Address: 18680 SW Shaw St., Beaverton, OR 97007 | Phone number: 503-356-6835

My Relative/Friend Has Been Arrested.

What Do I Do?

This document is a guide to help families navigate the criminal justice system in Washington County when a relative/friend who suffers from mental illness is arrested. This informational guide was written by NAMI volunteers. We are not attorneys, and this is not intended to be a substitute for professional legal advice. Please assist your relative/friend in obtaining proper legal representation as appropriate.

Support Your Relative

- If your relative/friend calls you and says they have been arrested, help them stay calm and let them know you are there to help.
- If your relative/friend is being held in the Washington County Jail, remind them that they have a right to have an attorney present when being questioned by police officers or detectives concerning the alleged crime.
- If your relative/friend is already at the Washington County Jail, they will be screened for mental illness, as well as other health concerns upon arrival.
    - Assure them that it is OK to discuss their physical and mental conditions and medications with the health screeners. It is important that they feel safe and able to speak openly to jail staff.
- You should visit your relative/friend as often as you are able. Visiting hours vary. Please check the Washington County Sheriff's Office website at: https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/sheriff/jail/contact-or-visit-someone-custody

Contact the Jail

Washington County Jail is located at 215 SW Adams Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97123.

- Main phone number: 503-846-6374

- https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/sheriff/jail/contact-or-visit-someone-custody

IMPORTANT: If you know or suspect that your relative/friend has had recent suicide attempts or thoughts, ask to speak with the Sergeant. Give them all the information you have.

- Notify the jail medical staff that your relative/friend suffers from a mental illness and describe the diagnosis and any other concerns you might have.
    - Be aware that while you can provide information to the jail staff, the staff cannot give you any information about your relative/friend due to confidentiality laws. However, you can ask the relative/friend to fill out a release of information (ROI) form. This will give the staff permission to talk to you about their care.
    - Be aware that the Jail Mental Health Staff must conduct its own assessment and will select the best treatment for your relative/friend. Your relative/friend may not necessarily be prescribed the same medication.
- You may provide the jail staff with detailed medical and mental health information by completing the Adult in Custody Health Information Form. It is best to deliver the form to the jail by hand or by fax – address and fax numbers are at the bottom of the form.
- You may bring your relative/friend's prescribed medication to the jail. Make sure they are in their original containers.
    - Be aware that medications probably will not be accessible until your relative/friend is completely screened and the Jail Mental Health Staff can verify and order medications.
    - Be aware that medications may be returned to you if they are already available at the jail or if they were changed by the jail psychiatrist due to your relative/friend's current symptoms.
- If you have trouble reaching the jail staff at the contact number above, you may try calling the Jail Medical Department directly at 503-846-6352. Please be patient, as mental health staffers are often with adults in custody.
- To learn more about community behavioral health supports for those who are justice-involved, Meredith Olson, the Jail Based Forensic MH Coordinator with County Behavioral Health can provide details. Meredith can be reached at 503-846-6027.

Information to Gather

- Booking number
- Charges
- Arraignment date and time
- Location of the arraignment
- Estimated length of stay

- Is your relative/friend expected to be released directly? If so, ask for the time so you can be there to pick them up.
- If your relative/friend is severely ill, ask if they can be taken to a psychiatric hospital with an involuntary hold for evaluation and treatment.

Much of this information is readily available at: https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/jail/log/

Preparing For Court

- Your relative/friend may want to retain a private attorney or use the public defender's office.

  Private Attorney

  - If your relative/friend has a private attorney, contact them and provide them with pertinent information regarding your relative/friend's case and mental health condition.
  - If your relative/friend decides to retain a private attorney, be sure to select one that is well versed in helping people with mental illness. They must understand not only the law, but also how to access the treatment facilities and mental health services that are available.
  - A private attorney will grant you more time, but remember you are paying for that access.

  Public Defender's Office

  - If your relative/friend does not have, or cannot afford an attorney, a Public Defender will be assigned to them at the arraignment. It is important that you attend the initial arraignment. Arrive early.
  - Do not be afraid to use the Public Defender. Public Defenders often have knowledge of "the system" as it pertains to those who need mental health services. But remember, the Public Defender works for your relative/friend, not you.
  - Public Defenders are extremely busy and do not have much time for telephone calls. They will appreciate written correspondence.

  Provide Information

  - Provide the attorney with an extensive medical/psychiatric/social history of your relative/friend. Presenting this information in writing will be very useful in pursuing the best outcome.
  - If your relative/friend is using a Public Defender, you will probably meet them on the day of the arraignment. Provide them with brief, written statements of pertinent information concerning the current circumstances, diagnosis, and relevant history of your relative/friend's mental illness.

Bail Considerations

- Consider carefully. Being in jail is an unpleasant experience for your relative/friend as well as the family. However, you must ask yourself, “Will my relative/’friend be able to comply with the terms of the bail and appear in court when required?”
- Also, jail may be a safer place for a person with severe mental illness who is in crisis, rather than having them wandering the streets with no help at all. While in jail, at least they will have shelter, will be fed, and will be given access to medication.