



Other DWI Court Programs in Texas

Denton County DWI Court

The Denton County DWI Court began in October 2005. 25 offenders have been referred to the court, 16 have been accepted into the program, and 2 have successfully completed the program. 2 offenders were discharged. One for absconding and the other was an inappropriate placement. Judge Richard Podgorski with County Criminal Court #5 oversees the program.

Offenders admitted into the program have pled guilty and have multiple previous DWI convictions. Referrals come from community supervision officers (CSO), prosecutors, or defense attorneys. Placements in the program are made by court order. The program typically 12 months and has 3 stages. The stages differ by the number of court appearances, visits with CSOs, types of treatment, educational programs, or additional conditions that offenders are required to complete. Every violation results in sanction and accomplishments and completions are rewarded with praise in court, letters of congratulations, etc. Offenders that are unsuccessfully discharged may be referred to a more appropriate program or have their probation revoked.

El Paso County DWI Drug Court Intervention and Treatment Program

The El Paso County DWI Drug Court Intervention and Treatment Program became operational on November 3, 2004. Ninety-one (91) offenders have been enrolled and 32 have successfully completed the program. The program is overseen by Judge Robert Anchondo with the County Criminal Court-at-Law #2.

El Paso's court is a 12 month program with four phases serving adults with DWI offenses. Phases differ by the amount of reporting to court and CSO required and the treatment that must be completed, which includes cognitive classes. El Paso requires their offenders to maintain employment, get a GED, or attend school and abide by a curfew. They include offenders' families as much as possible and even include employers with the offenders' permission. Their program is also bilingual to address the needs of their community. Offenders who repeatedly have substance abuse violations will spend time in jail. Offenders that are doing well may have their community service restitution decreased or experience decreases in their fees if required to pay a large sum.

El Paso County says their program makes a difference because of the intensity and frequency of the program.

Fort Bend County DWI Court

The Fort Bend County DWI Court began February 1, 2006. 50 offenders had been accepted into the program. 20 offenders had successfully completed. Judge Sandy Bielstein with County Court-at-Law #4 oversees the program. The DWI Court follows the drug court model in relation to their use of sanctions and incentives. Most offenders referred to the program have been arrested and pled guilty to a second DWI offense. Participation in DWI Court is a condition of probation, usually an initial condition. Most offenders remain in the program for at least 12 months.

What Fort Bend County has to say about their DWI Court:

The DWI Court model is surprisingly very successful, when compared to other therapeutic court models. The characteristics of the DWI offender differ greatly from typical drug court participants. These offenders are generally more motivated and committed to change. Of the 50 participants admitted into the program, the court has not unsuccessfully discharged any participant and there have been no arrests among these participants or graduates since the program started.

Tarrant County Felony Alcohol Intervention Program

The **Tarrant County Felony Alcohol Intervention Program** started accepting offenders into their program in December 2006. 28 people have been accepted into the program, 26 remain as one was revoked for a new offense and another for continued use of illicit drugs. They have a two-year program so it is too early for offenders to have successfully completed. Judge Sharen Wilson of Criminal District Court #1 carries the DWI Court docket.

Tarrant County's program has 5 phases and it serves felon DWI repeat offenders. Over the duration of the program, the offender undergoes a continuum of treatment and varying levels of supervision, including use of a curfew during the first month, SCRAM, and random urinalysis testing. Upon advancement to the next phase, the offender receives a waiver of CSR hours.

Tarrant County wanted to add that:

We are working closely with MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), the TCU (Texas Christian University) research department, Resource Recovery for treatment funding, as well as other community organizations in our endeavor to make this a successful program. We have all 10 components of an effective DWI court according to the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) standards.

Williamson County DWI/Drug Court

The Williamson County DWI/Drug Court became operational on November 13, 2007. 41 offenders have been admitted into the year-long program. As the program has been in operation less than one year, there are no successful completions to report just yet. Judge Tim Wright with County Court-at-Law #2 oversees the DWI/drug court.

Williamson County's court has three phases. Offenders obey a curfew for two of the phases, attend Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous meetings, and visit their probation officer and the court in varying amounts depending on phase and compliance with the program. All offenders have ignition interlock devices installed in their cars and if the offender does not have a vehicle than they must have a ViCap unit installed in their home.

Additional information shared by Williamson County:

During each court session, if a participant is compliant they receive an incentive. Upon graduation of phases, the participant receives a certificate. When advancing to Phase III, offenders receive a donation from the community (i.e. dinner at Chick-fil-A, movie passes, etc.) in addition to the certificate. If an offender has been non-compliant, the sanction may include CSR, completing a thinking report to be read in front of the court, or spending a night, a weekend, or more time in a jail depending on the severity of non-compliant behavior.