

Juneau Coordinated Resources Project

Juneau Mental Health Court

What is the Juneau Coordinated Resources Project (JCRP)?

The Juneau Coordinated Resources Project (JCRP) - also known as the Juneau Mental Health Court - is a voluntary “therapeutic” or “problem-solving” court located within the Juneau District Court that hears cases involving individuals with mental health disorders and mental disabilities who are charged with criminal offenses.

The JCRP is a post-booking diversionary response to the problem of “criminalization,” or an increased likelihood that people with mental health disorders or mental disabilities will be processed through the criminal justice system instead of the mental health system. The court diverts people with mental health disorders and mental disabilities, who are charged with criminal offenses, from incarceration and into appropriate community treatment and services to prevent further contacts with the criminal justice system.

The project supports the well-being of individuals with mental health disorders and mental disabilities by identifying criminogenic risk factors (factors known to impact recidivism) and developing a comprehensive case plan that is responsive to the needs of the participant. The plan addresses mental health and substance issues, educational and vocational deficits, family and relationship problems, criminal thinking, and housing. It promotes engagement in meaningful activities and increases overall social functioning.

Objectives of the Juneau Community Resources Project:

- Promote public safety
- Reduce inappropriate incarceration of offenders with mental health disorders and mental disabilities, and promote their well-being in the community
- Relieve the burden on the Alaska Department of Corrections presented by inmates with mental health disorders and mental disabilities
- Reduce repeated criminal activity among offenders with mental health disorders and mental disabilities (legal recidivism)
- Reduce psychiatric hospitalization of offenders with mental health disorders and mental disabilities (clinical recidivism)

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for participation in the JCRP, a defendant must be:

- Charged with a misdemeanor crime or Class C felony
- Diagnosed with a mental illness (Mental Health Trust Beneficiary)
- Residing in the City and Borough of Juneau
- Willing to voluntarily participate in an individualized case plan in lieu of traditional bail or sentencing conditions
- Eligible to receive community behavioral health services

How the JCRP/Mental Health Court works

The court diverts eligible offenders with mental health disorders or mental disabilities from jail and into appropriate community treatment, focusing on their individual therapeutic and criminogenic needs (factors that are predictive of recidivism). With the second generation of mental health courts, we follow criminal justice research that emphasizes the importance of addressing criminogenic needs when the case plan is developed.

Collaborative Team Approach: An important highlight of the CRP project is to provide a single point of contact for a criminal defendant with a mental health disorder or mental disability. The project provides a multidisciplinary team of designated and trained judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and probation officers who consistently participate in court hearings.

Community Treatment: A defendant is eligible to receive assistance from the project in developing, coordinating, and monitoring an individualized case plan. The court orders that plan as a condition of bail or probation. Participants are monitored by probation officers who work exclusively with the CRP projects. The CRP probation officers are employed by the Division of Behavioral Health, Alcohol Safety Action Program. Probation officers provide treatment and resource matching, and linkage to and monitoring of the case plan.

Monitoring by the Court: The court monitors the participant's adherence to the case plan through regularly held status hearings and receives reports on the participant's progress. If treatment non-adherence occurs, the court may adjust the plan to motivate adherence or employ non-jail-based sanctions or incarceration.

Invitation:

Court is open to the public and anyone may observe JCRP Hearings.

Judge Kirsten Swanson
Courtroom B
Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m.

Dimond Courthouse
First Floor
123 4th Street, Juneau

For more information:

JCRP Project Coordinator
PO Box 114100, Juneau, AK 99811
Phone: (907) 463-4756
JRidgeway@akcourts.gov

Referral Process

Anyone can make a referral to the Juneau Coordinated Resources Project. Police, corrections staff, lawyers, friends, family members, community behavioral health providers, judges, and court staff can alert the Project Coordinator that a defendant may be eligible to have their case heard in this therapeutic court.

For more information on court observation days and times, or to make a referral, contact the Project Coordinator at (907) 463-4756.

The Juneau Coordinated Resources Project is a collaborative effort of:

- Alaska Court System
- Alaska Department of Corrections
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Office of Public Advocacy
- Alaska Department of Law
- Alaska Public Defender Agency
- Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP)
- City & Borough of Juneau Prosecutor's Office
- Alaska Highway Safety Office
- Criminal Defense Attorneys
- JAMHI Health & Wellness
- Consumers and Family Members