



St. Johns County Drug Court Participant Handbook



“Visualizing a Brighter Future”

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St. Johns County Drug Court Participant Handbook

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Who is on the Team?

The Drug Court Team is a group of very dedicated professionals who want drug court participants to be successful. The Judge leads the Drug Court team, which includes the following people:

Drug Court / County Court Judge, Alexander Christine	(904) 827-5613
Drug Court Coordinator, Ralph Cumberbatch	(904) 827-5620
Assistant State Attorney, Eric Leb	(904) 209-1620
Assistant Public Defender, Craig Atack Division Chief	(904) 827-5699
FDC Probation Officer, Brian O'Neil	(904) 825-5038
EPIC Treatment Counselors Sara Tomlinson/India Williams	(904) 829-2273
Deputy/Chaplain Deon Johnson SJCSO	(904) 209-3134
Deputy Clerk of the Court, Tara Schultz	(904) 819-3618
Seventh Circuit Drug Court Manager Kimberly Clark	(386) 313-4561

THANK YOU! - Without the continuing support of the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners and all the contributing stakeholders in this community, drug court would not be a possible option for those in need.

This handbook is available for download at www.circuit7.org and it is incomplete without the Participation Application and Disclosure.

Introduction - Welcome to the St. Johns County Drug Court!



We want you to succeed! Your success in this program will be good for you, your family and the entire community. As a participant in this program, you will be required to follow the program rules, instructions given in court by the Judge and follow the treatment plan you develop with your treatment counselor. This handbook explains what is expected of you. It will also provide you with general information about the program.

Please read this handbook carefully. It should assist you to complete the program successfully. We encourage you to read it and to share it with your family and friends who support you in recovery. If you do not understand this handbook, please ask your attorney or a drug court team member to help you.

Introduction - What is the St. Johns County Drug Court?

The mission of the St. Johns County Drug Court is to protect society by identifying and treating addicted, non-violent substance abusing offenders in a more efficient and effective way in the criminal justice system. Through improved communication and collaboration among stakeholders, we intend to reduce alcohol and drug abuse in the community, lower recidivism rates, lessen the financial impact on society and help those so identified to lead productive lives as law abiding citizens.

The St. Johns County Drug Court is a Judge led program for non-violent addicted people with drug related felony charges who reside in this County. The program involves regular court appearances before the Judge, substance abuse treatment counseling, frequent random drug testing, supervision by probation and collaboration with other team members such as your attorney, the State's Attorney, court administration and law enforcement. Drug court is a multi-phased program involving addictions treatment and the collaborative monitoring efforts of the entire drug court team. Everyone works together in an effort to give you the best opportunity to succeed. To be successful, you will be the most important person in this process.

Introduction - Participant Benefits

- Good chance of living a drug free lifestyle with associated benefits
- Good chance of living a law-abiding lifestyle
- Rebuild family & community ties
- Avoid lengthy incarceration such as prison
- Early termination from probation

Introduction - Drug Courts Work! (Visit allrise.org)

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) tells us that:

- Drug courts are the nation's most successful criminal justice program
- There are now over 4,000 Drug Courts nationwide
- Over the past 35 years Drug Courts have served over 1.5 million seriously addicted people
- Drug Courts annually refer more people to treatment than any other system in America
- Nationwide, 75% of Drug Court graduates remain arrest-free at least two years after leaving the program.
- The most rigorous and conservative scientific "meta-analyses" have all concluded that Drug Courts significantly reduce crime as much as 45 percent more than other sentencing options.
- Drug Courts save money, cut crime and serve veterans in need of substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- Drug Courts save up to \$27 for every \$1 invested



Introduction - "The Promises"

Participation in recovery support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Smart Recovery or other team approved sessions are a required component of this program.

The primary textbook used by Alcoholics Anonymous is known as the "Big Book". It describes "the promises" on page 86 as follows:

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness,
2. We will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it,
3. We will comprehend the word serenity,
4. And we will know peace.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain insight into others.
8. Self-seeking will slip away.
9. Our whole attitude and outlook will change.
10. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.
11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
12. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Introduction - How Do I Join?



To enter the drug court program you must qualify for the program, agree to complete the program, and be sentenced to probation with a special condition that requires you to successfully complete the program. Drug dealers need not apply. Participants sign a participation agreement that explains exactly what is expected.

Introduction - How do I know if I qualify?

Qualification criteria include the following:

- Agree to participate
- 18 or older
- Non-violent drug related felony
- No violence in criminal history
- Residence in St. Johns County
- Capable of benefiting from program regimen
- Other considerations including health issues and prescription medications

Introduction - A New Beginning!

This is a chance to move forward in your life. The lives of people in drug courts all over the world are being changed in incredible ways. Carefully consider your decision to join!

Introduction - How long is the Program?

This is a multi-phased program that can be completed in one year, depending on how well you do. It often takes people longer than a year to successfully complete because addiction is so difficult to overcome. Please review the participation agreement closely to fully understand program requirements.

Introduction - We want you to Graduate!

We want you to do well and stay in treatment until you graduate! It is better for you, your family and the community. We conduct a special graduation ceremony for those who graduate. It is a time for you to continue living a law-abiding, drug-free lifestyle without the external “training wheels” provided by drug court. Using the support systems that you put in place while in drug court will become very important. Program graduates are strongly encouraged to come back to see drug court team members if you need help or, better yet, simply to tell us how well you are doing!

Courtroom – The Judge



Drug Courts are different than traditional courts because you appear before the judge often to review your progress regardless of whether you are doing well or doing poorly. We have learned that this time with the Judge can help a participant to be successful in ways that nothing else can. Everyone wants the Judge to be proud of their achievements. Be prepared to tell the Judge how you are progressing in the program. The Judge wants very much for you to be successful!

Courtroom - A Word from the Judge

So many people have worked very hard for more than a decade just to make this opportunity available. Your success will benefit you, your family and the community. These are three keys:

1. Honesty is paramount – with yourself, with me with team members and with others
2. Respect yourself, respect me, respect the team and respect others
3. Do not abscond! – Participate in treatment, come to court and comply with supervision

Courtroom – Appearances in Court

Every participant is required to be in court fifteen minutes before the hearing is scheduled to begin. If you have a question about your next court date, please consult your court notice or contact a team member. A warrant is typically issued for those who fail to appear in court. In such an event, attempts to contact the participant will typically be made to encourage the participant to report to the jail for a sanction. The matter will usually be addressed at the next available drug court hearing. If the participant does not follow through as required, an additional number of days in jail can be expected. Do not use unauthorized drugs in the meantime. An individual who remains absent from the program for thirty days or more will be viewed as an absconder and may face expulsion from the program.

Courtroom – Behavior

- Show up early
- Turn off cell phones and pagers
- Stay seated and quiet until addressed by the Court
- Stand up and approach when addressed by the Court
- Stay for the whole hearing unless you are given approval to leave

Courtroom - Dress Code

If you have any concerns about how to dress for court, please ask your probation officer. It is important to treat yourself and the Court with respect.

- Men = shoes, courtroom appropriate shirt & long pants
- Women = shoes; courtroom appropriate blouse or top, with skirt or pants or courtroom appropriate dress
- No bathing suit tops, halter tops, hip hugger pants, see through blouses, or bare midriffs
- No clothing bearing or promoting alcohol and/or other drug related themes
- No gang clothing or “colors”
- Remove hats and sunglasses

Courtroom - Incentives

You may expect to receive incentives when you do well. Examples include:

- A-Team
- A-Team with Incentives
- Applause & Recognition
- Words of Encouragement
- Certificates
- Fewer restrictions
- Tangible Incentives
- Earning Community Service Hours



Courtroom - A-Team

“A-Team” is for participants who have completed everything required of them when they appear in Court. Those who are on the A-Team may also leave Court right after they appear in front of the Judge. Most others must remain for the entire drug court hearing. Even though team members recommend who will be on the A-Team, the Judge makes the final decision. We love having large A-Teams in drug court!

Courtroom - A-Team with Incentives

Any participant that exceeds minimum requirements may be recognized as being on the A-Team with incentives.

Courtroom – Some Additional Incentives

- Any participant on “A-Team with Incentives” for seven consecutive drug court hearings earns credit for ten community service work hours.
- Any participant that invests in a GED program earns credit for ten community service work hours – If you complete the course, you earn credit for twenty-five community service work hours
- Any participant that remains gainfully employed, in trade school or in smokers cessation classes for sixty consecutive days earns credit for five community service work hours
- Any participant that researches the possibility of obtaining health care insurance earns credit for two community service work hours
- Any participant that completes a budgeting plan earns credit for two community service work hours



Courtroom - Sanctions

You may expect to receive sanctions when you do not follow through as expected. Accountability is very important when you are trying to modify behaviors. Examples include:

- It could take longer to graduate
- Expressions of disappointment from the Judge
- Required community service work hours
- Restrictions
- Jail time

Courtroom - Missed Meetings

A missed meeting consists of but is not limited to individual or group sessions with your counselor, meetings with the Probation Officer or Drug Court Coordinator at a determined time and place. Communication is the key. You can only be excused from these meetings by a Team member. In the event a meeting is missed and unexcused, suggested sanctions can range from being tasked with completing an essay, to an overnight detention in the county jail.

Courtroom – Treatment Responses

In addition to using incentives and sanctions, this program uses treatment responses. Sometimes a participant may need to participate in additional treatment sessions, support groups, other types of services or even residential treatment. We understand that such a response might feel like a sanction; nonetheless, our intent is to provide each participant with the treatment services that they need.

Addictions Treatment – Treatment Works!

It is remarkable how well addictions treatment works when patients apply themselves in the course of evidenced based services. There are millions of people in recovery all over the world are leading very successful lives. Why not you?



Addictions Treatment – Individual Counseling

You get to develop, review and update your treatment plan together with your counselor during individual sessions. Effective individual counseling sessions are an invaluable part of your treatment process. Please take advantage of this time to progress in the program and to achieve your goals. Please know that it may be necessary for your treatment counselor to schedule extra individual treatment sessions with you if a need is identified.

Addictions Treatment Costs

Participants in this drug court program receive treatment services valued at many times the treatment costs actually paid. If you are serious about living a law-abiding lifestyle that is free of alcohol and other drugs, drug court is the right place for you – and it is also a good value. Participants in drug court are required to pay \$10 a week for treatment services to EPIC Behavioral Healthcare. Financial accountability is an important part of recovery. If an individual is delinquent, it will be brought to the Team's attention and addressed in Court with the individual. Delinquent fees can delay your advancement in the program.

Addictions Treatment - Confidentiality

To encourage candid participation in the treatment process, federal and state law protects your identity and privacy. Because of these regulations, policies and procedures have been developed to guard your confidentiality. To enable collaboration that is necessary for an effective drug court, you will be required to sign a waiver authorizing the transfer of information among drug court team members. It is also important to know that drug court hearings are open to the public according to state law.

Addictions Treatment – Group Counseling



You will be required to attend group treatment counseling sessions and education classes that must not be missed unless properly excused in advance or in the event of a true emergency. Please avoid making excuses not to attend. Treatment groups are a major component of this program. Arrive on time, participate as appropriate and remain until the event is over. Otherwise, you may be counted as absent. Follow all the treatment provider's "house rules".

Addictions Treatment – Unacceptable behavior

1. Violence or threats of any kind to staff or other participants
2. Use and/or possession of alcohol or other drugs
3. Belligent behavior or acts of vandalism to property
4. Possession of any type of weapon
5. Inappropriate sexual behavior or harassment
6. Breach of confidentiality of other patients in treatment

Addictions Treatment – Ancillary Services



Often, patients need additional services such as mental health counseling, medication assisted treatment, Intensive Outpatient treatment, residential treatment, transitional housing, family involvement, primary medical services, etc. Based on available resources, we will do our best to help you to meet your needs. We know recovery is not an easy process. We praise your efforts and your courage. We will

attempt to provide the services you need in order to help you and your family through this difficult journey. These services should help to overcome stress, problems and conflicts that may block your recovery. Please let us know if at any time you feel that you are not realizing the benefits of this program and we will be glad to seek a remedy.

Addictions Treatment – Vivitrol/Naltrexone & Buprenorphine

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare currently provides Vivitrol medicated assisted treatment to participants in this drug court program on an as needed basis. Vivitrol is a time-released injection of naltrexone that blocks the euphoric effects of opiates and alcohol. Some claim that it reduces cravings. Many believe this form of treatment can significantly increase the chances of success for those who are addicted to alcohol or opiates. Please consult with your treatment counselor if you think you might benefit from this form of treatment. It involves a medically based screening process. You will

not be required to receive Vivitrol injections or other components against your will. If you are screened and approved to participate in this type of treatment, it is 100% voluntary.

Addictions Treatment – Support Groups / Recovery Program Meetings

Involvement in support groups such as the twelve-step programs like Narcotic Anonymous (NA) and Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) or SMART Recovery Programs are important to your recovery. The drug court requires you to attend and to provide written or electronic verification that you are doing so. You should get to know the people at these meetings who are recovering from addiction and living a drug-free lifestyle. Developing this support system may be critical to a long-term successful recovery. It is your responsibility to find out when and where meetings take place. Participants can engage in online meetings as well. Your treatment counselor and probation officer will assist you if necessary.

Warning, everyone who attends these meetings is not necessarily living a drug free lifestyle. Please address any concerns that you may have about these support groups with your counselor.

Addictions Treatment - Medication

Upon your treatment orientation into this program, you will be provided with a medical release/informative form that you are required to present to your doctor upon any visit. As this is a substance abuse program, abstinence is the goal. In the event your medical provider prescribes you a mind-altering medication, you will be required to keep an accurate log to record when you take the medication and how much you take. Your treatment counselor will review the log with you on a regular basis. If your prescription for a mind-altering medication must exceed three days, we will need to further review your progress in the program. If you abuse your prescription, a treatment will be in order. A sanction response may also be imposed.

VERY IMPORTANT!

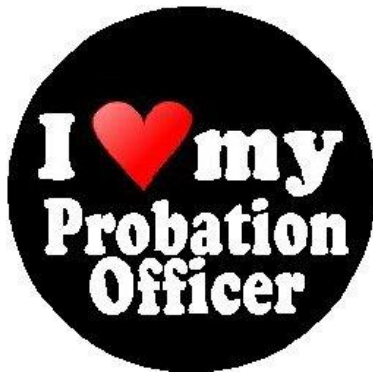
Support group verifications must be turned in at EPIC by 9:30AM every Monday to receive credit in Court on the following Tuesday.

Treatment fees must be paid by Friday at 3:30PM to receive credit in Court.

Drug Court hearings take place on Tuesdays at 1:00PM in Courtroom #216

Community service work hours must be turned in to probation by Noon on Friday to receive credit in Court on the following Tuesday.

The Drug Court Coordinator has office visit hours every Friday between the hours of 2PM and 4PM in room #275 of the Courthouse.



Supervision

Supervision of drug court participants is primarily the responsibility of the probation officer assigned to the program. The program coordinator also assists in supervising program participants. Every participant in this drug court program is on probation with a special condition that requires successful completion of drug court. It is extremely important to abide by your conditions of probation to include the requirements specified in the participation agreement.

Supervision - What are the Rules?

The rules are spelled out in great detail in the Participation Agreement. These are a few highlights.

1. Appear in Court as scheduled
2. Follow your Treatment Plan
3. Show up on time for Appointments
4. Complete the Phase Requirements
5. Be truthful
6. Follow lawful instructions of team members

Supervision - Show up on time for Appointments

Show up on time for court, treatment sessions, probation office visits, and drug tests...everything! You will be glad you did!

Supervision - Steps to Success!!!

Each phase of the program includes treatment goals, activities, and requirements that you must meet in order to successfully complete the program and graduate. These are things that you will be required to do no matter which phase you are in.

- Appear in court regularly
- Pay a \$10 per week treatment fee
- Meet regularly with probation
- Progress in Treatment

Supervision - The “regular stuff” you must do to advance to the next phase, is:

- Follow established individualized treatment plan
- Complete phase requirements
- Submit phase advancement form
- Have your treatment fees paid up
- Get the OK of the Team
- Get the OK of the Judge in court

Supervision - Complete Phase Requirements

All of the phase requirements for the program are spelled out in the Participation Agreement. Completing the phases are your steps to success. In brief, the steps you must take are described on the following pages. Everyone who enters the program as a participant starts in phase one when sentenced. You will be placed on probation with a special condition that requires you to successfully complete the drug court program.

Supervision - What else is expected of me?

- Treat team members and others with respect
- Stop all drug related activity
- Comply with drug screening
- Live a law-abiding lifestyle
- Review the program guidelines during your orientation



Supervision - Treat others with respect:

You should respect the opinions and feelings of other program participants. Verbal or physical threats toward anyone will not be tolerated. Any inappropriate behavior will immediately be reported to the Court and may result in a severe sanction. Aggressive behavior towards staff cannot be tolerated.

Supervision - Fraternization, Living Together & Intimate Relationships

Participants are encouraged to build healthy relationships with others who are living a law-abiding, drug-free lifestyle. Helping other participants in the program by listening to each other, giving wise input when requested and carpooling together to treatment sessions are often good things that are encouraged. Residing in the same halfway house or sharing an apartment with another drug court participant may even be necessary to make ends meet financially. However, please be very prudent about the people with whom you spend your time, the places that you spend your time, and the things that you do. Those who are within their first year or two into recovery typically experience huge changes in their life. Early in recovery, people are often vulnerable in ways they do not fully understand. For this reason, entering into new, intimate relationships, especially with others who are new to recovery such as other program participants, is strongly discouraged. Sadly, it is more common for a person who relapses to pull down their significant other than for a person who is strong in recovery to pull up their intimate partner. We cannot emphasize enough, the importance for you to use this opportunity in drug court to focus your efforts on making yourself the best you can be.

Supervision - Stop all drug related activity

Do not possess, sell, or use alcohol or illegal drugs. Do not frequent areas where drugs are being sold or used. Any relapse you have with drugs or alcohol must be reported immediately.

Supervision - Community Services Hours

Each participant is required to complete 100 community service hours while in drug court. Drug court participants can also benefit from an earned credit of \$10.00 for every community service hour completed other than those hours designated for program requirements. Approved designated locations for community service can be obtained from your Probation Officer.

Supervision - Live a law-abiding lifestyle

You are required to refrain from further violation of the law. Additional offenses may result in you being terminated from the program. Testing clean is not the only program rule. We are very interested in you leading a law-abiding lifestyle. We strongly suggest that you get involved in pro-social activities such as bettering your employment situation, improving your education level, attending church, participating in organized sports, joining social clubs, and/or engaging in family friendly activities.

Supervision – Unsuccessful Termination



Even with the Team supporting you, this is not an easy program. Your success in this program depends mostly on you. The Team will work very hard in an effort to help you to be successful; however, do not expect the team to work harder than you.

- **Do not lie to the Judge (BIG “NO-NO”)**
- **Do not commit a new felony offense**



- **Do not commit a crime of violence**
- **Do not repeatedly break the program rules**
- **Do not abscond from the program**

Supervision – Phase Advancement

Please use the phase advancement form on the next page when you are ready to advance from phase one to phase two.

**St. Johns County Adult Drug Court
Phase Advancement Request Form
Phase I to Phase II**

This form must be completed prior to your advancement from Phase I to Phase II. Your advancement into Phase II relies on your ability to prove you have mastered the Phase I requirements and are now ready to accept the challenges and responsibilities forth coming in Phase II.

It is your responsibility to complete and turn this form into the Program Coordinator.

Please print all required information

Participant's Name: _____

Date participant completed all of Phase I requirements and received a recommendation by the primary counselor to advance to the next phase: _____

Please indicate your present number of clean days: _____

Are you employed? If you are employed, provide your employer's name: YES or NO _____

If you are not employed, state your reason for not being employed. _____

Are you attending school or enrolled in a court approved educational program? YES or NO _____

Are you meeting with your Probation Officer on a weekly basis? YES or NO When was your last meeting? _____

How many group sessions have you actively participated in, while in this present phase? _____

How many individual and family sessions have you attended during this present phase? _____

Please take some time to reflect on your Phase I experience:

The decision to advance into the next phase is a Team decision; the Presiding Judge will make the final decision. Good Luck.

Participant Date

Treatment Counselor Date

Probation Officer Date

Program Coordinator Date

Presiding Judge Date



Drug Testing - Comply with Drug Screenings

One of the main goals of the program is to help you to not use drugs. A refusal to submit to a drug test could result in expulsion from the program. A positive test or admission of substance abuse may result in a sanction and/or changes in treatment. Repeated substance abuse may result in termination from the program. Drug tests may be conducted at the treatment facility, the probation office, county jail, at the courthouse and any other approved facility location. Always be ready to submit to a drug test while in the program



Drug Testing - Over the Counter Drugs

Participants shall not ingest mind altering OTC drugs that may result in a positive drug screen. Such medications include those that contain alcohol, dextromethorphan, pseudo-ephedrine and ephedrine. Participants will discuss all over the counter medications and supplements they plan to take with the treatment counselor before taking the medication. This is particularly important before ingesting diet pills, herbal supplements or energy drinks. Examples of OTC drugs that contain prohibited ingredients include, but are not limited to: Nyquil, Actifed, Sudafed, Coricidin, Nasal Crom and Robitussin DXM. Examples of OTC medications that will not result in a positive drug screen when taken as directed include: aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen and naproxen.

Drug Testing - Additional Substances to Avoid

Participants shall not possess or ingest any mind and/or mood altering substances. They will not possess or ingest designer drugs, smoking mixtures, synthetic cannabinoids, poppy seeds or anything labeled “not for human consumption”. Specific examples of these substances include, but are not limited to: spice, bath salts, kratom, cannabis oil and products containing poppy seeds.

Drug Testing - A Drug is a Drug is a Drug!

Alcohol is a drug that participants are not allowed to use while in the program. Over the counter medications are drugs. Check with the team before you take such medications. Prescription drugs are drugs. Follow your doctor’s orders and check with the team as soon as possible. Do not take someone else’s prescription, not even from a family member.

Drug Testing - Positive Urinalysis

Drug Courts throughout the country aim to assist its participants in full abstinence from all drug use. Abstaining from illicit/mood altering substances can be a challenging, with this in mind seek assistance from your counselor, sponsor or a team member. If you have used an illicit/mood altering substance, inform a team member as soon as possible. The consequences for using illicit/mood altering substances are as follows:

1. Upon identification of the positive UA, you will be contacted by the Program Coordinator to discuss the test results and the reason for the use.
2. There will be a treatment response: to include additional treatment, support groups and other types of services which may even include residential treatment.
3. There will be an immediate loss of clean days.
4. Court ordered detention or some other form of behavior modification
5. Increased court appearances
6. Reimbursement of \$20-\$40 for all positive drug screens. Community service hours cannot be used to offset this debt.

Drug Testing - Missed Urinalysis (UA)

Please do not miss a UA. When participants have missed drug tests in the past, it has often been an attempt to avoid drug use detection. The consequences for missing a drug screen are as follows:

1. Upon identification of the missed UA, you will be contacted by the Program Coordinator to help establish the reason for the miss.
2. A loss of all accumulated clean time is effective immediately.
3. There will be a treatment response: additional treatment, support groups, and other types of services which may even include residential treatment.
4. An additional sanction may also be imposed to include a jail sanction by the Judge.



Drug Testing - Dilute Samples

Please limit your liquid intake a few hours prior to drug testing and eat some food. Dilute urine samples can indicate that an individual intentionally set out to alter the outcome of his/her drug screen. There is no way team members can differentiate the individual's intent. The consequences for dilute samples drug screen are as follows:

1. Upon identification of the first dilute sample, you will be contacted by the Program Coordinator to help establish the reason for the dilute.
2. Typically you will be assigned to participate in an informative session covering creatinine, dilution and methods of prevention, which will be followed by your written submission of a 2 page essay on dilution. (To be submitted to the Coordinator)
3. The participant will have to complete 5 community service hours
4. A warning will be issued from the Bench.
5. Upon identification of a second dilute sample, the program response will typically be the same as they are for a positive test.

MAP to Court, Probation and Treatment

Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL 32084
Florida FDC Probation, 75 King St., St. Augustine, FL 32084
EPIC Behavioral Healthcare, 3910 Lewis Speedway (Suite 1103), St Augustine, Florida 32084

The Mission and the Vision of the Florida Judicial Branch

Mission & Vision

The mission of the judicial branch is to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Vision of the Florida Judicial Branch

Justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable.

- **To be accessible**, the Florida justice system will be convenient, understandable, timely and affordable to everyone.
- **To be fair**, the Florida justice system will respect the dignity of every person, regardless of race, class, gender or other characteristic, apply the law appropriately to the circumstances of individual cases, and include judges and court staff who reflect the community's diversity.
- **To be effective**, the Florida justice system will uphold the law and apply rules and procedures consistently and in a timely manner, resolve cases with finality, and provide enforceable decisions.
- **To be responsive**, the Florida justice system will anticipate and respond to the needs of all members of society, and provide a variety of dispute resolution methods.
- **To be accountable**, the Florida justice system will use public resources efficiently and in a way that the public can understand.

<http://www.flcourts.org/florida-courts/mission-and-vision.shtml>