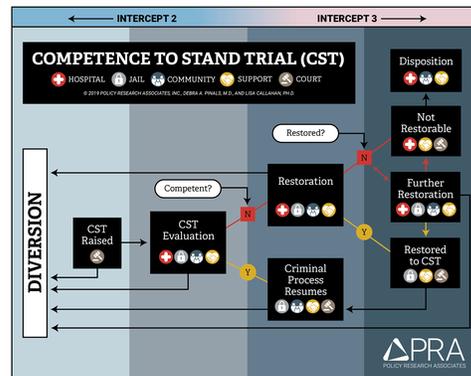




## Examine Your Community's Competence to Stand Trial System With Tools From Policy Research

**The issue:** Courts frequently face challenges when a person's **competence to stand trial (CST)** is questioned due to symptoms of serious mental illness, intellectual disabilities, or cognitive disorders. Without streamlined procedures, individuals often experience prolonged detention in jails or psychiatric hospitals, leading to detrimental and costly outcomes for individuals and communities.

**What's happening:** Policy Research is leading efforts to transform how jurisdictions address CST and competence restoration services. As demand for timely and effective approaches grows, Policy Research is helping states and communities identify and implement what works.



*Competence to Stand Trial Flowchart*

### Resources from Policy Research you should know about:

- The [CST Flowchart](#) outlines critical decision points in the CST process. It identifies diversion opportunities at key intercepts, ensuring individuals for whom competence is raised receive timely access to appropriate services.
- The [CST Microsite](#) serves as a one-stop hub for research, tools, and best practices. It also highlights lessons from our technical assistance to Washington State following the *Trueblood* settlement.



# Improving Outcomes With Competence to Stand Trial Mapping Workshops



Competence to Stand Trial (CST) Mapping Workshops, offered through the [Systems Mapping and Training Center at Policy Research](#), are designed to build solutions to decrease waitlists and length of stay. By bringing together community partners, including behavioral health providers, legal professionals, and individuals with lived experience, facilitators help communities to map their CST processes, identify gaps and duplications, and determine strategic improvements.

Key strategies developed through these workshops include the following:

- Establishing bail considerations to facilitate supported release
- Ensuring rapid access to forensic evaluations
- Developing screening protocols
- Training forensic evaluators on community-based alternatives
- Creating forensic navigator roles to connect individuals with diversion resources

These interventions help communities reduce waitlists, shorten detention times, enhance public safety, and improve outcomes for individuals. Ready to improve CST processes in your community? Learn more and bring a workshop to your community.

□ [Bring a CST Mapping Workshop to Your Community](#)

## Research That Resonates: From Publication to Positive Social Change

Article

**Challenges to Reforming the Competence to Stand Trial and Competence Restoration System**



Article

**Evaluation and Restoration of Competence to Stand Trial: Intercepting the Forensic System Using the Sequential Intercept Model**

Authors

Lisa Callahan, PhD, & Debra A Pinals, MD

Journal

*Psychiatric Services*

Year

2020



Policy Research leads the field in CST research and technical assistance, using the [Sequential Intercept Model](#) (SIM) as a framework to guide CST transformation. In 2020,

Senior Research Associate Lisa Callahan, PhD, and collaborator Debra A. Pinals, MD, released two papers examining challenges and potential solutions within the CST and competence restoration systems.

"[Challenges to Reforming the Competence to Stand Trial and Competence Restoration System](#)" outlines systemic barriers to CST reform and emphasizes the importance of collaboration between legal and clinical systems. The publication is an influential resource for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, appearing in publications such as "From Crisis to Care" by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training, Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building Center.

Their second article, "[Evaluation and Restoration of Competence to Stand Trial: Intercepting the Forensic System Using the Sequential Intercept Model \(SIM\)](#)," highlights effective solutions to address barriers in the CST system. Drs. Callahan and Pinals highlight opportunities at each intercept of the SIM to increase linkages to community-based services and reduce jail and hospital stays. Its insights have been integrated into state-level planning efforts, most notably the *Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan (2022–2026)*.

Together, these publications have deepened the field's understanding of what drives issues in CST systems and offer a roadmap for meaningful, sustainable reform. They have advanced the dialogue on creating more equitable and responsive forensic mental health practices nationwide.

***Policy Research leads the nation in driving sustainable, impactful change for people with behavioral health conditions. Ready to transform your community? [Contact us!](#)***

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