MIAMI–DADE ADULT DRUG COURT

Participant Handbook

Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court:
Judge Maria Verde-Yanez
Richard E. Gerstein Building, Courtroom 4-4

Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court Office:
Joseph A. Collazo, Drug Court Manager
1351 NW 12 Street, Room 103 Miami, FL 33125
Contact #: 305-548-5135

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court!

This handbook provides an overview of the program and outlines your responsibilities as a participant. Remember, it covers general practices, and your specific case may have different guidelines. Always follow instructions from the Judge, your attorney, treatment provider, case manager or any court representative, even if they are not in this handbook. You must also follow your treatment plan from an approved treatment provider.

We are here to help you succeed in drug court, so feel free to ask any questions.

MISSION STATEMENT

Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court, the first of its kind in the nation, stands as a beacon of hope and transformation since 1989. We empower participants to overcome substance use, mental health, and trauma challenges, guiding them toward long-term recovery and becoming their best selves. Through rigorous supervision, accountability, and comprehensive treatment, we uplift families, strengthen communities, and ensure public safety.

VISION STATEMENT

As the nation’s first drug court, we lead with unwavering commitment to innovative and compassionate justice. Our vision is to extend our reach within the framework of our funding, ensuring that every individual we serve in Miami-Dade County receives the highest standard of support, treatment, and guidance. While expanding our impact, we remain steadfast in upholding best practices, empowering participants to rebuild their lives, uplift their families, and fortify our community's safety and resilience.

OVERVIEW:

Drug Court is a program designed to help individuals with substance use and mental health disorders avoid prosecution while achieving long-term recovery. It provides support and services to help you stay drug-free, treat mental illness, and heal from trauma. By participating, you'll have the opportunity to recover from addiction, address mental health issues, and overcome other life challenges. The program integrates treatment for both substance use and mental health, ensuring you receive comprehensive care. Thousands of participants in Miami-Dade County have thrived through Drug Court.

As a participant, you must follow the court's instructions and your treatment plan. This includes regular court appearance to review your progress, random drug testing, and attending designated treatment services. Your therapist will work with you to create and update your treatment plan to help you succeed. You will have a reasonable opportunity to explain your perspective on any therapeutic adjustments.

Participation in The Adult Drug Court Program is voluntary, and you will sign an agreement to enroll. The program length varies based on individual progress but usually lasts at least 12 months, depending on your clinical needs. Once you complete the program and no longer need monitoring, the treatment team will recommend discharge to the Judge, who makes the final decision.

PROBATION:

If you enter drug court on probation, you will have a case manager and a probation officer to monitor your treatment plan and progress. Both will report your progress to the court. You will receive a copy of your signed probation orders. We are here to help you complete your probation successfully. However, if you violate the terms of your supervision, you will have a hearing before the Drug Court Judge, who will decide on the appropriate action. We are here to support you in successfully completing your probation and starting your recovery journey.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION:

First-time offenders who successfully complete drug court will have their charges dismissed by the judge or nolle prosequi by the Assistant State Attorney. You may then be eligible to have your arrest record sealed or expunged. Consult your attorney for more information on this process. For others, the case may be dismissed by the court, or adjudication may be withheld after taking a plea. Most importantly, participants with a substance use disorder are given the chance to avoid further legal issues and treat other associated disorders, including untreated mental health issues and trauma. Consult with your attorney about the potential outcomes of your case(s).

NON-COMPLIANCE:

If you consistently fail to meet program requirements, you may be removed from the program and sent back to the original criminal court where your case was filed. Your case will then be prosecuted by the Assistant State Attorney from that division, and if convicted, you may face jail time. The court only removes participants as a last resort.

If you transferred from another jurisdiction and are unsuccessful, you will need to take a plea or be sentenced in Dade County Drug Court, as your case cannot be sent back.

The Judge, staff, counselors, and case managers work hard to help you succeed. Your treatment plan may be adjusted to include more counseling, support meetings, drug testing, and court appearances. These changes are meant to support your treatment, not as a punishment. Changes to your treatment plan are NOT a sanction. They are meant to help you better succeed in your recovery. Adulterating or diluting urine to mask drug use is considered a serious violation and will be sanctioned by the judge.

Upon entering Adult Drug Court, you must agree to waive your right to have any firearms confiscated by law enforcement at the time of your arrest returned to you.

ADULT DRUG COURT TEAM:

The Adult Drug Court Team, led by Judge Maria Elena Verde-Yanez, works together to support participants. The team includes the prosecutor, defense attorney, drug court manager, intake specialists, case managers, administrative assistant, data entry specialist, court liaison, probation officer, urinalysis technicians, and treatment providers.

Below is the contact information for some of the key stakeholders in Drug Court. All members of the multidisciplinary team members share the same goal and will work closely with you to achieve the best possible outcome. We want you to succeed and become the best version of yourself!

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS:

The Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court is located at:
Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building
1351 NW 12 Street Miami, Florida 33125
Courtroom 4-4

Judge Maria Verde-Yanez - *11th Judicial Circuit Judge, State of Florida*

Kristin Ariza, Judicial Assistant to Judge Verde-Yanez
Phone: 305-548-5103
Fax: 305-548-5105
E-mail: kariza@jud11.flcourts.org

Joseph A. Collazo - Adult Drug Court Manager
Phone: 305-548-5135
Fax: 305-548-5140
Email: jcollazo@jud11.flcourts.org

If you do not have a private attorney, you can call:

Audra Cohen – Assistant Public Defender
Phone: 305-545-1755
Fax: 305-545-1990

Akilah Bain - Prosecutor, Assistant State Attorney
Phone: 305-547-0285
Fax: 305-547-0100

If you are a person with a disability who needs assistance, please call:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator
Voicemail: 305-349-7175
TDD: 305-349-7174
Fax: 305-349-7355
Email: ada@jud11.flcourts.org

For information, schedules, and locations of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous

Please call:

Phone: 305-265-9555

Phone: 305-620-3875

For information on secular meetings, please visit:
www.smartrecovery.org/meeting **or** www.rational.org

RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT:

Thriving Mind oversees substance use treatment services, which often have waiting lists. The Drug Court team keeps a prioritized bed list, notifies participants when a bed is available, and coordinates admission.

INTAKE/SCREENING:

After you have been arraigned and decide to participate in the Adult Drug Court, you will be referred for an intake assessment. A team member in the courtroom will send your referral to the Intake Department, and an Intake Specialist will contact you to schedule your assessment. The date and time will be set by the assessor. You will also be drug tested at the arraignment.

The initial assessment helps the intake specialist determine the level of care you need and the appropriate "track" for you. During the intake, you will sign a release allowing the evaluation to be shared with several members of the multidisciplinary drug court and treatment team, including the Judge. The intake appointment will take about two hours.

Remember, this is a treatment court designed to provide you with the right services. It is important to be honest so you can receive the services you truly need. We don't want to either under or over-treat you. If you do not attend the evaluation at your scheduled date and time, the court may sanction you for non-compliance.

TREATMENT TRACKS:

Participants are placed into one of four tracks, with services tailored to each individual's needs:

Track 1: High Risk/High Need (HR/HN): Typically, these participants need a combination of intensive treatment, close monitoring, and accountability for their actions.

Track 2: High Risk/Low Need (HR/LN): Typically, these participants require close monitoring and accountability for their actions, but do not need intensive treatment services

Track 3: Low Risk/High Need (LR/HN): Typically, these participants need a combination of services that include intensive treatment and close monitoring to prevent relapse.

Track 4: Low Risk/Low Need (LR/LN): Typically, these participants require minimal supervision and basic drug education services

Participants are typically assigned to one of three tracks—High Risk/High Need, Low Risk/High Need, or High Risk/Low Need— based on their assessment. They will then follow a phased system corresponding to their assigned track as outlined below. Each phase emphasizes key concepts and specific treatment goals, along with activities and requirements that must be fulfilled before advancing to the next phase. Your counselor from the treatment program will explain these phases to you and recommend progression based on your achievements. The duration of your participation in the program will depend on your individual progress.

Please see the phase advancement guide below:

Phase Advancement Guide

HIGH RISK/HIGH NEED Track

(Guidelines may vary based on individual recovery progress and pro-social habilitation)

Phase	Duration	Group Sessions	Individual Sessions	Office/Home Visits	Court Appearances	Random Drug Testing	Other Considerations
(PHASE 1) Acute Stabilization 6 hrs./week group counseling initially; 200 hrs. over 9-12 months of counseling	Min. of 60 days	2-3 x per week	1 x per week min.	Weekly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	○ Weekly court for first 30 days ○ Then monthly if in residential ○ Otherwise, 2x per month	○ Min. of 14 consecutive days of negative drug screens ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Develop case plan ○ Engage in treatment ○ Comply with supervision/Probation ○ Start changing people places & things ○ Address housing ○ MOUD/MAUD education ○ No unexcused absences for 30 days ○ Obtain medical assessment
(PHASE 2) Clinical Stabilization Identified as Phase 2 when stepping down from residential	Min. of 120 days	Min. of 2x per week	1 x per week min.	Weekly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	Monthly court; bi-monthly post-residential until further notice	○ Min. of 30 consecutive days of negative drug screens ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision/probation ○ Show changing people places & things Maintain housing ○ Begin family sessions if recommended ○ Begin peer recovery groups ○ Address financial & medical issues ○ Enroll in parenting classes if applicable ○ No unexcused absences for 60 days
(PHASE 3) Pro-Social Habilitation	Min. of 90 days	Min. of 1 x per week	2 x per month	Bi-monthly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	Court appearance every 30-45 days	○ Minimum of 45 consecutive days of negative drug screens ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision/probation ○ Show changing in people places & thing ○ Family sessions if recommended ○ Begin MRT ○ Maintain recovery groups & housing ○ Address life skills, financial & medical issues ○ Establish recovery network & pro-social activity ○ Secure job/education unless waived ○ No unexcused absences for 60 days
(PHASE 4) Adaptive Habilitation and Continuing Care	Min. of 90 days	○ 1 x week or as needed ○ bi-monthly or monthly near phase end	1 x per month or as needed .	Bi-monthly office visit; monthly home visits with case manager	Court appearance every 30-60 days	○ Minimum of 60 consecutive days of negative drug screens ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision/probation ○ Show changes in people places & things ○ Continue MRT ○ Maintain recovery groups, pro-social activity, & housing ○ Address medical, financial issues & ancillary services (i.e. parenting, family support) ○ Begin job/search or vocational training, or school

Steps to Apply for Graduation

- Minimum of 90 days in phase 4
- Minimum of 90 consecutive days of negative drug screenings
- Engaged in treatment
- Compliance with supervision and or probation
- Maintain pro-social activities and recovery network/groups
- Maintain employment, vocational training or school
- Address ancillary services (i.e. parenting, family support)
- Complete criminal thinking program (MRT)
- Maintain housing
- Demonstrate changing people, places and things
- If on MOUD/MAUD, create a post-program plan in with your treatment provider.
- Pay all Program Fees
- Complete the pre-completion survey
- Articulate continuing care plan

Phase Advancement Guide

HIGH RISK/LOW NEED Track

(Guidelines may vary based on individual recovery progress and pro-social habilitation)

Phase	Duration	Group Sessions	Individual Sessions	Court Appearances	Random Drug Testing	Other Considerations
(PHASE 1) Orientation	Min. of 90 days	Min. of 1 x per week	1 x per week min.	○ Bi-weekly court appearance: for the first 30 days ○ Then monthly unless otherwise required	○ Min. of 60 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly)	○ Develop case plan ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Begin criminal thinking program (MRT) ○ Start changing people places & things ○ Address housing ○ Obtain medical assessment ○ No unexcused absence for 30 days
(PHASE 2) Pro-Social Habilitation	Min. of 60 days	Min. of 1x per week	2 x per month min.	Court appearance every 45 days or as scheduled by the court	○ Min. of 120 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Continue MRT ○ Demonstrate changing people, places & things ○ Begin family sessions if recommended ○ Establish pro-social activity ○ Maintain housing ○ Address life skills, financial & medical needs ○ Parenting classes if applicable ○ No unexcused absence for 60 days
(PHASE 3) Self-sufficiency	Min. of 90 days	Min. of 2 x per month	Min. of 1 x per month or as needed	Attend court as scheduled for non-compliance or as ordered.	○ Minimum of 90 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Complete MRT ○ Demonstrate changing people, places & things ○ Maintain pro-social activity ○ Address life skills, financial, medical issues & ancillary services (i.e. parenting and family support) ○ Complete parenting classes, if applicable ○ Maintain or seek housing, employment, or training. No unexcused absence for 90 days

Steps to Apply for Graduation

- Minimum of 90 days in phase 3
- Minimum of 90 days of consecutive negative drug screenings
- No unexcused absences for 90 days
- Compliance with supervision and or probation
- Maintain pro-social activities
- Address ancillary services (i.e. parenting, family support)
- Complete criminal thinking program (MRT)
- Maintain or demonstrate an effort to obtain housing, employment, vocational, or educational training
- Demonstrate changing people, places and things
- Complete parenting classes/ancillary services, unless waived
- Pay all program and court fees
- Complete the pre-completion survey
- Articulate continuing care plan

Phase Advancement Guide

LOW RISK/HIGH NEED Track

Guidelines may vary based on individual recovery progress and pro-social habilitation

Phase	Duration	Group Sessions	Individual Sessions	Office/Home Visits	Court Appearances	Random Drug Testing	Other Considerations
(PHASE 1) Acute Stabilization 6 hrs./week group counseling initially; 200 hrs. over 9-12 months of counseling	Min. of 60 days	2-3 x per week	1 x per week min.	Weekly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	○ Weekly court for first 30 days ○ Then monthly if in residential ○ Otherwise, 2x per month	○ Min. of 14 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Develop case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Start changing people places & things ○ Address housing ○ MOUD/MAUD education, if applicable ○ Obtain medical assessment ○ No unexcused absences for 30 days
(PHASE 2) Clinical Stabilization Identified as Phase 2 when stepping down from residential	Min. of 120 days	Min. of 2 x per week	1 x per week min.	Weekly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	Monthly court; bi-monthly post-residential until further notice	○ Min. of 30 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Show changing people places & things ○ Begin family sessions if recommended ○ Maintain housing ○ Begin peer recovery groups ○ Address financial & medical issues ○ Enroll in parenting classes if applicable ○ No unexcused absences for 60 days
(PHASE 3) Adaptive Habilitation	Min. of 90 days	Min. of 1 x per week	2 x per month	Bi-monthly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	Court appearance every 45 days	○ Minimum of 45 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Show changing people places & things ○ Maintain peer recovery groups & housing ○ Address life skills, financial & medical issues ○ Establish recovery network ○ Secure job/education unless waived ○ No unexcused absences for 60 days
(PHASE 4) Continuing Care	Min. of 90 days	○ 1 x week or as needed ○ bi-monthly or monthly near phase end	1 x per month or as needed .	Bi-monthly office visits; monthly home visits with case manager	Court appearance every 60 days	○ Minimum of 60 consecutive days of negative drug screenings ○ Call daily; submit to random urinalysis or test three x weekly	○ Review case plan ○ Engaged in treatment ○ Comply with supervision and or probation ○ Maintain peer recovery groups, housing, recovery network ○ Address medical and financial issues and ancillary services (i.e. parenting, family support) ○ Begin job/search or vocational training, or school ○ Demonstrate changing people, places and things

Steps to Apply for Graduation

- Minimum of 90 days in phase 4
- Minimum of 90 consecutive days of negative drug screenings
- Engaged in treatment
- Compliance with supervision and or probation
- Maintain recovery network/groups
- Maintain employment, vocational training or school
- Address ancillary services (i.e. parenting, family support)
- Maintain housing
- Demonstrate changing people, places and things
- If on MOUD/MAUD, develop a post-program plan with your treatment provider
- Pay all program and court fees
- Complete the pre-completion survey
- Articulate continuing care plan

DIVERSION

Generally, a small number of participants assessed by the intake specialist need less intensive services and are placed in a three-month Diversion program focused on basic drug education. The drug court program, on the other hand, is designed for individuals with substance use disorders who are at high risk of re-offending and require substantial support.

DIVERSION TRACK TERMS AND CONDITION

The Diversion Track spans three (3) months. Participants will be referred to the county's DATP program to complete this track and will have limited court appearances via Zoom to keep this track distinct from others.

If a participant is not successful in the Diversion program, the assigned counselor will schedule a court hearing and notify the court of any non-compliance issues. During participation in Diversion, a strict policy against drug and/or alcohol use will be enforced. Any participant who tests positive for drugs and/or alcohol, commits a new offense, or otherwise fails to meet program requirements will be dismissed from the Diversion program. The participant will appear before the judge and, if eligible, may be offered entry into drug court. If accepted into the Adult Drug Court Program, some participants may complete the program in less than a year, or it may take a year or more, depending on your clinical needs.

DRUG COURT HEARINGS:

Adult Drug Court hearings take place at the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building.

You will need to attend court regularly and dress appropriately. The frequency of your court appearances will depend on your current phase in the program and your compliance. During each court appearance, the Judge will review a progress report prepared by the treatment team. This report includes your treatment goals, stage of change, drug test results, attendance and participation in treatment, any obstacles to treatment, and other compliance issues. The Judge will ask you about your progress in treatment and recovery, addressing any challenges you may be facing. If you are following your treatment plan, you will be encouraged to keep going with the program and work together with the treatment team to achieve your goals. You may also receive incentives for your progress.

If you are struggling to maintain sobriety or follow your personalized treatment plan, the Judge will discuss these challenges with you and the treatment team. The team may propose adjustments to your treatment approach, potentially including more intensive outpatient or residential treatment, or a discovery plan tailored to align with your current readiness for change. **If there are program violations within your control, such as missing court hearings or treatment sessions, or providing a diluted or adulterated urine sample, the court may impose a sanction. Repeated violations or continued unsatisfactory progress may result in a brief jail sanction.**

ALWAYS BE HONEST!

Overcoming a substance use disorder requires your utmost effort and honesty.

Your presence in court on your scheduled dates is mandatory. Please arrive before your scheduled hearing time and remain in the courtroom until the Judge meets with you individually and dismisses you. Failure to appear without a valid excuse may lead to a warrant for your arrest.

The courtroom atmosphere is non-confrontational. Attorneys typically maintain quiet to facilitate open communication between you and the Judge.

If you require extensive services or closer monitoring, you may be assigned a case manager. It is important to stay in regular contact with your assigned case manager. They will assist you in navigating the process and provide support during your time in drug court.

MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID/ALCOHOL USE DISODER

If you are struggling with alcohol and/or opioid addiction, you may find medications for opioid/alcohol use disorder (MOUD/MAUD) helpful. MOUD/MAUD includes medications such as methadone, buprenorphine (Subutex, Suboxone), and naltrexone (Vivitrol), either in oral or extended-release injectable form. If appropriate, you will be referred for screening to determine eligibility for MOUD/MAUD. These medications are prescribed by a physician and are used alongside other drug court treatment services. MOUD/MAUD is always integrated into treatment plans. Buprenorphine is commonly used in drug court for detoxification, withdrawal prevention, stabilization during treatment, and maintenance in long-term recovery. There is no predetermined duration for taking these medications. The length of time you use them depends on your recovery progress and your treating physician's recommendation.

Buprenorphine, Subutex and naltrexone are available at no cost at the Jackson Behavioral Health Clinic, which partners with Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court, and at most public treatment facilities. If you have insurance, grants will cover your co-payment costs. FDA-approved medications for addiction, such as buprenorphine, and naltrexone are provided during jail sanctions or any period of incarceration to ensure continuity of treatment. Methadone is available at private clinics in Dade County, but it is not provided free of charge.

If you are pregnant entering drug court, you can access buprenorphine (Suboxone/Subutex). Don't attempt detox on your own, as it can be harmful to you and your baby.

Vivitrol is beneficial for recovery from opioids and alcohol. To receive a Vivitrol shot, you must abstain from opioids for 7-14 days beforehand, making it most effective after a period of opioid sobriety. Vivitrol is also effective in treating alcohol addiction and can be initiated after detoxification. It is available at no cost at the Jackson Behavioral Health Clinic and most public treatment facilities. If your prescribing physician is private, you must agree to provide the court with their contact information and sign a release allowing the exchange of information between the physician and the court. The court supports your education about treatment options and will help you navigate them.

It's important not to manage your medication independently. Take your medication exactly as prescribed. If you wish to adjust your dosage, discuss it first with your doctor and treatment team. Completing drug court successfully does not require stopping MOUD/MAUD, as stabilization on MOUD/MAUD equates to abstinence.

While all participants with opioid or alcohol use disorders are required to receive education about MOUD/MAUD, no one will be compelled to start using these medications, continue their use, or taper off the medication against their wishes.

DRUG TESTING:

Drug and alcohol testing is vital for maintaining program integrity and occurs randomly throughout the entire program. Alcohol testing is equally important as drug testing. Urinalysis is used for both drug and alcohol testing, with alcohol testing including EtG testing, oral fluid testing and trans-dermal devices. No alcohol consumption is allowed in drug court, including wine and beer. The EtG test can detect alcohol intake within 72 hours prior to the test. Additionally, you may need to undergo other types of drug testing including hair, sweat, and oral fluids, to determine recent or extended drug use.

If you test positive for marijuana when entering drug court, you will have a 30-day grace period before the court holds you accountable for a positive urinalysis. It's important to be truthful with the court about the last date you used marijuana.

Adult Drug Court participants not in residential treatment follow a call-in system. This system notifies you via recorded message when a drug test is scheduled. You are required to call in daily and provide a urine sample within the designated time frame. Tests primarily occur at treatment provider facilities, but also at your court hearings. All tests are supervised by a lab technician of the same gender, and it's important to follow instructions to ensure accurate observation. Most drugs, including marijuana after a single use, remain detectable in the system for about 72 hours.

POSITIVE TEST RESULTS:

If a participant acknowledges that a positive urine test accurately reflects drug or alcohol use, a confirmation test is not necessary. However, if the participant denies substance use and the test is positive, the sample will undergo lab confirmation. Participants are responsible for the cost of confirmation tests when denial results in positive confirmation.

Sanctions will be imposed for diluted or tampered samples, missed tests, or failure to call the system. Urine drug tests screen for various substances and check creatinine levels, temperature, and adulterants. Attempting to manipulate drug tests is prohibited. Drug court treats diluted samples as NONNEGATIVE and imposes stricter sanctions for dishonest conduct. Claims of excessive water consumption as a reason for dilution will not be accepted.

Missed tests will be considered positive, and diluted urine tests will be treated as non-negative results.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION POLICY:

Participants entering the Program must agree to abstain from all mood-altering substances that may test positive during a drug test. This includes benzodiazepines (such as Xanax), narcotics, tranquilizers, sedatives, stimulants, opioids, and opioid-based medications. **If a participant requires prescription medication that could test positive for a prohibited substance, they must seek prior approval from the court and provide appropriate medical documentation.**

All participants must obtain a prescription from a physician for any prescription medication they take and disclose their intention to use the medication to the court or staff. Participants should have their prescribing physician complete a Medical Form provided by the court. This form must be returned to the court at the next scheduled hearing.

You should never take someone else's medication, including medication given to you by a family member, under any circumstances.

You are prohibited from taking any controlled narcotic medication. In a life-threatening emergency, follow your doctor's instructions. Whenever possible, inform the doctor that you are in drug court and request a non-narcotic alternative if available. When visiting a doctor, dentist, or emergency room for any reason, you MUST inform them of your participation in drug court and request a non-narcotic medication whenever feasible. It is your responsibility to provide copies of all prescriptions to your counselor, case manager, and the court.

Participants must inform both the drug court team and their treatment provider about any over-the-counter medications they are currently taking or plan to take before using them. Some over the counter and prescription medications can cause a positive result for prohibited substances on drug tests. It's important for participants to notify the court for their own protection.

DETOXIFICATION FROM ALCOHOL AND BENZODIAZEPINE:

Many of you may be prescribed medications from the benzodiazepine class, such as Xanax, Ativan, or Klonopin, for anxiety. These medications are generally NOT allowed in drug court, except for treating seizure disorders or other critical illnesses. We recognize anxiety as a serious condition and will work with you and your doctor to gradually taper off benzodiazepines and find an appropriate alternative.

Do not stop taking these medications suddenly or without consulting a physician. Abrupt discontinuation, especially for frequent users, can lead to seizures or even death. Always discuss tapering off benzodiazepines with your doctor and inform the court. If detoxification services are necessary, the court will help arrange entry into a detox facility.

If you have a severe alcohol dependency, you will likely require medical detoxification. We understand detoxing from opioids is uncomfortable. In our program, you can access Buprenorphine (Suboxone/Subutex) to avoid painful withdrawals. Please be honest with us so we can assist you through this process as comfortably as possible. The court collaborates with Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital to provide both inpatient and outpatient detoxification services, as well as medications for opioid/alcohol use disorder (MOUD/MAUD).

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES:

Using any products that contain alcohol, such as mouthwashes, breath strips, cough medicines (e.g., Nyquil, etc.), hand sanitizers, non-alcoholic beer and wine, herbal supplements (e.g., ginkgo biloba, etc.), flavoring extracts (e.g., vanilla, etc.), communion wine, flambé dishes (e.g., baked Alaska, etc.), colognes, body sprays, or any other alcohol-containing product, will not be accepted as a valid excuse for a positive alcohol result. It's important to discuss these potential exposures proactively and not wait until after a positive test result. Exposure to such products will not justify a positive alcohol test result.

Performance-enhancing supplements and diet supplements are prohibited. Avoid consuming Kombucha tea, Red Bull and other energy drinks. Additionally, refrain from consuming foods that contain poppy seeds (e.g. muffins, bagels, etc.), as poppy seeds can cause a positive result for opioids in drug tests.

You must refrain from using any synthetic or mood-altering chemicals/substances, or any substances labeled as "not for human consumption." We conduct tests to detect these substances, including Spice and Fentanyl.

While you may have a medical marijuana card, the use of medical marijuana is generally not allowed in drug court, except in exceptional circumstances. If you plan to use over-the-counter CBD products, it's important to inform the court or your treatment provider beforehand. CBD products containing THC are also not permitted.

To protect yourself and avoid testing positive for a prohibited substance, always read labels before consuming any food or drink.

SANCTIONS & INCENTIVES

SANCTIONS:

Sanctions are promptly imposed following violations and are primarily determined by the Judge, with input from the drug court team. Participants have the opportunity to explain their perspective before sanctions are imposed. Program violations include actions such as committing new offenses, missing court hearings or treatment appointments, tampering with urine tests, neglecting daily check-ins to the random system and in providing urine screenings, behavioral issues during treatment, not attending mandated support group meetings (Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, or Smart Recovery), unauthorized departure from residential treatment, or failing to comply with other court directives or rules in residential treatment.

Possible sanctions include:

- Verbal Admonishments from the Judge
- Useful Community Service (ONLY at approved nonprofit sites such as parks, religious institutions or homeless shelters)
- "Jury Box" Observation
- Essay Assignments
- Increased Court Supervision
- Electronic devices - Transdermal alcohol monitors
- Home Detention
- Letters of Apology
- Violation of Probation
- Team Round Table
- Limited Incarceration
- Program Termination

If you receive a court sanction, you are required to comply with it immediately.

INCENTIVES:

Incentives are recommended by treatment and court staff and are granted at the Judge's discretion for achievements such as adherence with drug treatment, maintaining sobriety, following mental health treatment plans, notable progress in treatment, fulfilling service commitments, obtaining a GED, securing employment, completing residential treatment, and adopting a pro-social lifestyle.

Examples of incentives include:

- Verbal Praise
- Recognition in court
- Priority status in court appearances
- Reduced frequency of court appearances
- Round of Applause
- Advancement to the next program phase
- Participation in gift cards drawings ("Fishbowl" selection)
- Symbolic Rewards
- Legal benefits
- Travel passes
- Writing commendations
- Successful program completion

TRAVEL PASS REQUEST:

To obtain a travel pass before leaving the area, you must be in good standing with both your program and the court. If you need a travel pass on your scheduled court date, your progress report will be reviewed by the Judge for a decision. If you have an emergency or unexpected need to travel on a day other than your scheduled court date, please follow these steps:

- Appear in court between the hours of 8:45am-11:00am Monday through Thursday to request a travel pass.
- Bring documentation from your treatment provider confirming awareness of your travel plans and your compliance with the program.

The Judge authorizes travel passes. You don't need a travel pass to visit Monroe, Broward, or Palm Beach Counties. However, any missed sessions due to approved travel must be rescheduled to stay on track with your treatment plan and successfully complete drug court. Additionally, you must inform your treatment provider about your travel pass.

During a travel pass, it is crucial to remember that ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE is strictly prohibited. The judge may request a hair test at any time, which can detect use within the past ninety (90) days.

EMPLOYMENT:

Securing and maintaining a job that suits your interests is essential for achieving long-term success in recovery. Our employment referral services cover:

- Job readiness training
- Resume writing support
- Interview skills development
- Job referrals

For employment referral assistance, please contact Transitions, Inc.

Main office is open from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Located at: 1550 NW 3rd Ave, Miami, FL, 33126

12-STEP/RECOVERY SUPPORT MEETINGS:

If you have been diagnosed with a severe alcohol or substance use disorder, you may be required to participate in Twelve-Step programs such as Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Medication-Assisted Recovery Anonymous, or SMART Recovery, which is a recovery support meeting. These peer support groups are not formal treatment programs but offer valuable support for individuals recovering from addiction. It is recommended to attend multiple groups and meetings to find the one that best fits your needs and schedule. You have the freedom to choose from a list of approved programs, and attending faith-based programs like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous is not mandatory. Secular groups are available as an alternative. Before joining peer support groups, recovery peer specialists use evidence-based interventions, such as 12-step facilitation therapy, to prepare you for what to expect and help you derive the maximum benefit from your participation.

The court will provide an attendance sheet that must be signed and stamped by a group's authorized member at each meeting you attend. Submitting these signed sheets at your court status hearings is required. You'll also be encouraged to choose a sponsor of the same gender with at least five years of sobriety. It's advisable to purchase a workbook and work through the 12 steps with your sponsor. Your treatment team will guide you on the recommended number of weekly meetings. Attendance at these meetings is mandated only for individuals diagnosed with a severe substance use disorder.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Drug Court collaborates with various community resources to ensure you receive the appropriate services and support. Engaging with these services can help you address untreated mental health issues, trauma, homelessness, and family challenges. These additional supports are designed to assist you in overcoming obstacles that may affect your recovery journey.

Developing healthy living habits and learning to manage physical, emotional, and stress-related issues are crucial for your long-term recovery success. Substance use disorders are often connected to trauma experienced during childhood and throughout life. Therefore, Drug Court will help you access various services, including psychiatric and psychological assessments, trauma therapy, medical and dental screenings, STD testing, family planning, parenting classes and housing assistance. It is important that you follow all treatment recommendations and provide documentation to the court.

We understand that recovery is a challenging journey, and we commend your efforts and bravery in making positive life changes. You are not alone in this process. We value the importance of a strong support network and will encourage and require the involvement of loved ones who can assist you throughout your recovery.

To help build and strengthen your support system, the court may ask a family member, friend, or significant other to appear in court and/or provide a urinalysis. If their test shows illegal drugs, there will be no law enforcement consequences for them. The court's goal is to assess whether your social and family environment supports your sobriety. It is nearly impossible to recover when you are surrounded by people who uses drugs and alcohol. If needed, the court will help extend treatment services to your family member or significant other.

Your recovery and compliance with Drug Court require a drug free environment. Therefore, your significant other will be asked to engage in treatment, or you may decide not to enter the program. Additionally, you will be expected to avoid associations with peers or friends who do not support your recovery.

The court understands that drug use impacts the entire family. Therefore, the Miami-Dade Drug Court has adopted a family focused approach to treatment, which requires you to participate in family therapy and/or couples counseling. If you live with family members, the court will want to meet them. Our community partners have expanded their services to address the needs of the entire family, providing the necessary support to strengthen family bonds and help you build healthier relationships. This program is designed to help you change your life and make positive, pro-social choices. Continuing relationships or friendships with individuals who use drugs goes against the goals of the program and hinders long-term recovery. Please carefully consider whether you can commit to the Drug Court program.

If the court has reason to believe that your children are at risk, the court will initiate involvement of The Department of Children and Families or engage a family member in order to make sure the children are safe. If you have children under the age of six, you will be required to complete an evidence-based parenting program as part of your drug court requirement. The program is free. Research and practical experience have demonstrated that the parenting role of both women and men with substance use disorders is a complex matter that cannot be separated from their treatment.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM COMPLETION:

Your successful completion of the Miami-Dade Drug Court program signifies your accomplishment. To finish the Drug Court program, you must meet the following requirements:

- Successfully maintain a minimum of 90 consecutive days of abstinence, consistently participate in peer recovery groups and pro-social activities and have a strong recovery network in place.
- Show significant progress toward independent life goals and demonstrate a deep understanding of your recovery journey.
- Be gainfully employed, attending school, or receiving vocational training at the time of completion, unless you are unable to do so.
- Fill out the Pre-completion Questionnaire.
- Complete all phase requirements, case plan goals and the continuing care plan.
- Reside in a safe, stable residence.
- Pay all program fees and restitution (if applicable).
- Make a $100.00 donation to Friends of the Drug Court, Inc. or $50.00 if you have completed the diversion track at DATP.
- Successfully comply with all conditions of probation if you are on Drug Court probation.

Your counselor will recommend you for program completion, with the final decision made by the Judge.

CONCLUSION:

The outcome of your experience at the Miami-Dade Adult Drug Court Program is ultimately in your hands. The Judge and the treatment team are here to guide and assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. To succeed, you must be motivated to take advantage of what the program offers and commit to a drug-free life. This commitment extends beyond your time here; it's a lifelong dedication to yourself, your family, and your community.

CONTINUING CARE AND SUPPORT AFTER PROGRAM COMPLETION:

Before you are discharged from the program, the adult drug court will work with community treatment and service providers to create a plan for your continued care. This plan will address your needs for mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, housing, financial assistance, healthcare, and health insurance. It will include setting up initial appointments for treatment services and arranging transportation if needed. Whenever possible, case management will be included to help you stay engaged with the necessary post-discharge services.

For the first 90 days after you complete the adult drug court program, treatment providers or case managers will try to contact you periodically by phone, email, or other means. They will monitor your progress, offer advice and encouragement, provide referrals for additional treatment if needed, and conduct a post-completion survey.

We hope this handbook has been helpful and has answered most of your questions about the program. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at the Drug Court Program Office: 1351 NW 12 Street, Room 103, Miami, FL 33125, or call (305-548-5135).

ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
"WE WHO LABOR HERE SEEK ONLY TRUTH"