

RCW 2.30.030 Therapeutic courts authorized—Establishment of processes—Determination of eligibility—Persons not eligible—Use of best practices—Dependency matters—Foreign law limitations. (1) Every trial and juvenile court in the state of Washington is authorized and encouraged to establish and operate therapeutic courts. Therapeutic courts, in conjunction with the government authority and subject matter experts specific to the focus of the therapeutic court, develop and process cases in ways that depart from traditional judicial processes to allow defendants or respondents the opportunity to obtain treatment services to address particular issues that may have contributed to the conduct that led to their arrest or involvement in the child welfare system in exchange for resolution of the case or charges. In criminal cases, the consent of the prosecutor is required.

(2) While a therapeutic court judge retains the discretion to decline to accept a case into the therapeutic court, and while a therapeutic court retains discretion to establish processes and determine eligibility for admission to the therapeutic court process unique to their community and jurisdiction, the effectiveness and credibility of any therapeutic court will be enhanced when the court implements evidence-based practices, research-based practices, emerging best practices, or promising practices that have been identified and accepted at the state and national levels. Promising practices, emerging best practices, and/or research-based programs are authorized where determined by the court to be appropriate. As practices evolve, the trial court shall regularly assess the effectiveness of its program and the methods by which it implements and adopts new best practices.

(3) Except under special findings by the court, the following individuals are not eligible for participation in therapeutic courts:

(a) Individuals who are currently charged or who have been previously convicted of a serious violent offense or sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030;

(b) Individuals who are currently charged with an offense alleging intentional discharge, threat to discharge, or attempt to discharge a firearm in furtherance of the offense;

(c) Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of vehicular homicide or an equivalent out-of-state offense; or

(d) Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of: An offense alleging substantial bodily harm or great bodily harm as defined in RCW 9A.04.110, or death of another person.

(4) Any jurisdiction establishing a therapeutic court shall endeavor to incorporate the therapeutic court principles of best practices as recognized by state and national therapeutic court organizations in structuring a particular program, which may include:

- (a) Determining the population;
- (b) Performing a clinical assessment;
- (c) Developing the treatment plan;
- (d) Monitoring the participant, including any appropriate testing;
- (e) Forging agency, organization, and community partnerships;
- (f) Taking a judicial leadership role;
- (g) Developing case management strategies;
- (h) Addressing transportation, housing, and subsistence issues;
- (i) Evaluating the program;

(j) Ensuring a sustainable program.

(5) Upon a showing of indigence under RCW 10.101.010, fees may be reduced or waived.

(6) The health care authority shall furnish services to therapeutic courts addressing dependency matters where substance abuse or mental health are an issue unless the court contracts with providers outside of the health care authority.

(7) Any jurisdiction that has established more than one therapeutic court under this chapter may combine the functions of these courts into a single therapeutic court.

(8) Nothing in this section prohibits a district or municipal court from ordering treatment or other conditions of sentence or probation following a conviction, without the consent of either the prosecutor or defendant.

(9) No therapeutic or specialty court may be established specifically for the purpose of applying foreign law, including foreign criminal, civil, or religious law, that is otherwise not required by treaty.

(10) No therapeutic or specialty court established by court rule shall enforce a foreign law, if doing so would violate a right guaranteed by the Constitution of this state or of the United States. [2018 c 201 § 9002; 2015 c 291 § 3.]

Findings—Intent—Effective date—2018 c 201: See notes following RCW 41.05.018.

Conflict with federal requirements—2015 c 291: See note following RCW 2.30.010.