

## DIVERSION STAFF

The Diversion Treatment Program is run by Andrée Mattix, M.Ed., L.P.C., L.M.F.T., Director of Social Services for the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office. Seven masters-level counselors and social workers assist Ms. Mattix in providing individual and group counseling to program participants. For more information, please contact us at:

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**BJA** BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE



Criminal Justice Section



OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

# Adult Diversion Post Plea Program



for Defendants in Criminal District Court

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To participate in the Post Plea Diversion Program, individuals must first enter a plea of guilty to the charges brought by the state of Louisiana. Sentencing for these charges will be deferred. The case will remain on the court docket pending the completion of the Diversion program. Sentencing will not move forward unless the participant fails to comply with and/or complete the program or voluntarily withdraws.

All new criminal cases are screened by the District Attorney's Office to determine diversion eligibility. During the screening process, a defendant's file is reviewed, including a review of his/her criminal record, to determine if s/he qualifies for the program.

The diversion program promotes public safety in two important ways. First, it allows motivated individuals to receive meaningful rehabilitation without the negative collateral consequences of a criminal sentence, which reduces recidivism and increases the likelihood that participants become more productive members of our community. Second, the cases of the participants do not drain the limited resources of the criminal justice system. As such, the program assists the District Attorney's office in focusing its prosecutorial resources on violent criminals.

In addition, due to the fact that participants are all facing felony charges, this program allows highly motivated individuals an opportunity to potentially avoid the negative consequences of felony convictions, such as inability to obtain a professional license, ineligibility for public housing or student financial aid, and difficulty obtaining employment.

**Upon successful completion of the program, a participant may be allowed to withdraw their guilty plea and the case may be dismissed. This is at the discretion of the Orleans Parish District Attorney.**

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The Diversion Post Plea Program will take approximately 24 months to complete and may include drug testing, counseling, substance abuse treatment, group therapy, education, and soft skills job training. Participants must agree to keep all appointments and accept all treatment recommended by the diversion counselor.

**Drug Testing** Participants must remain drug and alcohol free; they must also submit to drug testing as directed by the diversion counselor and treatment provider.

**Drug Treatment** All participants are assessed for substance use/dependence. The results of the assessment will determine the level of care recommended.

**Employment/Education** Participants must maintain gainful, verifiable employment and /or participate in an educational/ vocational training program.

### **Sanctions**

If a participant fails to comply with the program requirements, misses appointments, or tests positive for a prohibited substance, the diversion counselor may immediately order one or more of the following:

- Increase reporting to diversion counselor
- Increased drug testing
- Implement/alter a curfew
- Community service hours
- Alter treatment schedule
- Extend program length
- Return case for sentencing

**Fees** In order to participate in the Adult Diversion Post Plea Program, a \$200.00 program fee must be paid to the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office. In addition, participants are responsible for the cost of their drug testing.