

News Release



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New Jersey Judiciary Recognizes National Drug Court Month

The New Jersey Judiciary is recognizing National Drug Court Month with activities across the state, including a display of artwork created by those in recovery or members of their family.

As part of Drug Court Month, several vicinages are holding graduation ceremonies for those who have completed the intensive four-phase drug court program, which diverts defendants to the appropriate services to treat their addiction.

Artwork from the third annual Heroin and Opioid Art Exhibit will be on display in the lobby of the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton during the first two weeks of May.

The following drug court graduation ceremonies will take place during the month:

- [Burlington Vicinage](#), Friday, May 4
- [Middlesex Vicinage](#), Friday, May 4
- [Mercer Vicinage](#), Tuesday, May 15
- [Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage](#), Tuesday, May 15

Also, the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage will hold an Opioid Crisis Summit on Tuesday, May 15, at Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing. The summit, which is open to the public, features members of the judiciary, elected officials, law enforcement and service providers leading discussions about the opioid epidemic and responses to the crisis.

The Judiciary's drug court program operates within the Superior Court to address nonviolent drug addicted offenders. The program requires participants to complete four phases of rigorous drug and alcohol treatment and recovery.

"The close supervision that we offer our clients reduces recidivism rates for our participants when they complete the program," said Donna Plaza, chief of adult drug court. "Only 7 percent of participants who complete the program are rearrested and convicted on an indictable offense three years after graduation as opposed to almost 40 percent of defendants leaving New Jersey state prisons."

Drug court began in New Jersey in 1996 with pilot programs in the Camden and Essex vicinages and gradually expanded until they were implemented statewide with voluntary participation by 2004. The program became mandatory for certain drug offenders in 2013. Since its inception, 3,672 participants have graduated from the program.

The art exhibit, which highlights opioid and heroin abuse, addiction and recovery, is sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the New Jersey Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office in conjunction with the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

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