

A DIFFERENT KIND OF COURT



Collaborative and Restorative Justice

When one thinks about the courts and justice, visions of a jury and a judge sentencing a defendant to jail or prison materialize. But that is not always the case. In certain situations, offenders may be eligible to participate in what are called "collaborative" or "restorative" justice courts.

Collaborative justice courts are also known as "problem-solving courts" because they promote accountability to the community by combining judicial supervision with treatment and other rehabilitation services that are rigorously monitored and focused on recovery. Restorative justice courts also promote accountability by requiring offenders to make restitution to the community through work assignments in the local area where the crime was committed. Funding for these programs comes from a variety of federal, state, and local sources.

"Collaborative justice courts, focusing on less serious drug offenses, mental health, domestic violence, and juvenile matters, have been remarkably successful at turning around lives . . . They change the offender for the better . . ."

—Ronald M. George, Chief Justice, California State Supreme Court

SAN DIEGO HAS NUMEROUS COLLABORATIVE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COURT PROGRAMS

Adult Drug Court:

Adult Drug Court operates in each of the four divisions of the Superior Court in San Diego County, and is a collaboration between the court and the County's Health and Human Services Agency, District Attorney, Public Defender, law enforcement, and the treatment community. This minimum 18-month program includes intensive judicial supervision, drug treatment counseling, educational and vocational training opportunities, frequent random drug testing, and the use of court-imposed sanctions and incentives. Eligible offenders are those charged with non-violent felony cases where the underlying cause of the criminality is substance abuse.



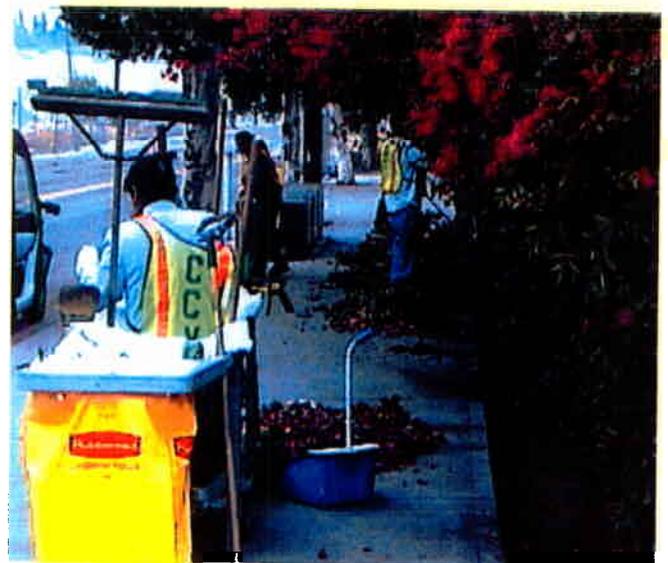
Dependency Court Recovery Program:

Parents entering the dependency system (i.e., whose children have been removed from the home), and who require alcohol and drug treatment services, receive a timely and thorough alcohol and drug assessment, focused treatment case management, and follow up. This program, created in the late 1990s, is collaboration between the court and the County's Health and Human Services Agency, District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, County Counsel, and the treatment community. By providing targeted and effective alcohol and drug treatment services, the opportunity for recovery, family reunification and improved long-term outcomes is maximized.

For parents who are not able to meet court-ordered treatment goals, a specialized Dependency Drug Court provides more intensive substance abuse treatment and monitoring, random drug testing and increased judicial oversight in a therapeutic court setting. The program provides another tool for alcohol and drug-abusing parents who want to live a drug-free life to address their substance abuse problem, improve their ability to parent, and reunify with their children.

Downtown Community Court:

The Downtown Community Court Program was developed as a collaboration between the Downtown San Diego Partnership and justice system agencies to address misdemeanor and infraction quality-of-life crimes (e.g., disturbing the peace and graffiti) occurring in the downtown San Diego area. The purpose of the program is to reduce the number of quality-of-life crimes committed in the designated area by requiring offenders to perform work service and make restitution to the downtown community, while offering them dismissal of their cases after successful completion of probation terms.



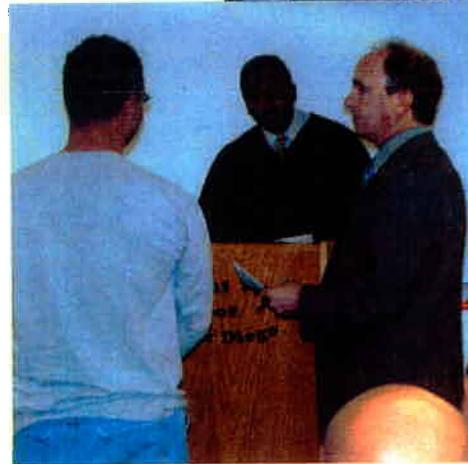


Domestic Violence Review Court:

Misdemeanor Domestic Violence offenders are sentenced to attend the mandatory 52-week Domestic Violence Recovery Program and are scheduled for periodic progress review hearings before a Judge on this dedicated calendar in each of the four court divisions.

Homeless Court:

Created by the Public Defender's Office in 1989 as the first Homeless Court in the nation, San Diego's program is aimed at a segment of the population that typically has no means for making reparations to the criminal justice system for misdemeanor criminal conduct. Homeless Court offers individuals an opportunity to resolve their outstanding criminal cases by participating in treatment programs rather than paying fines and/or serving time in jail. San Diego's Homeless Court program is convened once each month at either St. Vincent de Paul Village or Veterans' Village of San Diego. Homeless Court is also provided in the North County. The program is convened once a month at either Brother Benno's Center in Oceanside or the Vietnam Veterans' facility in Escondido.



Juvenile Delinquency Drug Court:

The Juvenile Delinquency Drug Court program is designed to assist juveniles who have repeatedly been non-compliant in drug treatment, and who therefore need increased monitoring and supervision by the court. The Juvenile Drug Court is a collaborative program of the court, the County's Health and Human Services Agency, Probation, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, law enforcement, and the treatment community. Only non-violent juvenile offenders who are not in custody and who also have drug treatment as a condition of probation are eligible.

Mid-City Community Court:

Created by the San Diego City Attorney's Office in 2003, the Mid-City Community Court focuses on misdemeanor quality-of-life crimes, including prostitution, marijuana possession, disturbing the peace, and graffiti in the Mid-City area of San Diego. Rather than having their criminal complaints filed with the court by the City Attorney, eligible offenders are sanctioned by a panel which includes community members. Offenders are ordered to perform community work service, attend rehabilitative and educational programs, and pay fines and fees.

Operation Stand Down Court:

This is an annual event sponsored by the Veterans' Village of San Diego. In addition to a resource fair for homeless veterans, judges hold a court session at the event venue to adjudicate criminal infractions and minor misdemeanors cases for veterans who have outstanding cases. This event gives veterans an opportunity to dispose of minor offense citations and warrants on adjudicated cases without the fear of going to jail.



Proposition 36 Review Court:

Beginning in 2001 after the statewide passage of Proposition 36, eligible misdemeanor and felony offenders who are convicted of Penal Code 1210 drug offenses are placed on formal probation supervision and receive treatment and testing services. They are also scheduled for periodic review hearings before a judicial officer on this dedicated calendar in each of the four court divisions.

Questions About Collaborative Courts?

If you would like more information on any of the Collaborative Courts, please call the Public Affairs Office at (619) 531-4484.