

Juvenile Drug Court Program

What is Juvenile Drug Court?

Juvenile Drug Court is an accountability Court dedicated to changing the behavior of the individual. Our Court offers an innovative way for non-violent juvenile offenders to break out of the vicious cycle of criminal behavior and alcohol/drug abuse through early intervention and intensive treatment.

The twelve month program was created to help juvenile offenders:

- End their substance abuse.
- Stop their criminal behavior.
- Improve family and community relationships.
- Methods for living a healthier AND happier drug free lifestyle.

Who is eligible for the program?

- Individuals from 13 to 16 years of age.
- Non-violent, non- status offenses.
- No convictions for violent or sexual offenses.
- Substance or alcohol abuse problems.
- Voluntary participation.
- Meet other specific requirements

Requirements for Juvenile Drug Court

- Attend all Juvenile Drug Court appearances.
- Comply with all orders issued by the Judge.
- Attend individual, family and group treatment sessions.
- Submit to scheduled and random drug testing.
- Attend school.

Home and school visits from staff are an important aspect of the program, as we help gauge the participant progress.

Participants and their families also receive a variety of “wraparound” services to address specific needs identified through the program. These services include: primary health care; tutoring and other educational or vocational assistance; mentoring; specialized therapy; psychiatric and psychological counseling; and other types of assistance.

Length of the Program

The length of the Juvenile Drug Court Program is a minimum of twelve (12) months, which is broken down into four (4) phases. The participant must complete all four phases of the program in order to graduate.

Criteria for Graduation from the Juvenile Drug Court Program

- Successful completion of all four (4) phases and program requirements.
- Demonstration that one is drug free and has had a substantial time of sobriety.
- Completion by the participant of a "Give Back" Community Service Project.
- Unanimous recommendation from the Juvenile Drug Court Team.
- The approval of the Judge.

Graduation from the Juvenile Drug Court Program is a significant accomplishment, particularly for participants who have experienced repeated failures in their lives before they entered the program. Accordingly, graduations will be held and treated as celebrations by everyone in the program. The Judge will preside, refreshments will be served, and family members and friends will be invited to attend.

How does an offender enroll in the program?

Referrals can be made by the Twelfth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, the public defender's office, a private attorney, or the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator screens each referral to ensure that the individual meets the eligibility requirements for the program. A treatment provider performs an assessment to determine whether or not the offender has a history of using alcohol or other drugs.

A recommendation is then made to the Family Court Judge, who in turn makes the final decision regarding the offender's participation in the program.

Want more information?

Please contact our Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator, Tim Suggs at 843-676-1250.

Other helpful websites:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association: <http://www.samhsa.gov/>

National Association of Drug Court Professionals: <http://www.nadcp.org/>

National Suicide Prevention: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Veterans: <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>