

**California Department of Mental health (DMH)**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**General Information about the Community Services and Supports (CSS)**  
**Component**  
**August 19, 2005**

**Mobile Crisis Team Partnership with Law Enforcement**

**Question:** One of the strategies listed in the CSS Program and Expenditure Plan Requirements is a crisis intervention team partnership with law enforcement. Can you describe in more detail what this partnership is like, and since this is a collaborative effort, what costs would be fundable with MHSA funding?

**Response:** Mobile crisis teams which pair police officers and mental health professionals are sometimes called Psychiatric Emergency Teams (PET) or Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT). The key aspect of these teams is that they provide a co-response of both police and mental health staff in emergency situations. These teams respond on-scene to situations involving people with mental illness. Their mission is to screen and evaluate persons with mental illness who come into contact with police and to refer them to the most appropriate service available and in the least restrictive environment possible. Places where police/mental health crisis response teams have been implemented have reported increased police safety, time savings for patrol officers and savings for taxpayers.

All of the mental health costs for staffing and providing new or expanded services are allowable under the MHSA. In addition, costs for training of law enforcement personnel and for evaluation of new or expanded services are also allowable. Costs for the law enforcement officers themselves are not allowable costs and are usually paid for by the law enforcement jurisdiction, consistent with their existing responsibilities. In addition, other costs usually born by law enforcement when responding to police calls, such as police cars, radios, administrative costs, etc. cannot be funded under MHSA.

**Mental Health Courts**

**Question:** If we want to implement a mental health court in our county for persons with serious mental illness who have criminal justice charges, what costs are allowable for funding under the MHSA?

**Response:** Mental health courts are specialized courts for defendants with mental illness. Defendants are offered the opportunity to participate in court-

supervised treatment in lieu of typical criminal sanctions. Mental health courts involve customary court staff as well as additional mental health staff. The costs of customary court staff and procedures, such as the judge, the attorneys, the bailiff, etc. are not allowable MHSA costs. Mental health clinicians and case managers who provide and monitor the defendant's treatment are allowable costs for new or expanded services. Some mental health courts also employ a court coordinator or court administrator who functions as a liaison between the court and the mental health system. This position may include both court functions, and mental health functions such as screening and/or case management. If so, the new or expanded costs attributable to the mental health functions would be an allowable MHSA cost. If there are other positions or costs with blended functions, the new or expanded costs should be allocated, with MHSA funds being used for mental health functions only.