

Understanding and Utilizing Specialty Court Programs

Eighth Judicial District Court, Clark County, Nevada

The Eighth Judicial District Court operates nine Specialty Court programs, targeting non-violent offenders with substance abuse or mental health issues. The EJDC Adult Drug Court, established in 1992, was one of the first Drug Courts in the nation. Since that time, Specialty Courts have expanded to include the Felony DUI Court, Mental Health Court, Juvenile Drug Court, Veteran's Court, Family Dependency Court, Dependency Mother's Drug Court, Child Support Treatment Court and OPEN Court.

Treatment Court Model

Specialty Courts are based on a treatment court model, providing treatment to offenders, reducing drug-related crimes, and providing programming for participants to gain life skills and educational advancement. All Specialty Court programs require participants to engage in individual and group substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling (based on individual needs), random drug/alcohol testing, probation supervision, collaborative case management and regular court status checks.

Cost Savings

Specialty Court programs result in significant cost savings to the State of Nevada and Clark County by reducing public costs associated with monitoring, detaining and prosecuting criminal activity by state and county law enforcement and prosecution agencies. The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) reports that for every \$1.00 invested in Specialty Courts, taxpayers save as much as \$3.36 in avoided criminal justice costs alone. When considering other costs associated with participants' involvement in the criminal justice system, it is estimated that Specialty Courts save taxpayer \$27 for every \$1.00 invested by reducing victimization and healthcare service utilization.

NADCP findings indicate that Specialty Courts reduce crime 45 percent more than other sentencing options. Participants in Specialty Court programs are six times more likely to complete substance abuse treatment than those not involved in a judicial program. Without judicial oversight, 70% of substance-abusing offenders drop out of treatment.

Eligibility

While each Specialty Court program establishes independent criteria for admission, the primary eligibility factors for an individual to participate in the Specialty Courts are (1) an identified alcohol/substance abuse disorder or SMI (serious mental illness) and (2) no history of violent offenses or drug trafficking.

Application Process

To learn more about each Specialty Court program, contact the Specialty Court Manager, Margaret Pickard, Esq. at 702-671-4505 or pickardm@clarkcountycourts.us. To apply for a Specialty Court program, please complete the Specialty Court Application available at : <http://www.clarkcountycourts.us/ejdc/courts-and-judges/specialty-courts.html> and submit to SpecialtyCourts@clarkcountycourts.us.

Eighth Judicial District Specialty Court Programs

Adult Drug Court: The ADC program is a minimum one-year court-supervised comprehensive inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment program for individuals involved in the criminal justice system who are dependent on drugs or alcohol.

Felony DUI: The FDUI program is a minimum three-year court-supervised program that offers intensive treatment and community supervision to participants who have at least three DUI charges within a seven year period. Successful completion of the program will result in the Felony DUI charge being reduced to a second offense misdemeanor DUI conviction.

Mental Health Court: The Mental Health Court is a court-supervised program intended for chronic thought disordered individuals who struggle to stay out of the criminal justice system, often because they are not medicated. In order to be eligible for the Mental Health Court, participants must have a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) including Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Major Depression Disorder or Chronic Severe Anxiety. The MHC is now accepting applications from the Municipal and Justice Courts.

Juvenile Drug Court: The Juvenile Drug Court program offers four court-supervised programming tiers: *Pre-Adjudication Diversion Program*, a 90-day program individualized to the needs of each youth (including school/educational services, substance abuse and mental health counseling, mentoring and family support groups and after school programs), *Educational Substance Abuse*, which is a 90-day intensive substance abuse education program, *Traditional Drug Court*, a minimum 12 month substance abuse program, and *Transitional Program*, a 90-day transitional program for youth transitioning into the community from juvenile detention.

Veterans' Court: Veterans' Court is court-supervised outpatient treatment for veterans convicted of a felony. The program works collaboratively with the Veterans' Administration to serve veterans with significant addiction and mental health issues that developed during or from their military service.

Family Treatment Court: The Family Treatment Court offers a court-supervised comprehensive outpatient substance abuse treatment for alcohol and drug dependent parents involved in the child welfare system. The program is funded by Nevada's Administrative Office of the Courts and Eighth Judicial District Court Specialty Courts Division.

Dependency Mother's Drug Court: DMDC is a court-supervised comprehensive residential substance abuse treatment for alcohol and drug dependent mothers and their children involved in the child welfare system.

Child Support Treatment Court: The Child Support Treatment Court is a minimum 12-month court-supervised comprehensive outpatient substance abuse treatment program for alcohol and drug dependent parents involved with the Clark County District Attorney's Family/Child Support Division.

OPEN Program: The OPEN Court offers a court-supervised intensive behavioral modification program for males, age 18 to 24 years of age, who have been incarcerated, with the goal of reintegrating them into their communities and connecting them with community based resources, while working to address their court requirements.