

**REENTRY COURT
PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**19th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

(Revised 1/31/2024)

WHAT IS THE 19th REENTRY COURT PROGRAM?

The Reentry Court Program is a specialty court program given the responsibility to handle cases involving non-violent and some violent but non-sex offenders through a supervision and treatment program. These programs include frequent judicial status reviews, intensive probation supervision, drug counseling, treatment, educational opportunities, employment assistance, case management, and the use of sanctions and incentives.

The Reentry Court is a multi-faceted court based program that combines the strength of the correctional system, law enforcement, the prosecutorial branch, and the judicial branch with the stakeholders in mental health, substance abuse treatment, education, and workforce development in order to reverse the disturbing trend of high incarceration rates with low rates of behavioral change.

The incarceration phase (pre-release) of the Reentry Court Program is conducted at Angola, the Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP.) During the incarceration phase, the participants are mentored by Angola inmates serving life sentences. These are amazing, life-giving individuals whose goal is to allow candidates to benefit from their mistakes – to avoid their outcome. The mentors have themselves become certified in various areas of vocations. Areas addressed are basic life skills, job skills, Pre-GED and GED instruction, faith-based reentry, and substance abuse treatment.

When the pre-release phase has been completed, the participant may petition the Court for acceptance into the Reentry Court, which continues and builds upon the participant's work and progress made while at Angola. The goal of the Reentry Court Program is to provide the participant with the resources and skills necessary to successfully re-enter society.

The philosophy of the program is that through learning new behaviors, using the resources of treatment, family, community and friends, and also structuring a suitable recovery environment, many of the participants will be capable of living a crime-free lifestyle. The Reentry Court Program addresses the offender's need for treatment, support, and monitoring in a highly structured system that emphasizes accountability.

This system involves the treatment program, Case Management Services, the Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, Probation and Parole, and other community resources as needed. Returning Citizens are required to participate in regular treatment sessions, frequent urine drug screening, and recurrent court appearances to ensure they comply with the requirements of the program. Other concerns such as emotional problems, vocational needs, educational deficits, etc., are addressed by the appropriate agencies.

The treatment philosophy used involves the utilization of intensive day treatment, family therapy, self-help programs of AA/NA/CA/Celebrate Recovery, and case management in a structured and disciplined environment. When necessary, referrals can be made to detoxification programs, inpatient treatment and/or residential treatment settings.

This handbook will provide you with information about the Reentry Court program and what is expected of you as a program participant. We encourage you to share this information with your attorney, family, friends, employer, or anyone else that is impacted by your participation in this program. We look forward to working with you as you begin the process of long-term recovery and integration back into the community.

REENTRY COURT STAFF

The Reentry Court staff works closely with the Probation Officers, Judges, and other agencies to stay informed about the client's status.

The presiding Judge will make all decisions regarding participation in the Reentry Court Program with input from the team. The presiding Judge is Judge Fred T. Crifasi.

The Reentry Court Team (RECT) consists of the following members:

- Judge
- Program Coordinator/Case Manager
- Social Worker
- Probation Officers
- Prosecutor
- Public Defender
- Minute Clerk

Contact Information

Hon. Fred T. Crifasi: Reentry Court Judge (225) 389-4722; FCrifasi@19thjdc.org

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PHASES OF REENTRY COURT

The probation portion of Reentry Court is divided into four phases. A participant must successfully complete each phase before transitioning to the next phase. Each phase has a key concept or focus.

Upon completion of the incarcerated portion of the programming, a participant will return to probation and participate in additional programming and treatment. An overview of the four (4) phases follows on the next pages.

19TH JDC REENTRY COURT PROGRAM OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

Phase I: ~ 4-6 months* (Homecoming)

Requirements:

1. Weekly random drug screens and as instructed
2. Weekly court attendance and as instructed
3. Weekly contact with Probation Officer (PO) and as instructed; location/manner at the discretion of the PO
4. Weekly contact with mentor
5. Working/ seeking work while performing community service (min. 30 hrs/wk)
6. Maintain curfew from 10 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. every day
7. Compliant with special conditions of probation

Phase II: ~ 4-6 months* (Settling In)

Requirements:

1. Min. of 2 random drug screens per month
2. Court attendance every other week and as instructed
3. Weekly contact with Probation Officer (PO) and as instructed; location/manner at the discretion of the PO
4. Weekly contact with mentor
5. Working/ seeking work while performing community service (min. 30 hrs/wk)
6. Maintain curfew from 10 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. every day (Sun. – Thurs.) and 12:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m. (Fri. – Sat.)
7. Compliant with special conditions of probation

Phase III: ~ 6 - 9 months* (Living on Your Own)

Requirements:

1. Min. of 2 random drug screens per month

2. Monthly court attendance and as instructed
3. Weekly contact with Probation Officer (PO) and as instructed; location/manner at the discretion of the PO
4. Contact with mentor
5. Working/ seeking work while performing community service (min. 30 hrs/wk)
6. Maintain curfew from 10 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. every day (Sun. – Thurs.);
No curfew Fri.- Sat.
7. Compliant with special conditions of probation

Phase IV: 12 months** (Maintaining)

Requirements:

1. Random drug screens
2. Quarterly court attendance and as instructed
3. Weekly contact with Probation Officer (PO) and as instructed; location/manner at the discretion of the PO
4. No curfew
5. Working/ seeking work while performing community service (min. 30 hrs/wk)
6. Compliant with special conditions of probation

** Probationer may not advance to the next phase if he/she has had a violation in the past 30 days.*

***If probationer successfully completes all 4 Phases, has completed all special conditions of probation and has not had any violations in the past 3 months, he/she may petition the Court to terminate probation satisfactorily.*

REENTRY COURT HEARINGS

As a participant, you will be required to appear in court on a regular basis. Your case manager will complete a status report for each of your appearances and will provide the Court with current information on how you are doing in the Program. If sanctions are necessary, they are addressed in court.

In Phase I you will attend court weekly; in Phase II you will attend court every other week; in Phase III you will attend monthly and in Phase IV you will attend quarterly. If you are arrested, your detention in jail will be, at a minimum, until you can appear before the court. Once you appear in court you may face a further sanction and/or termination from the program. If you surrender to the court, your time in jail may be greatly reduced. If you have questions about your court appearances you may contact your case manager.

DO NOT ARRIVE LATE TO YOUR STATUS HEARINGS!

Remember that a Status Hearing is a COURT APPEARANCE! Proper attire is required. No shorts, cutoffs, bare midriffs, halter-tops, sagging pants, hats, bandanas or other disrespectful/disruptive clothing will be allowed. Cell phones are to be turned off or they will be confiscated by the bailiff.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Before your court hearing, the judge will be given a progress report that will also be presented to the Reentry Court Team (REC Team). The progress report will discuss your drug testing results, attendance, participation, and cooperation in the treatment program, employment, and your participation in other requirements. The Judge may ask questions about your progress and discuss any problems you may be having. If your progress report shows that you are not doing well, the Judge will discuss this with you and determine an appropriate response, which could include a sanction. Responses can vary based on the individual and may include a revision in your current treatment plan, increased court attendance, community service hours, and/or other options as deemed appropriate by the Judge.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions are given for non-compliant behavior. Common sanctions may include essays, community service work, jail stays, increased drug screens, or termination.

The program is designed to work with people who have a problem and are honest about their desire to do something different. Sanctions are imposed to help clients get back on track when they slip up and fail to meet the program expectations. Discharge from the program is only a last resort for people who clearly cannot or will not comply with the structure of the Reentry Court Program.

It is important that you be honest if you have made a mistake or broken a rule. Dishonesty on a client's part will result in increase in the intensity of sanctions imposed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal confidentiality laws protect any person who is receiving treatment for a substance abuse problem. To participate in this program, you must agree to waive some of your rights to confidentiality. Specifically, you will be asked to sign a release so that your treatment provider can confer with the Reentry Court Team (RCT).

Also, the Reentry Court Team (RCT) will need a release to give the Court information it gets from the treatment provider. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WAIVE THESE RIGHTS.** HOWEVER, if you choose not to do so you will not be allowed to participate in this program.

Confidentiality is also essential in group therapy.

Anything that is discussed in group must remain within the confines of group. No information pertaining to any client should be discussed outside of group, unless you have that client's WRITTEN permission to talk about it.

MEETINGS

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN ALL TREATMENT MEETINGS REQUIRED. You are also required to present verification of AA/NA/CA/CR attendance as required. Regular attendance will be seen as a measure of your recovery. Meeting lists are provided to you at intake.

You are required to fill out a meeting verification form for each meeting that you attend. If you fail to fill out your form completely, it will not be accepted. **IF YOU ARE CAUGHT FORGING** your meeting verification forms, sanctions will be severe if you are allowed to stay in the Reentry Court Program. Keep in mind that some of the staff members are very familiar with the recovery community and will immediately recognize most attempts at deception around meeting attendance.

Meeting verification forms are turned in to your case manager when you attend court. Remember, this is the deadline; meeting verification forms can always be turned in early. Meeting verification forms are only turned in on the weeks that you have court.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotic Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, and Celebrate Recovery are NOT affiliated with Reentry Court, the treatment clinics, probation or other entities. They are support groups for people that meet regularly in the community to help each other stay clean and sober.

Do not let yourself fall behind on meeting attendance. It is much more difficult to catch up than it is to stay current. Falling behind on your meetings can also cause you to stay in a phase longer than normal.

DRUG SCREENS

If you are going to be positive for a screen, tell us up front, before you give the urine specimen. We can deal with a relapse a lot differently if you are honest about it. If you have a positive screen and you have not told Reentry Court Staff about it, you will receive sanctions for dishonesty in addition to whatever the treatment team recommends.

You are required to submit to random urine screens. The cost for urine drug screens is included in your \$40 program fee.

Reentry Court participants will receive notifications on the phone number and email provided by the participant. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that his/her contact information is correct and updated. It is also the participants responsibility to make sure that his/her phone is charged and in working order. If there is a problem with the participant's phone or email, it is the participant's responsibility to call the case manager or probation officer to determine if it's their day for a random drug screen. You must screen on the day of notification between the hours of **8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** You are not required to wait for the results. A positive screen will be sanctioned weekly. You are responsible to give yourselves enough time to make it to screening if required on that day.

If you have not gotten to the screening site by the time screening stops, you will receive a stall (presumptive positive) for that screen. If you have not produced a specimen within 30 minutes, you will not be allowed to continue trying and will receive a presumptive positive for that screen.

Intentional adulteration of a screen (trying to cover up/change results) will be dealt with as any other dishonesty. This can be a reason for discharge from the Program and scheduling of a probation revocation hearing.

If you are found to be drinking or continuing to use drugs, you must agree to follow through with a referral to a detox, inpatient or any other clinical recommendation by the treatment staff.

MEDICATION

You are responsible for informing your probation officer, the lab, the treatment clinic and the Reentry Court Case Manager of all prescription medications you are taking. You are also responsible for providing documentation and notifying staff if there are any changes to the prescriptions. **Use of mood-altering medications (without prescription and/or without court approval) can exclude a person from participation in the program.**

You are required to get staff approval **before** taking ANY over the counter medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, nutritional aids, or similar products. You will only be allowed to take only products that are non-addictive and do not contain alcohol. Failure to follow this policy can result in a positive or abnormal urine drug screen or breath test, and sanctions may be requested based on results. This may also change your verified clean date, causing you to stay in Reentry Court longer.

EMPLOYMENT

All participants are required to be employed in an acceptable, full time job or educational program. A job must be consistent with all aspects of the individual's recovery, or the job must be changed. Final determination of "acceptable job" rests with the Reentry Court Team. The only exception to employment is documented, verifiable disability that prevents employment.

To be acceptable for purposes of Reentry Court in most cases, a job must meet all of the following criteria:

- Provide regular work of at least 30 hours a week
- Result in a regular paycheck
- Able to be confirmed, both hours and paycheck, by the case manager
- Be compatible with Reentry court obligations
- Be compatible with recovery

Various jobs are never acceptable, including but not limited to:

- Job requiring lengthy or regular absences from the south Louisiana area (such as over the road truck drivers)
- Jobs which require frequent travel out of state
- Jobs which require constant contact with alcoholic beverages, such as bartenders and wait staff
- Jobs which involve illegal activity or association with people who are involved in illegal activity.

Other jobs may not be acceptable due to the individual participant's history of drug or alcohol abuse.

Case managers shall verify participant's employment and employment should not be terminated without prior discussion and permission from your assigned case manager.

Any participant who does not have employment as provided herein shall perform uncompensated daily community service work until acceptable employment is established and verified. The purpose of this community service work is not punitive. It is to keep the individual occupied in a verified setting and to motivate the participant to obtain productive employment.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN BUSINESS

We appreciate family members and friends supporting recovery, but we have found that sometimes participants use the good intentions of others to avoid their own responsibilities. Because of this, the Reentry Court Staff does not routinely discuss any participant matters with anyone but the participant.

HONESTY

Participants must be honest with staff. For purposes of Reentry Court, “honesty” means that the participant is truthful in all communications with the Court and program staff. Learning to be honest and trusting the court staff can be one of the most difficult things that you can learn to do. However, a person cannot experience full recovery from alcohol and drugs without making amends, correcting past and current mistakes, and learning to take full responsibility. The Reentry Court rewards “honesty.” The participant must admit to his/her violation at the earliest possible time without any attempt to evade responsibility for the violation. The treatment team will take this into consideration when deciding on a suitable sanction.

LIVING SOBER

Living a clean and sober life means avoiding areas or situations in which you may be tempted to use drugs. You should avoid bars, restaurants which primary purpose is to serve alcohol, or any place that drug use or unlawful behaviors are occurring. Decisions such as housing and employment can be greatly affected by this. It is imperative anytime you are considering changing a major aspect of your life that you discuss it with the court staff.

FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

Living a clean and sober life means avoiding friends who abuse drugs and alcohol and the places where they hang out. If you continue to hang out with people who are using and/or involved with illegal drugs/alcohol, it could cause you to be terminated from the Reentry Court Program.

YOUR NEW BEST FRIENDS, CASE MANAGER AND PROBATION AGENT

PROBATION

Remember that you have to comply with all the conditions of probations while you are in this program. Any violations of your terms of probation can result in a probation revocation hearing being scheduled. If your probation is revoked, you will most likely end up serving your sentence and may be subject to resentencing under the multiple bill of information as a habitual offender.

REPORT TO CASE MANAGER WHEN NECESSARY

Your court case manager may provide you with information on group meetings, twelve step meetings, employment opportunities, education programs and other community resources. You

must keep your case manager informed of any changes in your contact information, address or employment. The contact information you provide to your case manager will be used to contact you in the event of changes in the court or group schedule. You should contact your attorney regarding legal matters related to your participation in the program or if you have a question about your case.

CONCLUSION

The goal of Reentry Court Program is to help you achieve a life free of crime and dependence on mind altering substances, as well as to give you the skills to maintain meaningful employment. The Judge, Reentry Court staff, treatment providers and community liaisons are here to assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. To succeed, you must be motivated to commit to a drug free/crime free lifestyle and work toward full integration into the community as a productive member of society. We look forward to assisting you with this journey.