

L.A. County CARE Court

Overview



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

What is CARE Court?

CARE Court is a state-funded program which helps people with **untreated schizophrenia** or other **associated psychotic disorders** receive treatment and services for their recovery and well-being.

CARE Court is not a criminal or civil court. Its goal is to help residents get the support they need in the least restrictive way possible.

The program is strictly voluntary. Eligible individuals are not required to participate and can opt out of various services.

Why was CARE Court Started?



Many individuals suffering from untreated schizophrenia need help. They are at greater risk for experiencing homelessness, being jailed or winding up in the emergency room.



Their loved ones often **struggle with knowing where to turn to for support** or what steps they can take to help them get the care they need.



CARE Court gives vulnerable individuals (and those who care for them) **another path to access key services in their community** that can improve their lives and well-being.

What Services Can CARE Court Provide?

Participants can receive many kinds of support, such as **counseling, medication, housing options, social services**, and more.

A team of experts, including doctors, counselors, case managers, people with lived experience, and others, works with each participant to create a **CARE plan**—a personalized treatment plan that meets their specific needs.

A CARE plan is NOT a conservatorship.

Those taking part can express their own preferences about treatment and make their own decisions about participating in the program, whether to take medication, and other aspects of their care.

Is CARE Court available to everyone?



To qualify for CARE Court services and support, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Diagnosed within the "schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders" class and currently experiencing symptoms.
- Not clinically stabilized in ongoing treatment.
- Experiencing a significant decline in their mental health.
- Unlikely to survive safely in the community without support AND/OR needs services to prevent relapse and deterioration.
- A CARE Plan is the least restrictive alternative and the individual is likely to benefit from their participation.

Eligibility is not dependent on housing status. CARE Court is for anyone who meets these criteria, whether or not they are unhoused.

If your loved one is not eligible for CARE Court, the Department of Mental Health has many other services and programs for support.

CARE Court protects participants' rights to make their own decisions, giving them free legal representation and allowing them to **choose a supporter who can help them navigate the process.**



Appointed Legal Support For CARE Court Participants

- Legal representation for Care Court respondents will be provided by Independent Defense Counsel's Office (IDCO)
 - This is Panel of 50 attorneys with mental health and holistic legal training and experience will represent respondents when appointed by the Care Court



Filing a CARE Court Petition: How to File

Eligible petitioners must complete and submit the following materials to begin the CARE Court process:

- [CARE-100 form](#) AND
- Attach evidence, to CARE-100 form, that the person in need of services was detained for a minimum of two periods of intensive treatment ([WIC 5250](#) hold process) and the most recent event occurred within the past 60 days.
OR
- [CARE-101 Mental Health Declaration](#) from a licensed behavioral health provider

**Forms are available in
Chinese, Korean,
Spanish, Vietnamese
and English.**

What Happens After Filing a Petition?

Family members, roommates, clinicians, and others can **submit a petition** requesting the court to assess allowing an individual to participate. Once that paperwork is submitted, this is what follows:

- Petition Review
- Connecting with the Respondent (i.e. the person needing help)
 - **The process of locating, contacting, building rapport and trust and engaging can take time, and ultimately depends on the voluntary participation of the respondent.**
- Eligibility Hearing Participant Can Choose Supporter
- **Petitioner's Role is Complete.** Court excuses the original petitioner (if not DMH) and DMH is appointed as the petitioner for the CARE court petition.



CARE Court Process - How Can I Find Out More Information About the Case?

CARE Court respondents have the same legal rights to privacy about their care and medical treatment information as any other adult.

LACDMH takes the right to privacy seriously, and we do everything to safeguard the privacy of those who take part in this process.

The respondent has the right to decide whether they want to share information about their care, CARE Plan and treatment, whom they wish to share it with and what they want to share.

Unless the respondent chooses to share information with you, you will not be entitled to further updates about their case.

What Happens Next?

If the participant chooses not to participate, or if the petition isn't approved, the case ends. If the participant does take part CARE Court, these are the next steps:



CARE PLAN:

A team of experts, which can include clinicians, case managers, people with lived experience, and others, meets with the participant in the community to create a personalized treatment plan and help with supportive decision-making.



SUPPORT:

CARE Court will have periodic check-ins with the participant to evaluate their progress and allow for changes to the CARE Plan and its services and resources to support healing and recovery.



COMPLETION:

Participants receive services for up to one year. At 11 months, CARE Court holds a status hearing to determine whether the plan's services and supports should be extended for up to 12 more months.



NEXT STEPS:

The participant can continue with treatment, supportive services, and housing options in the community to support long-term recovery, even after they are no longer a CARE program participant.

CARE Court Information and Resources



Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health



dmh.lacounty.gov/care-court



CARECourt@dmh.lacounty.gov

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Helpful Video
- Downloadable Resources



Los Angeles Superior Court



www.lacourt.org/care

- Petitioner Resources
- Legal Form
- Self-Help Links



No Wrong Door!

Additional Resources for Help & Support

**Call or
Text 988**

to contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for support with mental health-related distress.

**Call 1-800-854-7771
(24/7 Help Line)**

for crisis response teams in the field or mental health resources through the LACDMH.

**Text “LA” to
741741**

Text “LA” to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive free crisis support via text message.

Call 211

for general information on resources or to be connected to health, human and social services.