

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

Essex Vicinage

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Trial Court Administrator



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Essex Vicinage Celebrates Accomplishments of Adult Drug Court Graduates

Newark – New Jersey Superior Court Essex Vicinage will celebrate the graduation of 18 participants from its Drug Court program on Thursday, Dec. 3 at 2 p.m. at the J. Harry Smith Lecture Hall on the Essex County College campus, 303 University Ave., Newark.

Assignment Judge Patricia K. Costello, Judge Ramona A. Santiago, who presides over the Essex Drug Court, Essex County Prosecutor Paula Dow, and Assistant Deputy Public Defender Elaine Wladyga will address the graduates, family and friends. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Ronald Christian, pastor of the Christian Love Baptist Church in Irvington.

Drug court is a highly specialized team process with a judge, prosecutor, defense attorneys, probation staff and treatment providers working together. Participants appear regularly before a Superior Court judge and are required to meet the goals of drug court by undergoing frequent drug testing, obtaining jobs, paying their fines and supporting their families. The clients are closely supervised by specially trained probation officers.

Drug court targets non-violent offenders with substance abuse issues. Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of all four phases. In order to graduate, participants not only must successfully complete all treatment requirements, remain sober, and demonstrate a strong sobriety support system, but they also must be employed full-time and have no pending criminal charges or active bench warrants.

Five of this year's graduating drug court participants will be receiving a well-earned early discharge because they have demonstrated extraordinary effort and remarkable success in their rehabilitation. Permitting superior performing drug court participants to graduate early will inspire their peers to work harder on their own recovery and to achieve similar success. Early graduations also allow Drug Court probation officers to supervise a greater number of participants.

With close to 400 active cases, the Essex Vicinage Drug Court program has grown into one of the largest Drug Courts in the state, enrolling between 10 and 12 defendants each month. For more information regarding the Essex Vicinage Drug Court program or the graduation, contact Criminal Division Manager Sonya Noyes at (973) 693-5937.

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