appearing before the Court regularly in lieu of returning to jail for minor revocations of probation. The MH Clinician will also be tasked with conducting intakes and assessments on all defendants referred by the mental health deputy probation officer. The MH clinician will assist the officer in ensuring that defendants are referred to the proper services if not eligible for Mental Health Court. The clinician will also be available to conduct assessments on and referrals to services for clients assigned to the Day Reporting Center.</p> <p>One (1) Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Counselor will be assigned to assessing the needs of adult probation clients transitioning from jail and/or prison and providing those eligible clients with intensive case management and treatment services. Cases will be referred from deputy probation officers assigned to the community supervision of said clients.</p> <p>The deputy probation officer assigned to the MH Court Program will maintain a caseload of no more than 50 adult probation clients with mental health and dual diagnosis needs. This officer will provide intensive community case management, will appear before the Court for the clients (-20) referred, and will work closely with the clinicians to ensure the clients are receiving optimal services.</p> <p>A second deputy probation officer, though not paid for out of MHSA funds, will be dedicated to re-entry</p> | |

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| | <p>services for clients transitioning back into the community. This officer will ensure that clients are referred to county and community based services, not limited to the following: mental health, AOD, education, vocational, day reporting, and jail alternative sanctions. Participation in the CCP's re-entry subcommittee currently include representatives of the following agencies and organizations: Public Defender's Office, Mental Health, Human Services Agency, Probation, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Superior Court, Workforce Investment, Merced County Office of Education, LifeLine Inc. (community development), Ace Overcomers (adverse childhood trauma counseling), and the California Prison Moratorium Project.</p> <p>In all, the four personnel assigned to the Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will help ensure that participants attend family, individual, and group counseling, probation meetings, and court appearances, take medication as prescribed, and submit to drug testing and search and seizure. Participants will receive sanctions for non-compliance and incentives for satisfactory participation. The project will infuse the critical transformational elements of the Mental Health Services Act by adopting a wrap around model of recovery and resiliency wherein families are treated as partners and all community resources are considered in rehabilitation.</p> |
| <p>Priority Population</p> | <p>The adult target population will include the following: 1) AB109, Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) clients, following their release from State Prison and transferred to the Probation Department for three years community supervision; 2) AB109 - 1170(h), Local Prison clients following their physical release from County Jail and committed to the Probation Department for a period of community supervision; 3) Traditional Probation Clients, following their release from jail to the Probation Department for 3-5 years of community supervision.</p> |

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| | <p>To be eligible for Mental Health Court, the client must have an Axis I mental health disorder, must be willing to participate in all required counseling, and be available to attend all court hearings. Every client will be evaluated on an individual case-by-case basis by the Adult Mental Health Court Team to determine eligibility and suitability.</p> <p>All other clients will be eligible for the services identified in the project's description.</p> <p>The location will be either the Adult Probation Office or a county building that is currently uninhabited and being considered for remodeling for collaborative AB109 efforts. Each building is in the City of Merced. All adult formal probation clients will eligible for assessment for services out of one of these locations.</p> |
| Describe strategies to be used | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community supervision instead of incarceration.• Certificates and other small incentives for follow-through on directives and tasks given the client.• Outcome data will be utilized to rate the success of the program. Every 6 months following a client's entry into the program, we will pull arrest and revocation data to determine recidivism. For instance, CDCR has a 67% recidivism rate, whereas the Merced County Day Reporting Center has a 26% recidivism rate for similar clients.• Graduation and participation data will also be used to evaluate the success of the program. | |

2) Please describe in detail the proposed program for which you are requesting MHSA funding and how that program advances the goals of the MHSA

The 2011 Adult Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109) went into effect on October 1, 2011. As required by the Act, a local Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) was established to identify strategies for the supervision and treatment of the offenders transferred from State to local jurisdiction. The Merced County CCP Executive Committee consists of the Chief Probation Officer (Chair), Mental Health Director, Sheriff, District Attorney, Presiding Judge, Public

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Defender, and City of Merced Police Chief. The CCP and its executive committee identified several strategies to implement locally. Two strategies still under development include a Mental Health Court and a Re-entry program. The Probation Department has already dedicated a deputy probation officer to oversee as many as 50 of the highest need adult mental health clients. This officer and managerial representatives of Mental Health, Probation, and the Court have been meeting regularly to develop an effective Mental Health Court for adult defendants subject to the criminal justice arena. The CCP has also started a subcommittee to develop a Re-entry program for defendants transitioning back to the community from jail and/or prison.

Defendants receiving effective, evidence based treatment and re-entry services are less likely to re-offend thus improving their opportunities for success and lessening the burden on the public safety system. The Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will provide intensive case management to eligible adult probation clients. One (1) Mental Health (MH) Clinician will be assigned to provide intensive case management to up to 20 defendants who have been diagnosed with an Axis I mental illness and are subject to appearing before the Court regularly in lieu of returning to jail for minor revocations of probation. The MH Clinician will also be tasked with conducting intakes and assessments on all defendants referred by the aforementioned mental health deputy probation officer. The MH clinician will assist the officer in ensuring that defendants are referred to the proper services if not eligible for Mental Health Court. The clinician will also be available to conduct assessments on and referrals to services for clients assigned to the Day Reporting Center.

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A second deputy probation officer, though not paid for out of MHSA funds, will be dedicated to re-entry services for clients transitioning back into the community. This officer will ensure that clients are referred to county and community based services, not limited to the following: mental health, AOD, education, vocational, day reporting, and jail alternative sanctions. Participation in the CCP's re-entry subcommittee currently include representatives of the following agencies and organizations: Public Defender's Office, Mental Health, Human Services Agency,

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Probation, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Superior Court, Workforce Investment, Merced County Office of Education, LifeLine Inc. (community development), Ace Overcomers (adverse childhood trauma counseling), and the California Prison Moratorium Project.

In all, the four personnel assigned to the Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will help ensure that participants attend family, individual, and group counseling, probation meetings, and court appearances, take medication as prescribed, and submit to drug testing and search and seizure. Participants will receive sanctions for non-compliance and incentives for satisfactory participation. The project will infuse the critical transformational elements of the Mental Health Services Act by adopting a wrap around model of recovery and resiliency wherein families are treated as partners and all community resources are considered in rehabilitation.

3) What target population(s) and location in Merced County will be served?

The adult target population will include the following: 1) AB109, Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) clients, following their release from State Prison and transferred to the Probation Department for three years community supervision; 2) AB109 - 1170(h), Local Prison clients following their physical release from County Jail and committed to the Probation Department for a period of community supervision; 3) Traditional Probation Clients, following their release from jail to the Probation Department for 3-5 years of community supervision.

To be eligible for Mental Health Court, the client must have an Axis I mental health disorder, must be willing to participate in all required counseling, and be available to attend all court hearings. Every client will be evaluated on an individual case-by-case basis by the Adult Mental Health Court Team to determine eligibility and suitability.

All other clients will be eligible for the services identified in the project's description.

The location will be either the Adult Probation Office or a county building that is currently uninhabited and being considered for remodeling for collaborative AB109 efforts. Each building is in the City of Merced. All adult formal probation clients will eligible for assessment for services out of one of these locations.

4) How does this proposal meet the unmet needs of the community?

The proposed Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will improve public safety, increase collaborative efforts, improve the continuum of care for probation clients, connect clients and their families to community treatment programs, and improve opportunities improving the quality of life for clients and their loved-ones.

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This proposal will also allow for alternative dispositions to revocations of probation rather than the traditional method of long-term incarceration.

5) How many individuals will be served and how?

The Mental Health Court will serve as many as 20 clients at a time. The mental health deputy probation officer will provide community supervision of the 20 clients and an additional 30 mental health clients who may not need the level of service provided by the MH Court.

The Re-Entry program will provide services to the 50 aforementioned mental health clients. Additionally, the Probation Department provides services to over 3,800 adult probationers and 180 AB109 Post Release Community Supervision clients (which will grow significantly over the next 3 years). Every client referred to the Probation Department, whether they be from the Court, the jail, or State Prison, are assessed by probation personnel utilizing a validated risk and needs assessment tool. Based on the assessment outcomes, clients are referred to services and levels of supervisions. It is anticipated that the Mental Health and Re-entry Programs will be additional, highly effective resources to assist this large client pool in successful rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

6) After consulting with the MHSA Coordinator, other mental health professionals and community members describe other programs that are similar or complimentary to your proposed program?

A similar program is the Merced County Adult Drug Court. The program is a Court-supervised, comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment program for adult probationers. The four-phase treatment program is provided in collaboration by the Mental Health Department - AOD Services, Superior Court, Probation Department, District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and other members of the Defense Bar.

Santa Cruz County employs a successful Re-entry program that includes the collaboration of many county and community based organization similar to those participating in Merced County's re-entry subcommittee. The Santa Cruz program is recognized, in part, for a warrant reduction program that has been successful at improving court attendance, at keeping clients in the community rather than in jail, and at reducing the jail population.

7) If expanding an existing program or strategy, please describe your existing program and how that will change under this proposal.

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The Merced County Community Services and Support Plan identified the following needs below and continue to be an unmet need in the Merced Community.

Table 2.1.1: Community Issues by Age Group

| Priority | Children/Youth (Ages 0-13) | Transition Age Youth (Ages 16-25) | Adults (Ages 26-59) | Older Adults (Ages 60+) |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | *Peer and family problems | *Inability to manage independence | *Inability to Work | *Isolation |
| 2 | *School failure | *Inability to work | *Incarceration | *Peer and family support |
| 3 | *Involvement In child welfare or juvenile justice system | *Homelessness | *Isolation | *Inability to work |
| 4 | *Out-of-home placement | *Institutionalization/ Incarceration | *Peer and family support | *Homelessness |
| 5 | *Inability to be in a mainstream environment | *Frequent hospitalization/ emergency room care | *Homelessness | *Frequent emergency room care |
| 6 | *Hospitalization | *Involuntary care and isolation | | |

8) Describe in detail collaboration strategies with other stakeholders that have been developed or will be implemented for this program and priority population, including those with tribal organizations. Explain how they will help to improve system services and outcomes for individuals.

The following organizations/agencies have been invited/encouraged to collaborate on the Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program:

Superior Court: Preside over special courts - Mental Health and Re-Entry.

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Mental Health: Assessment, case management, treatment, and court representation.

Probation: Assessment, referral, community case management, and court representation.

Public Defender's Office: Collaboration on special courts, alternative sanctions, and defense of clients when needed.

Human Services Agency: Vocational training program and family services programs, including 'All Dads Matter'.

District Attorney's Office: Collaboration on special courts, alternative sanctions, and prosecution when needed.

Sheriff's Department: Collaboration on re-entry of clients from jail to the community.

Workforce Investment: Vocational training and job finding.

Merced County Office of Education: Education and vocational training.

LifeLine, Inc.: Community development, including community service work program, and counseling services.

Ace Overcomers: Adverse childhood trauma counseling.

California Prison Moratorium Project: Inmate outreach.

- 9) Discuss how the chosen programs/strategies will be culturally competent and meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Describe how your program and strategies address the ethnic disparities identified in Part ii, Section II of this plan and what specific strategies will be used to meet those needs.**

The Mental Health Court and Re-entry Program will focus on the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to the participants by connecting them with service providers who understand and utilize the strengths of individual cultures when delivering services and treatment to participants and their families. The program will look to these culturally competent service providers to incorporate the participant languages and cultures into the services provided to garner effective and improved outcomes. It will be the intent of the program to embrace and promote culturally competent best practices for care, in order to uphold the ongoing culturally competent planning and implementation of the Mental Health Services Act.