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# **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS JUDICIARY**

## **DRUG COURT PROGRAM**

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



Effective December 17, 2025

## **EXHIBIT A**

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## **Introduction**

The Drug Court Act of 2015, codified at 1 CMC § 3207, was enacted on October 28, 2015. The Act created the Drug Court Program (“Drug Court” or “Program”). The Program operates as a collaborative, non-adversarial system for the rehabilitation of drug offenders through continuous monitoring, regular drug testing, and holistic dependency treatment.

The Drug Court Team assists with day-to-day operations and collaborates with agencies and community programs. The staff engages in data collection and analysis, grant writing, resource development, and public outreach. Under the leadership of the Presiding Judge and the assigned Drug Court Judge, the Drug Court Manager ensures the Program’s successful implementation.

## **Mission Statement**

*The mission of Drug Court is to improve the lives of individuals affected by drugs and alcohol and their families by providing a multidisciplinary approach, integrating evidence-based and culturally sensitive treatment services and promoting sobriety and positive behaviors.*

Drug Court aims to accomplish its mission by:

- Establishing effective and sustainable drug court programs that reduce drug use, crime, recidivism, incarceration rates, and criminal justice costs in the Commonwealth;
- Providing judicially supervised treatment as an alternative to incarceration;
- Providing rigorous case management to ensure that each participant complies with the treatment mandate;
- Helping all participants learn how to manage their substance use so they can maintain long-term recovery and sobriety;
- Utilizing health education to reduce high-risk behaviors among participants;
- Identifying and treating the health problems of high-risk participants; and
- Linking participants to housing, vocational, educational, and employment services.

## **Vision Statement**

*The vision of Drug Court is to foster healthier communities by improving the quality of life for individuals and families impacted by substance use.*

Drug Court aims to accomplish its vision by:

- Promoting rehabilitation by linking participants who struggle with a serious substance use disorder to treatment services in the CNMI;
- Ensuring community safety and reducing recidivism through appropriate substance use treatment and intensive community supervision; and
- Increasing collaboration between the court, counsel, law enforcement agencies, community substance use agencies, and other treatment services.

## Section 1. General Provisions

- (a) **Authority.** These policies and procedures are promulgated under 1 CMC § 3207.
- (b) **Title and Citation.** These policies and procedures shall be known as the NMI Judiciary Drug Court Policies and Procedures and shall be cited as "NMI DRUG CT. PP."
- (c) **Purpose.** These policies and procedures are intended to establish proper procedures, ensure timeliness regarding Drug Court cases, and reflect the best practices established by national organizations, including All Rise and the National Drug Court Institute.
- (d) **Effective Date.** These policies and procedures are deemed effective as of \_\_\_\_.<sup>1</sup>
- (e) **Construction.** These policies and procedures shall be construed to ensure simplicity in procedure, fairness in administration, and elimination of unjustifiable expense and delay.
- (f) **Conflict.** Nothing in these policies and procedures is meant to contravene established Commonwealth and federal laws or regulations, or other court policies and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> This Policy has been amended on the following dates: April 16, 2020, February 14, 2023, and September 12, 2024.

(g) **Definitions.** Unless defined below, any word found within these policies and procedures shall retain its commonly understood meaning. The following terms are defined as follows:

- (1) **Case Managers.** Case Managers are Drug Court staff who refer participants to specific services based on the participant's needs, the service's ability to comply with the Court's reporting requirements, and the service's capacity to provide appropriate care (e.g., mental or physical health, language, etc.). Case Managers work in collaboration with clinicians, Drug Court Team members, and other service providers for the benefit of the participant. This aids in forming treatment strategies and identifying issues currently affecting the participant's recovery.
- (2) **Community Supervision Officers; Compliance Officers.** Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers are law enforcement officers under 1 CMC § 3207 who ensure adherence to the terms and conditions of Drug Court, including maintaining public safety, monitoring and enforcing curfew, performing drug testing on participants, carrying out community supervision, documenting each participant's requirements after each Court appearance, and providing such information to the Court.
- (3) **Drug Court.** Drug Court is a non-adversarial system within the Superior Court that affects the rehabilitation and recovery of participants who commit drug-related crimes through continuous court monitoring, regular drug testing, and holistic substance use treatment.
- (4) **Drug Court Hearings.** There are multiple types of hearings including:
  - (i) Change-of-Plea Hearing, which is the first hearing where a potential participant submits a guilty plea to be held in abeyance;
  - (ii) Review Hearing, which is conducted regularly to monitor participant progress as ordered by the Drug Court Judge;
  - (iii) Emergency Hearing, which is conducted to address emergency participant behavior at the discretion of the Court.

- (iv) Order-to-Show-Cause Hearing, which is held for a participant who wants to contest their violation; and
- (v) Termination Hearing, which is held to determine whether a participant should be terminated from the program.

(5) **Drug Court Judge.** The Drug Court Judge (“Judge”) heads the collaborative treatment Drug Court Team. In this capacity, the Judge regularly reviews case status reports detailing each participant’s compliance with the treatment plan. During regular court appearances, the Judge administers graduated sanctions and incentives to increase each participant’s accountability and to enhance long-term treatment compliance.

(6) **Drug Court Manager.** The Drug Court Manager (“Manager”) oversees the daily operations, including case flow, treatment planning, referrals to suitable treatment providers, and participant progress.

(7) **Drug Court Team.** The Drug Court Team (“Team”) is a collaborative multi-disciplinary treatment team which includes the Judge, Manager, Case Managers, Compliance Officers and Community Supervision Officers, representatives from the Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Defender or other defense counsel, Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, designated treatment providers, and other additional individuals or entities as required to sustain and enhance Drug Court operations. Any mention of the above-stated agencies in these policies and procedures is made in reference to the agency’s representation on the Team.

(8) **Drug Court Treatment Providers.** Drug Court Treatment Providers are public, private, and community-based treatment providers who work closely with the Team to coordinate and provide substance use treatment as well as physical and mental healthcare. This approach is an evidence-based practice designed to assist participants in avoiding criminal recidivism, reducing harm from substance use while in recovery, and treating other mental or physical illness.

(9) **Law Enforcement Officers.** Law Enforcement Officers include Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) and Department of Corrections (“DOC”) officers who are

detailed to Drug Court. Law Enforcement Officers work closely with judiciary law enforcement officers, mainly Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers. Law Enforcement Officers work closely with team members to enhance positive outcomes for each participant.

- (10) **Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”) Criminal Division.** The Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Division assigns a prosecutor to Drug Court to act as a representative on the Team. The role of the OAG, Criminal Division in Drug Court differs from its role in the traditional adjudication process. In Drug Court, all parties and counsel share the common goal of helping participants successfully comply with treatment in a community setting. The assigned prosecutor reviews new cases for legal eligibility. If a participant is arrested on a new charge, the prosecutor reviews the new case and assesses the appropriateness of the participant’s continued participation. The prosecutor is also responsible for assisting the Team’s law enforcement members with ensuring participants’ continued coordination and the appropriateness of their ongoing participation in the Program.
- (11) **Office of the Public Defender (“PDO”) or Defense Counsel.** The Office of the Public Defender or other defense counsel acts as a representative on the Team. Defense Counsel represents and advises the participant in Drug Court proceedings. Defense Counsel also seeks to find treatment solutions for the participant which minimize the participant’s exposure to incarceration, reduce the risk of recidivism, and limit the consequence of a criminal conviction.
- (12) **Participant.** A participant is an offender who has been accepted into the Program after entering a guilty plea held in abeyance.
- (13) **Potential Participant.** A potential participant is an offender who is either being assessed for eligibility or is undergoing the entrance protocol, but has not yet been accepted into the Program.
- (14) **Staffing.** Staffing is a confidential Team meeting. The initial staffing is to discuss and report on a potential participant’s eligibility and suitability. The weekly

staffing is to discuss a participant's progress and compliance.

## Section 2. Guiding Principles

(a) **Target Principles.** Drug Court engages participants in a plea held in abeyance model and a structure that is supportive of success in recovery. The Program utilizes alternative treatment tracks appropriate for individualized interventions, taking into consideration the participant's substance use, mental and physical health, and other factors which may prevent successful recovery. The Program utilizes incentives and strategic, graduated sanctions to encourage the success of participants. Drug Court makes every effort to identify all reasonably appropriate treatment options and encourages participants to continue their engagement in the treatment plan.

(b) **Key Components of Drug Court.<sup>2</sup>**

- (1) Drug Court integrates substance use treatment services with justice system case processing. The Program integrates treatment services with the criminal justice system.
- (2) Using a non-adversarial approach, the Prosecutor and Defense Counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.
- (3) Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Program. Potential participants are referred to Drug Court for immediate assessment and, if accepted, placed in treatment programs.
- (4) Drug Court provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services. Participants engage in treatment for physical health, mental health, and substance use disorders. Drug Court coordinates with treatment providers to facilitate complimentary services.

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<sup>2</sup> Guided by Nat'l Assoc. Drug Court Pro.: Drug Court Standards Comm., *Defining Drug Courts: The Key Components*, ALLRISE (1997), <https://allrise.org/publications/defining-drug-courts-the-key-components-2/>.

- (5) Abstinence is monitored by random and frequent alcohol and drug testing. A series of timely progress reports coupled with court appearances encourage compliance with treatment protocols and judicial mandates.
- (6) A coordinated strategy governs Drug Court responses to participant compliance. Positive performance results in incentives including reduced supervision, phase promotions, and the eventual successful completion of the Program. Sanctions, when needed, are imposed based on their therapeutic value.
- (7) Ongoing judicial interaction with each participant is essential. Depending on the participant's Program phase and level of compliance, participants appear before the court regularly. Participants may be required to appear before the Court more frequently.
- (8) Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of Program goals and gauge effectiveness. Drug Court uses information technology to manage and analyze data and client referral needs. Process evaluation is assessed quarterly.
- (9) Drug Court promotes training and education for effective planning, implementation, and operation. The Team and staff meet benchmarks by continuing to educate themselves through regional and national training conferences, studies, and research efforts.
- (10) Forging partnerships between the Drug Court, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Program effectiveness. The collaborative structure of Drug Court requires constant communication among the Team and other collaborative stakeholders to share information and to enhance Program effectiveness.

(c) **Target Population.** Drug Court targets non-violent adult offenders where there is a reasonable assumption that the offender's criminal activity is connected directly to the ongoing, chronic, and habitual use of substances. Generally, the Program does not accept participants who are charged with violent or domestic violence offenses. On a case-by-case basis, the Program may accept participants who would otherwise be rejected if a significant period has elapsed since the aforementioned charge was filed. Under no circumstance, however, will an individual charged with a sexual crime be admitted into the Program.

Admission is subject to limited availability and resources. If necessary, the Manager maintains a waiting list of potential participants.

(d) **Initial Assessment.** An intake interview, a full assessment of substance use disorder, criminogenic and treatment need, and bio-psychosocial and drug testing are conducted for all potential participants deemed legally eligible to enter Drug Court.

### Section 3. Administrative Provisions

(a) **Case Assignment to Drug Court Judge.** Upon receipt of a referral deemed legally eligible by the OAG Criminal Division, the case will be temporarily transferred to the designated Drug Court Judge. If the potential participant is accepted into the Program, the case will remain with the Drug Court. If the potential participant is deemed unsuitable, the case will be returned to the originally assigned Judge.

(b) **Judicial Conflict; Assignment to an Alternate Judge.** In the event of a conflict with the Drug Court Judge, the case will be assigned to an alternate Judge pursuant to the terms, conditions, rules, and handbook of Drug Court.

(1) **Progress.** The participant's progress, violations, sanctions, and incentives will be determined by the assigned alternate Judge and their team.

(2) **Monitoring.** The participant's case will be discussed and monitored at the staffing hearing overseen by the assigned alternate Judge.

(3) **Transition.** A Drug Court Case Manager will assist the assigned alternate Judge's Case Manager by ensuring a streamlined and informed transition.

### Section 4. Eligibility and Entrance Protocol

(a) **Eligibility Chart**

Eligibility	1. Legal Eligibility	A. Defense Counsel submits written request to OAG for Legal Determination.
		B. OAG submits a Referral Form to the Manager with

		OAG's determination of legal eligibility.
	<b>2. Clinical Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>C. Drug Court Staff completes intake, screening, and assessment of the potential participant.</li><li>D. The potential participant is referred to the designated treatment provider, who conducts a clinical assessment and reviews the Team's screening and assessment results.</li><li>E. If the treatment provider agrees that the potential participant is clinically eligible, the treatment provider provides a preliminary diagnosis, treatment recommendation, and level of care.</li><li>F. After receiving the treatment provider's report, a Case Manager will present a summary of findings to the Team.</li><li>G. After reviewing the legal and clinical eligibility determination and receiving recommendations from the Team, the Judge determines whether the potential participant is suitable.</li></ul>

(b) **Eligibility Process.** A potential participant must be deemed legally eligible before being assessed for clinical eligibility. A potential participant must be deemed legally and clinically eligible to be suitable for the Program.

(c) **Legal Eligibility** is a legal determination based on the nature and type of charges filed against a potential participant as well as the potential participant's criminal history. The OAG Criminal

Division makes the initial legal eligibility decision. The most significant components of eligibility are a demonstrated substantial substance use problem associated with criminal conduct and a consideration of public safety.

(1) **Referral Letter.**

To initiate a determination of legal eligibility, a potential participant's counsel must submit a written referral to the OAG Criminal Division. The written referral should be submitted after a potential participant has expressed genuine interest in entering Drug Court.

- (i) *Substance.* The written referral shall contain, at least, the following information about the potential participant: (1) name and contact information; (2) case number and/or DPS case number; (3) bail status; (4) interest in Drug Court; (5) substance use history; (6) proposed home placement; and (7) waiver or non-waiver of attorney presence during intake and screening.
- (ii) *Form.* The written referral to the OAG Criminal Division may be electronic. A copy of the referral must be attached to the referral packet that is ultimately submitted by the OAG Criminal Division to the Manager.
- (iii) *Timing.* Requests should be made as early in the criminal process as possible. Requests may not be submitted after the entry of a guilty plea in the criminal docket in the pending matter.
- (iv) *Good-Faith Belief.* Counsels requesting a legal eligibility determination understand that referrals must be made with a good-faith belief that the potential participant is eligible.
- (v) *Required Notification.* If counsel for the potential participant, at any point after submitting a request but before the participant is accepted, finds that the potential participant is no longer interested in entering Drug Court, counsel shall promptly notify the Manager. After the Manager confirms that the potential participant is no longer interested in Drug Court, the entrance protocol ceases and any files regarding the potential participant are stored and/or destroyed in compliance with Commonwealth and

federal rules. If the potential participant wishes to withdraw after being accepted, exit protocols are followed.

(2) **Determination of Legal Eligibility.** Legal eligibility is determined by OAG.

- (i) *Timing.* Upon receipt of a request for legal determination, the OAG has fourteen business days to determine legal eligibility.
- (ii) *Criteria.*
  - (A) A potential participant is not legally eligible for Drug Court if they are a violent offender currently charged with, or who has been convicted of, an offense that is punishable by a term of imprisonment exceeding one year.
  - (B) A potential participant is not legally eligible for Drug Court if they have a restitution obligation that exceeds \$5,000.
  - (C) All participants are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- (iii) *Referral.* Once a legal eligibility determination is made, the OAG Criminal Division shall submit the Referral Form to the Manager and the requesting party (i.e., potential participant and/or counsel). The Referral Form shall include the OAG Criminal Division's legal eligibility determination and contain all the information necessary to identify and contact the potential participant, as well as the potential participant's: (1) name; (2) criminal case number and/or DPS case number; (3) bail status; (4) substance use history; (5) number of bench warrants for failure to appear in court; and (6) number of felony or misdemeanor convictions. The Case Manager will make all reasonable efforts to contact the potential participant within thirty days of receiving the referral to complete intake. If intake or clinical assessment is not completed due to the participant's failure within thirty days and without good cause shown, the potential participant will be denied entry into the program.
- (iv) *Grant and Services Eligibility.* Drug Court may be a recipient of grants with conditions that may limit the

pool of participants who qualify for services funded by such grants. Participants ineligible for services funded through grants will still receive the core services offered by Drug Court funded through other means.

(d) **Clinical Eligibility.** The Drug Court staff and designated Drug Court Treatment Provider(s) determine clinical eligibility. Clinical Eligibility is separated into the following two criteria.

(1) **Criteria One.** Criteria One of clinical eligibility consists of the following preliminary matters and clinical assessments made by the Staff.

(i) *Preliminary Matters.* Upon receipt of the Referral Form, the Case Manager shall contact the potential participant's counsel to determine: (1) whether Drug Court may initiate contact with potential participant directly and (2) whether the potential participant wants counsel to be present at the Intake Interview. If the participant wants counsel to be present during the Intake Interview, the Case Manager shall include counsel.

(ii) *Intake Interview.* During the Intake Interview, the Case Manager collects demographic information, orients the potential participant to the Program requirements, and assesses whether the potential participant is genuinely interested in Drug Court. If the potential participant wishes to proceed, the potential participant must sign requisite forms, including but not limited to, the Consent for Disclosure/Release of Confidential Information Form.

(iii) *Screening.* Following the Intake Interview, the potential participant's substance use disorder is evaluated using a screening tool. To ensure the validity of the screening results, the potential participant's counsel shall not be present during the screening. Nothing from the screening process may be used against a potential participant if they are determined to be ineligible for or later terminated from Drug Court.

(iv) *Assessment.* During the initial case planning appointment, the potential participant's criminogenic risk and need for treatment are assessed. To ensure

the validity of the assessment results, the potential participant's counsel shall not be present. Nothing from the assessment process may be used against a potential participant if they are determined to be ineligible for Drug Court, or if the participant is later terminated from the Program.

- (v) *Referral Packet.* Case Managers prepare and forward a referral packet to the designated treatment provider for a review of the Drug Court staff's findings. The referral packet includes copies of the intake form, disclosure form, screening results, and assessment results. Case Managers coordinate an appointment with the treatment provider for the potential participant.
- (2) **Criteria Two.** Criteria Two of the clinical eligibility determination is performed by the designated treatment provider. To maintain accuracy of testing results, the designated treatment provider shall conduct the following tasks and assessments timely and in accordance with best practice standards.
  - (i) *Clinical Assessment.* After referral from Drug Court, the designated treatment provider shall timely interview the potential participant to evaluate a potential participant's substance use disorder and any potential co-occurring disorders. This time frame is meant to ensure the validity of assessment results.
  - (ii) *Confirmation of Screening.* After conducting the clinical assessment, the designated treatment provider shall determine the accuracy of the participant's screening results.
  - (iii) *Treatment Recommendation.* Based on the clinical information gathered, the designated Treatment Provider shall develop an individualized treatment recommendation for the potential participant.
    - (A) The treatment recommendation shall be timely submitted to the Manager.
    - (B) The Manager may contest the proposed treatment plan.
- (e) **Initial Staffing.** After determination of a participant's legal and clinical eligibility, an initial staffing is held to report the findings to the Judge.

- (1) **Summary of Findings.** The participant's assigned Case Manager shall compile the legal and clinical eligibility assessment results and submit a Summary of Findings report to the Manager, who shall review and timely submit to the Team prior to the initial staffing.
- (2) **Presentation of Summary of Findings.** At the initial staffing, the assigned Case Manager shall present the Summary of Findings to the Team.
- (3) **Suitability; Judge's Decision.** During the initial staffing, the Judge considers the Team's findings and recommendations regarding the potential participant's suitability for Drug Court. The Judge then decides whether the potential participant is suitable.
  - (i) *Timing.* Unless good cause is shown, the Judge's decision to accept or reject a potential participant is made during the initial staffing.
  - (ii) *Form.* The Judge documents the Court's decision by completing the Summary of Findings form.
  - (iii) *Next Steps.* If the Judge finds that the potential participant is suitable, the Judge shall order the participant to appear with their passport and any other travel documents at an Initial Drug Court Hearing. The passport and any other travel documents shall remain in the custody of the Drug Court Program until the participant graduates, is terminated, or is otherwise discharged from the Program. If the Judge finds that the potential participant is not suitable, the Court shall issue an Order which informs the potential participant of their denial of entry into the program, and returns the matter to the criminal docket.

(f) **Initial Drug Court Hearing.** The potential participant and their counsel must be present at the Initial Hearing. The Initial Hearing is a Change of Plea hearing. The potential participant is advised of their rights, waives said rights, and submits a guilty plea to be held in abeyance pursuant to NMI Rule of Criminal Procedure 11-1. Admission requires participants to sign and submit the Drug Court contract and Plea Held in Abeyance agreement. If necessary, the Drug Court Clerk prepares any Orders triggering case assignment to Drug Court, release from custody, exoneration of bail or property, sealing of documents and/or vacating hearings in the criminal matter for the Presiding Judge's or the assigned Judge's review and approval.

## **Section 5. Program Duration**

Participation in the Program should not exceed twenty-four months. However, at the Court's discretion, a participant may be granted extensions to remain in the Program.

## **Section 6. Program Components**

Once a potential participant is accepted, orientation is scheduled to introduce the participant to the Program's components. In addressing a participant's substance use disorder, Drug Court incorporates regular judicial interaction with substance use disorder treatment, community supervision, and case management.

### **(a) Staffing and Judicial Interaction at Review Hearings.**

- (1) **Staffing.** Prior to a Review Hearing, the Team participates in a staffing to discuss each participant's progress and compliance with Drug Court requirements. Staffings are confidential, closed-door meetings for the Team.
- (2) **Participant Progress.** During the Review Hearing, the participant interacts with the Judge, as well as other Team members, discussing progress, addressing any concerns, and sharing achievements. The Judge may award incentives or impose sanctions based on therapeutic value.
- (3) **Frequency.** Participants should refer to their Drug Court Phase or Track for Review Hearing frequency. In the beginning of the Program, Review Hearings are scheduled weekly and may be lessened or increased in frequency at the court's discretion. Typically, Review Hearing frequency is based on the participant's performance in the Program.
- (4) **Ex Parte.** The Judge may initiate, permit, or consider ex parte communications expressly authorized by law or the Judicial Code of Conduct. In this capacity, the Judge may assume a more interactive role with parties, treatment providers, law enforcement officers, and other Team members.

(b) **Treatment Plan.** The Drug Court treatment providers are responsible for creating, developing, and updating individual treatment plans for each participant.

- (1) **Formation.** Treatment plans are flexible and adjusted based on a participant's individual needs and goals. While the Team typically defers to treatment providers, the Manager reserves the right to contest and/or amend treatment recommendation.
- (2) **Individualized.** Treatment plans take into account the participant's baseline functioning, individual capabilities, substance use level, and physical, mental, and emotional needs. A participant's recovery support system, such as family members, friends, employers, and others, may also be significant to the treatment plan.
- (3) **Review.** Initial treatment needs are determined during the clinical assessment. Needs are reviewed on a weekly basis and are often adjusted during the Program. Various treatment modalities are available and Drug Court endeavors to provide a full continuum of care to participants. Both individual and group therapies are employed to treat the whole person, not just the substance use disorder. Case Managers work closely with treatment providers to determine the appropriate level of care.
- (4) **Therapeutic Adjustment.** If the treatment plan is inadequate to meet the participant's needs the Court must work to increase level of care. If no reasonable treatment options are available to address the participant's substance use, or other personal needs, or to protect the safety of others, the Court has the discretion to terminate participation after a termination hearing.
- (5) **Funding.** Treatment funding is provided by private insurance, public assistance, and Drug Court. Confidentiality is maintained by providers, except where the continuum of care principle requires that information be shared.

(c) **Alternative Tracks and Phases in Drug Court.** No one intervention is appropriately suited for participants. The most effective outcomes are achieved when treatment and supervision services are tailored to the (1) prognostic risk level and (2) criminogenic needs of the participants. Drug Court participants are placed in one of four tracks based on their prognostic risk level and criminogenic needs. If there is a need to modify a track, a request from the Case Manager and treatment provider is submitted to the Judge for approval. Tracks vary in length and phase requirements.

- (1) **Transition.** Drug Court participants are placed in a multi-phase treatment model that transitions the participant from alcohol and other drug use to successful recovery. Drug Court is designed to guide participants from recognizing of their substance use disorder to actively engaging in the therapeutic process.
- (2) **Program Length.** Individuals entering the Program should anticipate that they will be actively enrolled for at least eighteen months. Each phase of the Program has specific elements and Program criteria that must be completed prior to moving to the next phase.
- (d) **Case Management.** Drug Court's case management is consistent with All Rise's best practice standards. In this model, the Case Manager has five key functions in case management comprised of assessment, planning, linking, monitoring, and advocacy. Case Managers work in collaboration with clinicians, Team members, and other service providers for the benefit of the participant. This aids in forming treatment strategies and identifying issues currently affecting the participant's recovery.
- (e) **Community Supervision.** Community supervision is an integral component in ensuring compliance and accountability of participants.
  - (1) **Officers' Roles.** The Community Supervision Officer(s), Compliance Officer(s), and other Program law enforcement officers work together to monitor participants outside of court settings, promote public safety, hold participants accountable for their actions, acknowledge participant success, and follow evidence-based practices to maximize results. The officers work together to ensure a participant's compliance with the Program requirements and orders dictating curfews, restrictions, and community service. These Team members also: (1) conduct random drug testing; (2) conduct general searches of participants' homes and/or living spaces, belongings, and vehicles; (3) conduct random searches of participants' person; (4) identify environmental threats; (5) stay alert to impending signs of relapse; (6) report investigative findings conducted by law enforcement officers; (7) issue notice to appear for violations; (8) enforce community obligations; and, (9) actively participate in Drug Court Staffings and Hearings.

(2) **Violations.** A participant's failure to comply with Program requirements is a violation. A violation may result in sanctions or termination of a participant from Drug Court.

(f) **Testing and Accountability.** Substance use testing is considered a cornerstone of the Program. Participants are subject to a random and frequent testing system.

(1) **Reporting.** To determine whether a participant is to report for testing, the participant shall call a designated testing phoneline every day between the hours determined by the Drug Court. Upon finding they are directed to report for testing, the participant reports to an assigned location during the designated hours. All testing is observed and results are screened by a certified testing agent.

(2) **Frequency.** The Judge may order a drug test at any time, without restriction, including during a hearing. A participant's failure to appear, failure to provide an adequate specimen, or submission of a diluted sample is considered a non-negative or positive test result for Program purposes. A participant may contest the results of a drug test but, if a participant wishes to contest the results, the participant bears the cost of any additional testing and confirmation of results. If the results are negative, the Program shall bear any costs. However, if the participant admits to the use for which the sample was sent for confirmation, they will be responsible for its cost regardless of the eventual result.

(g) **Incentives and Sanctions.** The Judge determines the appropriate incentives or sanction with recommendations from the Team.

(1) **Incentives.** Incentives compel compliance and drive success in case outcomes. Incentives are intended to promote and reward compliance with treatment requirements, and to build trust between the Team and the participant. Accordingly, Drug Court uses incentives to assist the participant in achieving treatment goals. Incentives recognize, encourage, and promote positive behaviors. Incentives include tangible rewards, like gift certificates, and intangible rewards, like applause or words of affirmation.

(2) **Sanctions.** Sanctions are also used to assist the participant in achieving treatment goals. Drug Court uses graduated

sanctions to promote accountability and compliance. Sanctions may include loss of privileges, increased court appearances or testing frequency, or shock incarceration. Sanctions are imposed swiftly as needed.

- (i) *Graduated Sanctions.* Graduated sanctions are a structured and incremental response to non-compliant behavior and violations. By design, the sanction should be appropriate for the behavior, the individual circumstances, and the severity of the substance use disorder, mental health, or physical health condition of the participant. Sanctions tend to be escalated in intervention.
- (ii) *Notice.* The Judge imposes sanctions after hearing from the Team and the participant. If a violation subjects the participant to a sanction, the participant is entitled to notice, and an opportunity to be heard. In most cases, the participant's contention will be heard at the weekly hearing.
- (iii) *Time Served.* The time a participant spends incarcerated after entry into Drug Court pursuant to a sanction and not related to a new charge shall constitute time served for purposes of determining the period of incarceration at sentencing. Any time spent at a residential treatment center or under house arrest shall not constitute time served.
- (iv) *Maximum Incarceration Sanction.* A participant must not be sanctioned to consecutive or cumulative incarceration exceeding in time the maximum sentence to which the participant entered a plea in abeyance.

## Section 7. Termination from Drug Court

### (a) Types of Termination

- (1) **Self-Termination.** Participation in Drug Court is voluntary. Accordingly, a participant may self-terminate from Drug Court at any time. The Court shall set a self-termination hearing. At the self-termination hearing, the Judge shall advise the participant of their rights.

Participants who self-terminate are responsible for paying any outstanding fines and fees.

(2) **Court Termination.** As eligibility for Drug Court participation is not a right, Drug Court may terminate a participant at any time. The Court, at the request of a Team member, or on its own motion or on motion of the OAG Criminal Division, may terminate a participant from the Program for good cause after a hearing. A violation of treatment obligations may be grounds for termination. The seriousness of the treatment violation, repeated failures to comply, limitation of alternative treatment options, or other good cause may result in court termination.

(b) **Grounds for Court Termination**

(1) **New Allegation of a Felony.** The Court may terminate a participant on motion of the OAG Criminal Division, or on its own motion, if the participant is arrested and charged with a new felony or a new violent or sexual felony at any time after entry into Drug Court.

(2) **New Allegation of a Violent Misdemeanor.** The Court may terminate a participant on motion of the OAG Criminal Division, or on its own motion, if the participant is arrested and charged with a violent misdemeanor.

(3) **New Allegation of a Domestic Violence Offense.** The Court shall terminate a participant on motion of the OAG Criminal Division, or on its own motion, if the participant is arrested and charged with a domestic violence offense.

(4) **Violation of a Stay Away Order.** The Court may terminate a participant on motion of the OAG Criminal Division, or on its own motion, if the participant violates a stay away order. In the alternative, the Court may impose a period of incarceration, or other conditions, as a stipulation of further participation.

(5) **Absconding.** The Court may terminate a participant for absconding. Absconding is when the participant's whereabouts are unknown to Drug Court officers or law enforcement officers for a period exceeding twenty-four hours.

(6) **Plea Expiration.** The Court may terminate a participant if the participant's plea agreement expires.

- (7) **Other Reasons for Termination.** The Court may terminate a participant based on non-negative or positive drug tests, prior failures in the treatment plan, lack of appropriate treatment services, other reasons related to the participant's compliance with treatment obligations, or for other good cause.
- (8) **Evidentiary Standard for Termination.** The evidentiary standard for Drug Court termination shall be proof by a preponderance of evidence.

**(c) Termination Procedure.**

- (1) **Termination for Accumulation of Violations.** In the accumulation of violations-based termination, the participant will first be given a termination plan. A termination plan is an agreement between a participant and the Program that is entered into when a participant has excessive violations or commits an egregious violation.
  - (i) *Length of Time.* The duration of a termination plan will be no less than thirty days. Terms and conditions of the termination plan will be approved by the Judge. If the participant is unable to comply with the terms and conditions of the termination plan, then a termination hearing will be scheduled.
  - (ii) *Conditions.* If a termination plan is ordered, certain immediate conditions will be imposed, including, but not limited to: curfew restrictions, and increase in drug testing.
  - (iii) *Violations.* A termination hearing will be scheduled if a participant commits a violation during a termination plan. Any violation committed during a termination plan will lead to a termination hearing at the discretion of the Court within thirty days unless waived by the participant.
- (2) **Criminal Charges.** When a participant is charged with a crime while in Drug Court, a termination hearing will be scheduled and heard within thirty days unless stipulated by the parties or for good cause shown.
- (3) **Absconding.** When a participant absconds from the program, the Court may schedule a termination hearing without a termination plan.

- (4) **Plea Expiration.** When a participant's plea agreement expires, a termination hearing shall be scheduled within thirty days. The participant shall be immediately remanded to the custody of DOC pending the termination hearing.
- (5) **Choice of Counsel.** When the Court schedules a termination hearing, it shall notify the participant's counsel in their criminal matter. The participant may choose to be represented by the counsel in their criminal matter or Drug Court appointed counsel.
- (6) **Sentencing Judge Post-Termination.** The Judge shall preside over the sentencing of a former participant who has either self-terminated or has been terminated by the Court from the Program unless the former participant requests to be sentenced by the original judge in the criminal docket.

(d) **Re-Entry into Drug Court.** If a participant who has been terminated wishes to re-enter Drug Court, such re-entry requires a new suitability assessment. The Judge may, at the Judge's discretion, refuse re-entry to any participant. At the Judge's discretion and with advice from the Team, the Judge may establish conditions for re-entry. Any re-entry conditions must be clearly noted in the case file and forwarded to the participant, OAG Criminal Division, and any counsel for the participant. A Drug Court graduate is not eligible for re-entry into Drug Court.

## Section 8. Suspension from Drug Court

- (a) **Suspension for Off-island Medical Treatment.** If a participant needs immediate off-island medical treatment, confirmed by their physician, that is not available within the Commonwealth, the Court may suspend their participation in the Program. The participant must provide all relevant information pertaining to their treatment including, but not limited to, travel itinerary, place of treatment, all contact information, name of treatment facility, name of primary physician, name and contact information of escort, if any. Suspension from the Program includes:
  - (1) Sober days being reset to zero upon return;
  - (2) No change in the Program phase, unless otherwise determined by the Judge, upon recommendation by the Team;

- (3) Weekly check-ins with the Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers, during which the participant updates the Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers as to their current status and any changes pertaining to their off-island treatment; and
- (4) Submission by the participant of bi-monthly status letters from the off-island treating physician.

(b) **Suspension for Other Reasons.** The Court may suspend participation in the Program, for good cause shown at the discretion of the Judge. The Judge may set conditions upon such suspension.

### **Section 9. Abatement by Death**

(a) **Dismissal of Charges in the Case of Death.** Upon verification of the participant's death, the Court on its own or on motion by either party shall dismiss all charges.

### **Section 10. Conditional Discharge**

(a) **Conditional Discharge.** Conditional discharge may occur upon agreement of the OAG Criminal Division and PDO, and approval of the Court.

### **Section 11. Successful Completion of Drug Court**

(a) **Graduation Ceremonies.** Graduation ceremonies are held to commemorate participants who have met the graduation requirements. Before graduation, the Team begins working with the participant to fully integrate them into the community. This includes the preparation of a long-term recovery plan (what was learned, plans to avoid relapse, and future goals) and other requirements imposed by Drug Court. The goal for each participant is to have in place a relapse prevention plan, stable housing, and a steady source of income.

(b) **Graduation Requirements.** A participant must meet all of the following criteria to graduate:

- (1) Successful completion of all Program requirements and payment of all fines, fees, and/or costs;

- (2) Satisfactory completion of community service and other Program assignments;
- (3) Six consecutive months of sobriety;
- (4) Sixty consecutive days sanction-free (exceptions may be made for minor violations);
- (5) Completion of an approved community-based project;
- (6) Completion of long-term Aftercare/relapse prevention Plan;
- (7) Completion of an Exit Survey;
- (8) A positive recommendation for graduation by the Team; and
- (9) The approval of the Judge.

(c) **Substantial Completion.** The Judge, with the recommendation of the Team, may grant a successful completion of the Program without a formal graduation ceremony under the following circumstances:

- (1) A participant's terminal illness has caused their health to deteriorate so severely that continued treatment compliance is impossible and there is no likelihood of future criminal conduct.
- (2) A participant has maintained at least six months of continued sobriety, successfully fulfilled commencement requirements, and demonstrated a compelling reason for early dismissal.
- (3) A participant diagnosed with a mental illness after entry, or whose pre-existing mental illness has significantly worsened, who represents no public safety risk and no likelihood for further criminal conduct, if the mental illness precludes further treatment compliance. The participant must have successfully engaged in treatment for at least 120 non-custody days at some time prior to dismissal.

## Section 12. Drug Court Fees

Drug Court assesses and collects fees to cover court services. Services may include: screening for eligibility and other appropriate services, clinical assessment, substance use disorder education, referral and case management, and service coordination. This fee may be in addition to any

other fee, fine, or cost that the court is authorized (or required) to assess and collect (such as treatment fees, community corrections fees, fines, costs, etcetera). Any additional fees, fines, and costs are dictated by offense or status. Payment of fees, and/or restitution is an important part of a participant's treatment, but no one who is otherwise eligible should be denied participation solely based on inability to pay. Fees may be broken up into weekly or monthly payments.

Ideally the participant is expected to pay all fees in full prior to graduation. Fees may be broken down into monetary benchmarks a participant must achieve prior to promotion from one phase to another, or may be assessed monthly. Fees are paid at the Judiciary Cashier's Office.

Restitution and prior court fines associated with the criminal case that brought the participant into the Program must be paid prior to graduation. The Judge may convert the remaining restitution to a civil judgment provided that the participant has paid a substantial amount of the restitution. The restitution has been substantially paid if the participant has paid at least 60% of the original restitution amount.

If a participant is terminated from the Program, all outstanding fees must still be paid.

### **Section 13. Confidentiality**

Federal and Commonwealth laws of confidentiality govern the Drug Court and its treatment programs. Disclosure of information received in the course of treatment is strictly prohibited unless a court order "for good cause" is issued. Participants must authorize the disclosure of information regarding their diagnosis, attendance, scope of treatment, treatment progress, quality of participation, and termination or completion of treatment. Participant's consent will be documented in a consent form and shall include authorization to conduct research of treatment success, costs, and recidivism rates for participants. All parties and counsel attending the staffing are obligated to sign and abide by a confidentiality form. At the discretion of the Judge, anyone outside of the Program can attend Drug Court hearings but attendees are obligated to sign and abide by a confidentiality form.

### **Section 14. Forms**

Drug Court is authorized to prepare applicable forms as necessary. Forms must be approved by the Presiding Judge or designee. Forms are available on the Judiciary's website at [www.nmjudiciary.gov](http://www.nmjudiciary.gov).