

Forensic Navigators

The Trueblood v. DSHS lawsuit challenged unconstitutional delays in competency evaluation and restoration services for people detained in city and county jails. The Trueblood Contempt Settlement Agreement establishes a plan for providing services to persons involved in the criminal court system and for providing treatment to people when needed so they are less likely to become involved in the criminal court system.

The Trueblood Settlement Agreement includes a plan for phasing in programs and services:

- Phase 1 [2019-2021]: Pierce, Southwest, and Spokane regions including Pierce, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat, Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Adams, Lincoln, and Pend Oreille counties.
- Phase 2 [2021-2023]: King region/county
- Phase 3 [2023-2025]: Thurston, Mason, and Salish regions including Thurston, Mason, Clallam, Kitsap, and Jefferson counties.

Program

The Forensic Navigator Program serves people who are evaluated for competency to stand trial, regardless if they are found competent. This includes people who are not competent to stand trial and ordered to receive inpatient restoration services; have had their charges dismissed; were removed from outpatient restoration services; and those who had their competency restored and were connected to a case manager with a community-based outpatient behavioral health agency.

Eligibility

People ordered to receive a competency evaluation are assigned a forensic navigator when the evaluation is ordered. A court may not issue an order appointing a forensic navigator unless DSHS certifies that there is adequate forensic navigator capacity to provide services at the time the order is issued.

Although there are no qualifying or disqualifying charges, the Forensic Navigator Program is designed for people who are determined to be suitable for community-based treatment and support. All potential clients are screened to ensure that only those who are suitable for such treatment and support are offered services.

Authority

See [RCW 10.77.074](#).

See [WAC 21-01-017](#).

Reviewed: 4/24

Partners

Forensic navigators have maintained extremely close contact with jail and court partners in order to continue serving clients, despite challenges presented by COVID-19. Similarly, forensic navigators have maintained close contact with all forensic services partners in the Outpatient Competency Restoration Program, Forensic Project for the Assistance in Transitions from Homelessness and Forensic Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, as well as community-based service providers with whom they work on behalf of shared clients.

The following partners are key to program success:

- Washington State Health Care Authority
- Outpatient Competency Restoration Program providers (via contract with HCA)
- Courts*
- City and county jails*
- Community-based service providers*
- Law enforcement agencies*

*Subject to phased implementation

For more information

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- For more information about Trueblood, or to be added to the Listserv, email truebloodtaskforce@dshs.wa.gov

