



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF  
CONTRA COSTA**  
Public Information Office

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contra Costa to Offer CARE Court, and New CARE Court Website,  
Effective December 2, 2024**

The Contra Costa Superior Court is pleased to announce the implementation of the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act, or “CARE Court” effective Monday, December 2, 2024. CARE Court information will be made available on the CARE Court website: <https://www.cc-courts.org/care/care-court.aspx>.

The CARE Act, passed in 2022, created a new voluntary civil court process to connect eligible adults impacted by specific classes of untreated mental health and substance abuse disorders to mental health and other support services. CARE Court will allow qualified individuals – such as a spouse or family member, first responder, provider/clinician, public guardian, or an authorized representative of Behavioral Health Services – to petition the Court for an eligible individual to receive treatment through CARE Court. A full list of those qualified to petition on another person’s behalf for CARE Court is available on the CARE Court website: <https://www.cc-courts.org/care/care-court.aspx>.

To be considered eligible for CARE Court, individuals must be:

- 18 years of age or older;
- Diagnosed with a disorder within the "schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders" class of disorders and currently experiencing symptoms;
- Not clinically stabilized in ongoing treatment;
- Experiencing substantially deteriorating mental health such that they are unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision and/or they need services and support to prevent relapse and

deterioration that would cause grave disability or serious harm to them or others;

- Likely to benefit from participation in a CARE Plan, and participation in a CARE Plan would be the least restrictive alternative.

Individuals who agree to participate in CARE Court can receive services, including mental health, housing and other support, via a voluntary CARE Agreement or a CARE Plan overseen by a judicial officer. These may include offers of community-based mental health resources, housing, and more. Under both, individuals can receive services for approximately one year, up to a maximum of two years. Review hearings will be scheduled periodically to assess the individual's progress and monitor the accountability of service providers.

“The Contra Costa County Superior Court embraces the CARE Court collaborative model as a significant step towards strengthening the courts’ role in improving the mental health system for those most impacted,” said Judge Melissa O’Connell, who will preside over CARE Court. “There is a space where our community members living with a mental health disorder can be supported by treatment, services, stable housing, and other members within our community, and still live independently, safely and with a sense of empowerment to provide for their own needs. The goal of our county CARE Court is to serve these twin aims by providing continuity of support for those on this journey and their families.”

CARE Court hearings will be held on Friday mornings in Department 20, located in the Wakefield Taylor Courthouse at 725 Court St. in Martinez. Initial court appearances should be in person. Remote appearances can thereafter be coordinated.

For more information, please visit the CARE Court website: <https://www.cc-courts.org/care/care-court.aspx>.

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