

**Los Angeles County Probation Department
2021 CSAC Challenge Awards Executive Summary**

Title of this Entry: Mental Health Housing Court Program

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Overview: The Mental Health Housing Court Program (MHHC) is a supervision program for adult mentally ill/homeless clients who receive housing and mental health treatment upon release from county jail.

Challenge: A primary challenge in Los Angeles County is the rapid growth of the mentally ill/transient population in county jail. Jail reform has increased a need for housing and mental health treatment; however, there is a lack of resources to provide such treatment for this population.

Solutions: In efforts to address the ongoing challenges, in 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors solution was the collaboration of the Office of Diversion and Re-entry (ODR) program with the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation or Department) to develop the Probation Mental Health Housing Court Program. The primary goal of the program was to supervise the mentally ill/homeless population assigned to the ODR court in the community. The MHHC program includes additional collaboration with the Department of Health Services, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles County Superior Courts, Housing for Health, and other community based mental health/housing providers. Community supervision has offered a more rehabilitative focus rather than an exclusively punitive approach to incarceration.

Innovation: The Probation Mental Health Housing Court Program is an innovative intensive supervision program that requires Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) to supervise their clients in a community setting. MHHC DPOs are required to conduct a home visit within 48 hours of the client's release from county jail. It is unique in that the program is unlike the traditional form of supervision where the client is required to report into the office. The MHHC DPO visits their client at least twice a month at either the client's home or housing program location. The goal of MHHC program is to meet the Department's expectations of providing support and guidance to a very high-risk population by collaborating with the housing case managers and treatment providers, such as Intensive Care Management Services and the Full-Service Partnership to ensure the clients follow their treatment plan and goals. The DPO also works directly with the court's treatment team to ensure the client is compliant with all court orders and conditions, ultimately transitioning the clients into permanent housing while

reducing recidivism.

The MHHC program is also innovative in that a DPO is assigned directly to the ODR Mental Health Court. The DPO collaborates with the court's Judicial Assistant to ensure all necessary reports are in court ahead of the suitability hearing date. The DPO participates in the court hearing to communicate Probation's position concerning the client as it relates to their current probation supervision status with both the Deputy District Attorney and the Deputy Public Defender. MHHC deputies underwent intensive Evidence-Based Practice Training, Motivational Interviewing Training, and Mental Health Training.

Results: Since 2016, the MHHC program has supervised over 2,085 mentally ill/homeless clients which is an 80% increase.

MHHC Statistical Analysis (2016 – Present)

	TOTAL # OF CLIENTS	TOTAL % INCREASE
PERMANENT HOUSING	220	71%
TEMPORARY HOUSING	815	71%
MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING, MEDICATION, MEALS, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING	2,925	69%
CLIENTS ACTIVELY SUPERVISED BY THE MHHC DEPUTIES	1225	66%

Due to the success of the program, the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) awarded a grant to the MHHC program to supervise a mentally ill pilot diversion caseload with a current client base of 300 DSH Diversion cases. In addition, in June 2021, ODR awarded the MHHC program funds to help provide support to clients placed in the Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial Program.

Replicability: The MHHC program can be successfully applied in other jurisdictions through collaboration with various stakeholders such as: Board of Supervisors, Probation Department, Sheriff, Department of Mental Health, County Courts, and Housing Programs. Stakeholders must operate in the framework of providing alternatives to incarceration with focus on the care-first, jail last approach.