

# BC-COURTS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

*fact sheet*

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The Beaver County Collaborative Options Utilizing Re-entry, Treatment, and Supports (BC-COURTS) program aims to provide local courts more flexibility to collaborate with the justice and human service systems.

The program's goal is to serve and potentially divert individuals involved in both the criminal justice and behavioral health systems by identifying, engaging, and supporting them with a multi-system specialized probation team.

This fact sheet showcases examples of the positive impacts the program has made since its implementation in April 2015. The information was gathered through interviews with two probation officers, one probation supervisor, a behavioral health supervisor, and a peer/case manager.

## BACKGROUND

The BC-COURTS model built upon efforts already happening in Beaver County aimed at constructing a comprehensive, evidenced-based system of care for individuals with substance use, mental health, and co-occurring disorders.

The distinguishing component of this program is the specialized probation team that includes a probation officer, a case manager, and individuals with lived experiences, i.e., peers. The team assists participants meet their supervision requirements and connects them to needed services and treatment based on their identified needs.



Now that the teams have been in place for over a year, the impact of BC-COURTS is beginning to be evident to both team members and participants. This fact sheet highlights a few of the program successes.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### ONE. The inclusion of peers and case managers on the probation team is benefitting individuals who are on probation.

#### ◆ Frequency of contacts

Consumer engagement is higher when using the team approach in comparison to traditional probation caseloads. According to the team members, this increases the chances of successfully completing the program.

#### ◆ Early intervention after release from jail

The participants are approached as soon as possible after release in order to schedule a behavioral health evaluation. Engagement and relationship building is happening earlier than it would in a traditional probation caseload. According to a probation officer, this is one of the main strengths of the program and the way it differs from typical caseloads.

#### ◆ Quality of contacts

The role of peers and case managers on the probation team is crucial. The probation officer said they add a "therapeutic" relationship that typical probation caseloads do not have.

### TWO. Increased collaboration and communication between the criminal justice & behavioral health system.

#### ◆ The addition of a probation officer on the team improves the case managers and peers access to the participant.

#### ◆ Communication between the team members helps to ensure that the probation officer has regular information about participant progress while enrolled in service.

Prepared by:

## A SUCCESS STORY

The following is a story submitted by one of the teams that illustrates the ways BC-COURTS is supporting people returning to the community after release from jail.



Prior to involvement with the Drug and Alcohol Peer Team, our client struggled with addiction, criminal activity, homelessness and unemployment. As a result of assessing, planning, implementing, and providing ongoing support and encouragement, this participant began working towards her goals.

The first two goals she accomplished were obtaining **employment** and **stable housing**. She has refrained from criminal activity, her relationship with her seven children has become much stronger, and she celebrated one year of sobriety this summer. This participant has overcome many obstacles in her life and is definitely on the right track.



## THE NUMBERS

- ◆ **129** participants have been served by BC-COURTS between April 2015 and June 2016.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ A total of **30** individuals have participated in specialized probation teams.
- ◆ **26** participants were referred to substance abuse treatment.
- ◆ **23** individuals were referred to mental health treatment.
- ◆ **18** individuals received assistance with housing related needs.
- ◆ **18** individuals were referred to the sponsor program
- ◆ **11** individuals were referred to physical health services.
- ◆ **9** participants were referred to employment services.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- ◆ Early intervention is key to successful reentry.

This lesson has the possibility of being incorporated into traditional probation caseloads or applied to other reentry programs.
- ◆ Therapeutic relationships are essential to client success.

The probation officer was very encouraging about the importance of having a peer and/or mental health professional on the probation team.

This lesson supports the expanded use of specialized probation teams in Beaver County and the utilization of the team approach by other county reentry programs.
- ◆ Collaboration between systems mutually benefits both organizations and the clients served.

<sup>1</sup> Served means that the individual was engaged by the probation team in some capacity, even if he/she has not been formally enrolled in the program.