



Community Mental Health Liaisons



The new Community Mental Health Liaison (CMHL) program is part of the Strengthening Mental Health Initiative. Thirty CMHLs work across the state to assist law enforcement and courts.

The goal is to form better community partnerships between Community Mental Health Centers, law enforcement, and courts to **save** valuable resources that might otherwise be expended on unnecessary jail, prison, and hospital stays and to **improve outcomes** for individuals with behavioral health issues. Liaisons also follow-up with Missourians referred to them in order to track progress and ensure success. Through the CMHL program, people with behavioral health issues who have frequent interaction with law enforcement and the courts will have improved access to behavioral health treatment.

Role of the Community Mental Health Liaison:

- Answer general questions about mental health conditions and co-occurring disorders (including mental health disorders, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities).
- Answer questions about the available CMHC resources and services to address behavioral health issues.
- Assist law enforcement and the courts in locating inpatient psychiatric beds for court-ordered involuntary detentions.
- Work to facilitate access to behavioral health resources for potential and existing clients.
- Upon request: Screen potential and existing clients for behavioral health needs and follow their cases to monitor treatment.
- For people with repeat involvement: Consult with case managers to improve coordination of care.
- Explore opportunities for use of outpatient commitments.
- Provide/coordinate training on the following topics: (mental health disorders, civil commitment procedures, suicide prevention, mental health first aid training, etc.).
- Identify and address structural barriers, miscommunications, and consistent patterns that reduce access to services.
- Participate in/consider developing with local law enforcement Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) or other initiatives that assist law enforcement in dealing with individuals with behavioral health needs.
- Collaborate with local partners in Mental Health Courts, Treatment Courts, Veterans Courts, other specialty/diversion courts dealing with behavioral health issues.
- Where appropriate, participate in monthly or bi-monthly meetings for other court initiatives, such as Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Crossover Youth Initiative (COYI), etc. to improve access to behavioral health services.
- Collect data about behavioral health issues that impact law enforcement and the courts.