

**Superior Court of New Jersey
Criminal Division - Hudson Vicinage
Drug Court**

Lourdes I. Santiago, J.S.C.
Drug Court Judge

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Hudson Vicinage Drug Court Holds 14th Graduation

Hudson Vicinage will hold its 14th drug court graduation celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 12:30 p.m., at the William J. Brennan Jr. Courthouse, 583 Newark Ave., Jersey City.

A total of 20 participants will celebrate successful completion of the program. Each graduate has attained a minimum of one year of continuous sobriety, is employed full time, has earned or worked towards a GED or high school diploma, has established a regular payment history on all court fines, and has established a sober community network where he or she resides.

Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. will address the graduates, family, friends, and supporters. Judge Lourdes I. Santiago will preside over the event. New Jersey State Sen. Ray Lesniak, a long-time proponent of Drug Court, will be the keynote speaker. Judiciary Voices in Unity, a choir composed of judges, attorneys, and court staff members, will perform.

Drug court is a highly specialized team process within the existing Superior Court structure that addresses non-violent drug-related cases. This rehabilitative option relies upon a unique, collaborative relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment professionals. The drug court program is rigorous, requiring completion of four phases over five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing, and a tightly structured regimen of treatment and recovery services. This level of supervision permits the program to support the recovery process, but also allows the team to react swiftly to impose appropriate therapeutic sanctions or to reinstate criminal proceedings when participants do not comply with the program.

One of the largest drug court programs in the state, Hudson County Drug Court has more than 470 active participants, with an annual retention rate of 84 percent.

For more information about the event, contact Evan Weiss at 201-795-6882.

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