

## Who is Eligible?

A participant can only be accepted into Mental Health Court as follows [generally stated]:

- Must be 18 years of age or older and a resident of Lee County
- Be willing to participate voluntarily and to comply with any recommended interventions
- The individual is considered to be legally competent and statutorily eligible
- Have an open misdemeanor or felony in the 20th Judicial Circuit
- Must have medical records to substantiate an eligible diagnosis within the last 6 months
- There must be a clear nexus between mental illness and criminal offense
- Must not pose a danger to staff or community
- Must meet the DCF definition of an adult with a Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI), such as:

- a) Psychotic disorders, including Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective disorders
- b) Bipolar disorders
- c) Major depressive disorders

\*Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) is defined by Florida DCF in the DCF Pamphlet 155-2, Chapter 5 (PERF)

Lee County Mental Health Court is a collaborative effort of:

- Lee County Criminal Division
- Office of the Public Defender
- Office of the State Attorney
- Lee County Sheriff's Office
- Lee County Clerk of Court
  - Centerstone
- Department of Children and Families
  - SalusCare of Florida
- Florida Department of Corrections
  - AIM Target Programs, Inc.



For additional information and to download the forms please scan the QR code or visit our website at:

<http://www.ca.cjis20.org>

Programs > Problem Solving Courts > Mental Health Court



## Mental Health Court Program



20th Judicial Circuit of Florida  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
Lee County Criminal Division

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## What is Mental Health Court?

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The Lee County Mental Health Court Program represents an effort to identify and address the unique needs of people living with a mental illness who become justice involved.

The program was developed to help individuals improve their quality of life and continue to be productive and responsible members of the community. The program is a voluntary alternative to the traditional criminal justice system. The Judge, court staff, legal counsel and treatment team offer guidance and encourage participants to successfully complete the program.

## Program Objectives

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- Increase effective cooperation between the criminal justice system and mental health treatment in our community.
- Assist participants struggling with a mental illness who have committed a misdemeanor or felony offense.
- More efficient case processing, improved access to public mental health treatment and services.
- Improved well-being and quality of life.
- Reduced chance of recidivism through education.
- Improved public safety for community at large.

## Program Overview

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Following arrest, participants are identified and eligibility for the program is determined through a series of screenings intended to promote public safety. Legal counsel explains the program and advises the participant in making a decision regarding participation.

A court supervision plan is developed cooperatively to specifically address the individual's needs, taking into account existing community resources. The participant, mental health professionals, and counsel must together agree to the court supervision plan. Entry into the Mental Health Court Program is voluntary. Defense counsel continues to provide legal representation throughout the Mental Health Court Program.

Successful completion of the court supervision plan results in closure of the case either through dismissal of the participant's charges or possible completion of the probation. Failure to complete the court supervision plan or discharge from the program results in prosecution on the pending charges.

## Program Rules

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- Attend regular court appearances.
- Establish cooperatively a court supervision and intervention plan.
- Demonstrate progress toward goals.
- Participate in mental health treatment and take medications as prescribed.
- Refrain from engaging in illegal activity.
- Meet conditions of probation, when applicable.

## Program Completion

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Upon successful completion of the court supervision plan, the pending cases may be dismissed by the State Attorney's Office. Probation may be terminated or continued on regular supervision. Participants will be successfully linked with mental health service providers that they can maintain for the future. Family and friends are invited to join the court as the Judge congratulates the participant for successfully completing the court supervision plan and achieving his/her goals.