

Some Things to Know Prior to Entering the Cherokee County Mental Health Program

The Cherokee County Mental Health Program seeks to address the mental health issues of its participants in order to break the cycle of criminal behavior. Because it is a program that provides increased benefits, including keeping its participants from being in jail, it requires a significant level of effort from those participants.

Before being considered for this program, which lasts a minimum of 18 months, each defendant will be provided with the Participant Handbook, the Court Contract and an acknowledgement of receipt of the Participant Handbook. Both the Court Contract and the acknowledgment of receipt of the Participant Handbook must be signed and received back to the Court Coordinator prior to the defendant being further considered for the program.

There are several things that a potential participant in the Cherokee County Mental Health Program should be prepared for if they are accepted into this program:

- All treatment, including, but not limited to, counseling appointments, doctor's appointments and case management appointments are MANDATORY and may not be missed unless excused by the court prior to the appointment. These appointments will require the participant to be in Canton at least three days a week. The amount of treatment will decrease as the participant advances in the program.
- Throughout the program, each participant will be drug tested an average of twice a week. The drug testing lab is located in the Historic Courthouse in Canton and testing is done between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
- During the first two phases of the program, each participant will come before the judge once a week. Court takes place each Friday morning at 10:00 a.m.
- While in the program, any failure to meet the expected behavior requirements will result in a sanction which could include community service and jail time. If a participant continues to fail to meet program expectations, they may be terminated from the program and their case set for a revocation hearing.
- Each participant is required, prior to graduating from the program, to pay a \$500.00 program fee.
- Each participant is responsible for completing any other conditions of their sentence, including community service, payment of probation fees, payment of fines, and payment of any restitution.
- Each participant will be placed on a curfew, which will be eased as the participant advances through the program.
- Each participant is responsible for arranging for travel to and from Canton for participation in the mandatory requirements of the program. Transportation issues will be a problem for the participant to resolve, not the Court, and will not be accepted as an excuse for missing any required activity.

There are other additional requirements for participation in the program; however, the above are the ones that will most directly impact a participant while they are attempting to get stabilized. If any potential participant believes that the requirements will prevent them from having success within the program, they, and their attorney, should strongly consider whether the program will be appropriate for their circumstances.

Any questions regarding this program may be directed to the Court Coordinator: Her contact information is:

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