

Riverside County Jail-Based Competency Treatment Program

RIVERSIDE, CA | 2021 ANNUAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

Our mission is to provide comprehensive competency restoration services in a timely manner to individuals found incompetent to stand trial (IST) pursuant to California Penal Code 1370.



DATES OF SERVICE
2013-PRESENT



CUSTOMER
RIVERSIDE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



AREA OF EXPERTISE
CORRECTIONAL MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES

Program Introduction

In 2013, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department engaged Liberty to implement and manage a new jail-based felony restoration of competency program. The program provides forensic psychiatric and psychological assessments and jail-based competency treatment (JBCT) using a specialized multidisciplinary team. Our recovery-oriented approach combines the proactive use of psychiatric medications; rehabilitative activities; and multi-modal cognitive, social, and physical activities that address competency in a holistic fashion. Now in its 9th year of operation, the program has served over 800 IST defendants and has consistently exceeded the 70-day contractual standard for restoring competency and/or transferring those in need more extensive treatment to the state forensic hospital. Given the program's success, the bed capacity was raised from 20 to 25 in 2018.

Liberty's multidisciplinary team includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, psychiatric technicians, and recreation therapists. Our recovery-oriented approach uses individualized assessment and interventions that promote improved cognitive functioning, of which competency is but one important component. We combine the proactive use of psychiatric medications; motivation to participate in rehabilitative activities; and multi-modal cognitive, social, and physical activities that address competency in a holistic fashion, rather than a narrow focus on legal concepts and courtroom protocol. Liberty's team works in close collaboration with specially selected and trained correctional officers to maintain a safe and secure therapeutic environment.

Program Objectives

Riverside County's overall goal for the JMHS program is to provide timely, comprehensive mental health services at a level of quality that is consistent with the accreditation standards of the NCCHC. Liberty supports the Department in this goal by:

1. Restore individuals to competency in under 60 days.
2. Provide a time-sensitive alternative to the state for the treatment and restoration of IST defendants.
3. Enable the Department of State Hospitals to reduce the wait-list dilemma for limited state hospital beds for those found IST.
4. Enable clients to receive more timely restorative treatment consistent with due process.



Based on consistent, high performance, Liberty's contract with the Sheriff's Department and Department of State Hospitals has been extended for an additional 3 years.

Program Highlights

For the entire term of the contract the program has consistently maintained a cumulative bed-fill rate of above 92%. During the last contract year, we maintained an average daily census of 99.7%. This maximized the utilization of allotted beds, increased the frequency of admissions and discharges, and reduced the time ISTs spend in jail awaiting admittance to a competency restoration program.

Over the past 4 years the court has accepted 99% of our competency reports as accurate and reliable. The accuracy of reports enhances the efficiency of the judicial process by enabling defendants to move more quickly through their criminal proceedings and reducing the time spent in custody prior to resolution.

Over the course of the contract, we have continually received positive feedback from the Sheriff's Department and custody staff with whom we work collaboratively each day. In the past year, we succeeded in helping Riverside to offer non-emergent involuntary medication administration for the first time, which is a service capacity highly desired by the California Department of State Hospitals.

Contract Year Results

Reduced admission delays: At the start of the year, the Department of State Hospitals set a goal to decrease the number of days between adjudication as IST and admission to a restoration program. Despite efforts, the average number of days for all California JBCTs worsened by 24 days, but Riverside JBCT succeeded in reducing its admission delay time by four days.

Reduced screening time: We cut the number of days to screen patients for admission to the program by more than half to 3.2 days during the last six months of the year. This also helped to facilitate the speed of admissions to the JBCT.

Improved rate of restoration: By addressing several program variables influencing restoration rate, we increased the number of patients who were restored and returned to court by 19% for the year. We did this by restructuring our treatment team meetings to focus specifically on competency deficits, by identifying appropriate interventions for each individualized deficit, and by closely evaluating effectiveness of the interventions. Further, we increased individual sessions with each patient, tailoring the frequency and durations of the sessions to each patient's needs.

Added capacity for IM: During the last seven months of the contract year, Liberty collaborated with the Sheriff's Department to develop a new policy and procedure for administration of non-emergent involuntary psychotropic medication. This also required improved access to Riverside County's EHR (TechCare) to effectively perform the functions necessary for administering Involuntary Medication Orders.

