



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County

Program Title: PWC CS Forensic Services Program

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety and Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Christopher J. Shorter

Title: County Executive

Signature: 

**Program Title: Forensic Services Program**

**Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety & Human Services**

**Executive Summary—PWC Forensic Services Team**

In 2018, according to Virginia Criminal Justice Workgroup, the prevalence rate for serious mental illness in Virgin jails was at least double the rate found in the community. This speaks to the community problem of addressing the needs of mentally ill inmates during their incarceration and upon release back into the community. Prince William County has implemented efforts to help divert individuals from jail that include, crisis intervention training (CIT) for law enforcement officers, Marcus Alert protocols and outreach program and a Co-Responder program. To further address the needs and assist re-entry into the community, the Community Services (CS) Forensic Services Program works collaboratively with other PWC agencies: Adult Detention Center (ADC), Public Defender's Office, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Criminal Justice Services, District 35 Probation and Parole) to support individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders throughout the criminal justice process and return to the community. The support, treatment and warm hand- offs for transitions are providing the stabilization some of the individuals need to possibly decrease recidivism and offer continuity of care that is so vital for continued improvement which is needed to stop the ongoing- cycle of repeat involvement with the criminal justice system.

To date, 52 individuals have been enrolled in the program and 63 have met criteria and agreed to services from 107 referrals made to the program.

The programming and commitment to continued collaboration and coordination along with warm hand offs when transitioning individuals with behavioral health conditions involved in the legal system is key to continued engagement in treatment and wellness for these individuals, which has been considered needed to reduce recidivism rate for these individuals.

## **Brief Overview of program- PWC Forensic Services Program**

The Forensic Services Program within the Prince William County Community Services Department was initially established in May 2018. Over the years, the Program has collaborated and developed committed partnerships with other County Agencies who serve individuals with behavioral health conditions as a way to address some of the gaps that were keeping these individuals stuck within the criminal justice system. While services were offered and at times individuals accepted the services or participated in the treatment, the continuity of care often ended when there was not the coordination between departments working with the individuals particularly around times of transitions. Additionally, not having access to transportation, housing, phones, food and other social determinants of health often interrupted the follow-through of these individuals, which often continued their involvement with the criminal justice system.

This program works with individuals with behavioral health conditions who become involved with the criminal justice system at various intercepts. The program provides coordination and monitoring of forensic evaluations, provides restoration to competency services for juveniles and adults, offers discharge planning services for forensic and NGRI individuals, services as point of contact for all MH individuals pending release from DOC facilities who plan to return to PWC, provides case management for NGRI individuals who are residing in the community on Conditional Release and outreach and linkage to needed resources by peer specialist. Two newer initiatives under the FSP are Forensic Re-entry Services for incarcerated individuals who meet SMI and/or Co-occurring criteria and are not connected with services, which is funded through Re-Entry Grant and the Forensic Transitional townhouse initiative which provides short-term shared housing for these individuals.

**The CS Forensic Services Program and the collaborations across PWC departments have led to better coordination for criminal justice involved individuals who have behavioral health conditions. This coordination is increasing continuity of care and addressing social determinants of health that have been barriers for wellness and stability for some criminally justice involved individuals.**

**Program Title: Forensic Services Program**

**Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety & Human Services**

**Problem, Challenge, situation faced by locality and**

In 2018, according to Virginia Criminal Justice Workgroup, the prevalence rate for serious mental illness in Virgin jails was at least double the rate found in the community. This speaks to the community problem of addressing the needs of mentally ill inmates during their incarceration and upon release back into the community. Prince William County has implemented efforts to help divert individuals from jail that include, crisis intervention training (CIT) for law enforcement officers, Marcus Alert specialized training with PWC being the first in Region 2 to implement the Marcus Alert protocols and establish a Co-Responder program in 20220. These programs are demonstrating an increasing practice of being able to divert individuals in need of behavioral health treatment from the criminal justice system. However, when arrest does occur the Community Services (CS) Forensic Services Program works collaboratively with other PWC agencies: Adult Detention Center(ADC), Public Defender's Office, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Criminal Justice Services, District 35 Probation and Parole) to support individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders throughout the criminal justice process and return to the community. The support, treatment and warm hand offs for transitions are providing the stabilization some of the individuals need to possibly decrease recidivism and offer continuity of care that is so vital for continued improvement which is needed to stop the ongoing- cycle of repeat involvement with the criminal justice system.

The Forensic Services Program (FSP) within the Prince William County Community Services (CS) Department, was initially established in May 2018. The program developed by a need to realign and join forensic related positions that were interspersed throughout CS believing that this would better serve individuals. Over the years this has led to understanding the need to coordinate better within

CS for treatment and to coordinate and collaborate with other county departments who serve these individuals as a key component to ensuring continuity of care for individuals with behavioral health conditions.

The FSP monitors court ordered forensic evaluations that while conducted by independent evaluators, requires monitoring and oversight to ensure that the evaluations are done timely and provided to the court by required dates. This program provides restoration to competency services for both juveniles and adults, discharge planning services and case management services for forensic and NGRI clients, serves as the point of contact for all individuals with mental health disorders pending release from Department of Correction facilities who plan to return to Prince William County. Forensic Re-entry services for incarcerated individuals who meet Serious Mental Illness and/or co-occurring criteria and are not connected with services was added through a Re-entry grant awarded by Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) in 2021. A recent add in January 2023 was FoRTT (Forensic Re-entry Transitional Townhouse Program) which recognized the need for housing for individuals re-entering the community. Further involvement in monthly General District Court Control Docket led to the recognition and need to develop a pre-trial compliance docket which is currently in early stages of development.

The CS Forensic Services Team is made up of 4 direct clinical positions, 1 Peer Recovery Specialist, a Coordinator (Kristen Durbin) and some oversight/management from clinical psychologist (Katanya Goswell) who provides program management. This team began identifying numerous gaps in the criminal justice system across various Sequential Intercepts which seemed to be creating barriers that individuals, once in the criminal justice system, seemed stuck to overcome, particularly if they had a mental health condition, which often left them repeating their cycle of criminal justice involvement unable to stop the cycle alone. This Team has connected and established regular

collaborations with other PWC partners to include: Public Defender's Office, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Criminal Justice Services, Adult Detention Center and District 35 Probation and Parole, along with other community resources and agencies.

For individuals who are in custody, the Re-Entry Services clinicians on the Forensic Services Team begin their engagement with individuals through the collaboration with the ADC MH Team and are connected with individuals while in custody and continue their involvement with the individual following release to the community for up to 3 months while working to transition the individual to an appropriate CS or community-based treatment program. To date the Re-Entry Team has received 107 referrals, 63 individuals meeting criteria for having serious mental illness and being open to receiving treatment and services. The ADC Mental Health Team often provides the first real opportunity that an individual may have to engage in mental health services. By providing a therapeutic environment within a correctional setting, the ADC MH Team offers and engages individuals into various behavioral health treatment services. Additionally, the ADC is one of six pilot sites in VA to be awarded the Jai Mental Health Program grant through the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services in 2016 which has provided additional services to include funding for placement in residential programming, ancillary medication management and needed transitional funds for individuals leaving the ADC and returning to the community. For many individuals, this is the first time their symptoms are treated and stabilized. Continuity of care is an integral part of all behavioral health services but becomes crucial for those re-entering the community. Providing this warm hand-off to the next program clinician and avoiding having the individual placed on a waiting list or left to make the transition on their own has shown to address one of the significant gaps of the individuals failing to connect and often destabilizing or repeating the cycle of criminal involvement. Transitioning from the criminal justice system into the community-

based treatment system can be overwhelming for anyone. For individuals with mental health and substance use needs, it often doesn't happen successfully without that warm hand-off to assist in navigating the system and supporting the individual. Data from 2020 showed that out of the general population of individuals who sought services through CS and were determined to meet agency eligibility criteria, criminal justice referred individuals made up 41% of missed first appointments. This gap is being addressed. Often an extremely high risk time for individuals who may resort to familiar coping strategies, regardless of how negative, to deal with the overwhelming issues. The collaboration and warm hand -offs provided by the CS Forensics Team Re-Entry Program who has partnered with the ADC MH Team and connected with the individual while incarcerated provides this continuity of care for the individual, pacing with the individual to ensure they are informed and able to choose and making it possible for them to choose something different that maintains the stability and gains they have achieved.

Working so closely with individuals has shed light on the social determinants of health that further impact these individuals getting stuck in repeating patterns and returning to the criminal justice system. Health concerns, food insecurity, transportation and housing to name a few. The development of the FoRTT aspect of the Forensic Services Program arose to address the housing need and since January, 3 individuals have been placed who would otherwise have been homeless upon their re-entry to the community. The Peer Resource Specialist of the Forensics Team provides outreach and linkage for these needed resources. Helping to get someone a phone or transportation to needed appointments and healthy food are all important pieces to the continued stability and success and wellness of the individual. The Peer works to provide this assistance for those re-entering the community and at all intercept levels where possible.



The collective commitment to providing comprehensive care, treatment and services along with the recognized need for collaboration and coordination is upheld by all involved county partnerships when it comes to engaging individuals into behavioral health treatment and diverting from the criminal justice system. Once case example of the Forensic Services Team and involved Collaborative Partnership Follows:

PWC Agencies Involved: CS Forensic Services; Criminal Justice Services, CS Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Staff, ADC MH Staff, Public Defender's Office

The individual involved, like many others, has been trapped in a cycle, frequently transitioning between the criminal justice system and inpatient hospitalization. With no support network in his prior residence in another state, he relocated to PWC to live with family. Unfamiliar with accessing services in VA, he experienced psychiatric decompensation necessitating inpatient treatment. While undergoing the Temporary Detention Order (TDO) process, he was charged with battery against a healthcare worker and disorderly conduct on hospital grounds, thus interrupting the TDO process and leading to his arrest and booking at the ADC.

Upon arrival at the ADC, the MH staff and the PWC Forensic Services Program promptly initiated services. The ADC MH staff focused on stabilizing the client's psychiatric condition, while the Forensic Services Program engaged with the individual, assessed his community-based needs and referred him to the Forensic Services Team. In less than two weeks following his arrest, the client underwent screening and was enrolled with the Forensic Team where he started receiving Forensic Case Management Services. Unexpectedly, the individual was granted bond and released without the knowledge of the treatment providers. Nevertheless, within a week of his release, he proactively engaged with case management services and

met with a psychiatrist. His forensic therapist provided reminders of the appointments and facilitated transportation to ensure he faced no barriers. At the individual's request, a plan was made to transition him from oral medications to injectable medications to better address his mental health symptoms. However, prior to his first injection, his symptoms resurfaced leading to another encounter with law enforcement and subsequent arrest.

Upon returning to the ADC, it became clear to all involved that the client required injectable medication for his treatment. The ADC MH Team advocated for the individual and ensured he received the necessary treatment. Simultaneously, the CS Forensic Team Re-Entry Clinician in consultation with the individual recognized the need for intensive wrap-around mental health support upon release and beyond the Forensic Team's involvement and arranged a referral and warm hand-off to the CS Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team. The ACT team screened the individual while at the ADC, confirmed eligibility and a stable housing plan was identified as he was accepted into the Forensic Transitional Townhouse Program (FoRTT). The Peer from the Forensic Team engaged and provided navigation and support throughout the transition.

The individual faced multiple charges across two states and probation violations. His cases were spread across different court levels and he had various legal counsel representing him. The PWC Public Defender's Office, recognizing that he would best be served by cohesive legal representation, filed to represent the individual on all charges. The assigned attorneys maintained regular contact with all parties involved

and actively participates in the release planning process. The individual was granted bond and ordered to comply with intensive pre-trial conditions. PWC Criminal Justice Services worked with all parties for smooth release. On the day of release, the Forensics Team Re-Entry clinician was present at the ADC, ready to transport the individual to FoRTT. The clinician provided the individual with personal items obtained from his family essential to making his stay at FoRTT successful, along with food, a cell phone and a clothing voucher. Upon arrival at the townhouse, a warm handoff to the ACT program was facilitated.

Since his release the individual has maintained contact with mental health providers, his attorneys and intensive pretrial officer. He is doing well and is enthusiastic about his new opportunity for positive change.