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**To: Assignment Judges  
Trial Court Administrators** **DIRECTIVE # 16-18**

**From: Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.** *GAG  
10/16/18  
SOB*

**Subject: Drug Court – Voluntary Application Case Flow Policy and Backlog Standard**

**Date: October 16, 2018**

This directive promulgates the attached voluntary application case flow policy and backlog standards for the New Jersey Adult Drug Court program, as approved by the Judicial Council.

To assist in reducing the overall criminal backlog and to expedite the processing of drug court cases, the Drug Court Advisory Committee developed case processing standards and an accompanying flow chart. This policy establishes a time standard of 45 days from the filing of the application to entry of the guilty plea. Applications not determined within 45 days after the date that the application was filed will be in backlog status and reflected in a drug court backlog report. The case flow policy also creates interim deadlines for the clinical evaluation; the state's response to the application, including any objection; any necessary hearings; and the plea.

Questions regarding this directive may be directed to Donna Plaza, Statewide Drug Court Manager, via email at [Donna.Plaza@njcourts.gov](mailto:Donna.Plaza@njcourts.gov) or by telephone at 609-815-2900, ext. 55316.

Attachments (Policy and flow chart)

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner  
Criminal Presiding Judges  
Steven D. Bonville, Chief of Staff  
AOC Directors and Assistant Directors  
Melaney S. Payne, Special Assistant  
Ann Marie Fleury, Special Assistant  
Jessica Lewis Kelly, Special Assistant  
Criminal Division Managers and Assistants  
Probation Division Managers and Assistants  
Donna Plaza, Statewide Drug Court Manager  
Marcia Matthews, Assistant Drug Court Manager

## **ADULT DRUG COURT VOLUNTARY APPLICATION CASE FLOW POLICY AND BACKLOG STANDARD**

### **I. Introduction**

To address and reduce the backlog of Drug Court cases, the Drug Court Advisory Committee developed a flow chart for voluntary cases setting as a standard that the average case should take no more than 45 calendar days from application to plea.

### **II. Voluntary Drug Court Application**

The New Jersey statute (N.J.S.A. 2C:35:14) defines application to drug court as a motion from the Defense. The State may object to the motion, in which case the Defense may respond, with the judge then making the final decision on acceptance or denial.

### **III. Policy**

Once an application is filed, the Criminal Division will do a cursory statutory review of the case. On day one, if there is no statutory bar, the case should immediately be scheduled for a clinical evaluation. If there is a statutory bar, the clinical evaluation is not automatically scheduled at this time and the State can prepare its response to the application.

By day ten, if the State objects, the written objection should be submitted to the Defense and the criminal division.

Where there is no statutory bar, the clinical evaluation should be completed and provided to the parties and the court within 21 days. If there is no objection from the State and the defendant is clinically eligible, a plea should be scheduled for the next available court date. For any out-of-county charges, the Defense should complete a consolidation order pursuant to Directive #2-18 and Rule 3:25A on consolidated dispositions within ten days of the clinical acceptance and a plea should be scheduled for the next available court date.

Where the State objects or the defendant is clinically ineligible, and the defendant wishes to be heard, a written response should be submitted by day 25.

By day 30, the motion (application) should be heard. If the judge grants the defendant's motion, the defendant shall plead into drug court the same day. If the judge denies the motion, the case goes back on the trial team calendar.

Any case where more than 45 days has passed from date of the motion will be considered to be in drug court backlog and a report will be generated reflecting that.

# VOLUNTARY APPLICATION - DRUG COURT FLOW CHART

