

# **Liberty County DUI Court**

## **Overview:**

The Liberty County DUI Court began operation in February 2011 and is a 24-month, intensive outpatient chemical dependency treatment program for non-violent criminal offenders that is supervised by the State Court of Liberty County and presided over by the Honorable Leon M. Braun, Jr.. The purpose of the program is to improve community safety and reduce DUI recidivism by providing multiple DUI offenders the opportunity to change their lives using enhanced judicial accountability, treatment and increased supervision.

The goal of the program is to treat addicted offenders in an effective manner so that recidivism is reduced and offenders can become productive members of society. The safety of the public is of paramount concern and only non-violent offenders are accepted into the program.

DUI Courts have been shown to reduce recidivism by DUI offenders. A study by the Judicial Council of Georgia found that 12 months after graduation from DUI Court, participants are almost three (3) times less likely to have a new DUI arrest. At 24 months of participation, participants are four (4) times less likely to have a new DUI arrest. The end result is a greater likelihood that offenders will remain drug-free while avoiding further contacts with the Criminal Justice system and will become productive members of society.

## **Program Components:**

The Program provides a comprehensive course of treatment that integrates group counseling, individual counseling, and involvement in community-based recovery programs, random drug screens, medical monitoring, and case management services. The Program has access to a continuum of treatment services ranging from residential to aftercare. Collateral services are provided to address needs such as stable housing and family counseling. Offenders are placed in an environment where they undergo treatment and counseling, submit to frequent and random drug testing, make regular appearances before the judge and are monitored closely for program compliance. Graduated sanctions, including jail time, are imposed for noncompliance. Conversely, incentives are applied for continual compliance. Mandatory leisure activities are designed to help participants learn sober leisure skills to occupy the time previously spent in illicit activities.

To graduate from the Program, participants must have a GED or high school diploma, be gainfully employed, perform 80 hours of community service, pay all court fees and maintain at least 12 months of continuous sobriety.

Research continues to show that Drug and DUI Courts work better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone. A Michigan Study shows that DUI Court graduates are three times less likely to be rearrested for any criminal offense, and up to 19 times less likely for impaired driving. In a Georgia Study of 3 DUI Courts, all DUI Court participants had a recidivism rate of 15%, whether or not they graduated or were terminated, versus a recidivism rate of up to 35% for those not in DUI court. (NHTSA/Georgia Study) The three Georgia DUI Courts prevented between 47 and 112 more repeat DWI arrests. (NHTSA/Georgia Study)

## **Who is Eligible:**

Eligible Participants are those who are charged with their 2<sup>nd</sup> DUI within 5 years or their 3<sup>rd</sup> or more DUI in their life. Participants must also not have any prior violent convictions, be at least 17 years old, a non-illegal alien and live within Bryan, Chatham, Liberty or Long Counties at time of arrest.

In addition, those participants currently on probation must test positive for alcohol/drugs or receive a new charge involving alcohol/drugs while on probation.

## **Disqualifying characteristics may include:**

- 1) Conviction of a violent criminal felony or certain sexual offenses as identified by federal guidelines
- 2) Severe and/or untreated mental/physical health problems which would impede participation in program.
- 3) Illegal alien status
- 4) Residing outside Bryan, Chatham, Liberty or Long Counties
- 5) Pending felony charges in this or any other jurisdiction.

## **Funding:**

DUI Courts are not cheap to operate. While participants must pay fees to support their treatment costs, operations must be funded by fund raising, local government appropriations and state grant funding. Currently, Liberty County is assisted in funding the court with grants provided by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

## **DUI Court Team:**

<b>Judge:</b>	Leon M. Braun, Jr.	
<b>Judicial Assistant:</b>	Kelly Little	(912) 876-7101
<b>Coordinator:</b>	Fran Arnsdorff	(912) 665-1795
<b>Solicitor:</b>	Jeffery Osteen	(912) 876-7228
<b>Law Enforcement:</b>	Cpt. David Edwards	(912) 408-3106
<b>Public Defender Contact:</b>	John Ely	(912)876-7584
<b>Court Clerk:</b>	Katina Dearmon	(912) 876-7338
<b>Treatment Director:</b>	Kascey Ifill	(912) 877-3600