



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Anne E. Minihan
Administrative Judge
Ninth Judicial District**

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Rockland County Enhances Treatment Court for Justice-Involved Individuals

NEW CITY, NEW YORK—Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge Anne E. Minihan today announced changes to the treatment court structure in Rockland County. The drug treatment courts are specialized courts targeting justice-involved individuals charged with felonies or misdemeanors who may be suffering from addiction issues. The new combined Superior Court for drug treatment located in the Rockland County Courthouse is now accepting both felony and misdemeanor cases into the program. The Rockland County Treatment Court (RCTC) is a partnership of the court system's Ninth Judicial District, the Rockland County District Attorney's Office, the Rockland County Public Defender's office, the local defense bar, the Rockland County Department of Probation, and local service providers, among others. The court system's Office for Justice Initiatives' Division of Policy and Planning, led by Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Richardson and Statewide Problem-Solving Court Coordinating Judge Toko Serita, has been involved throughout the planning and implementation of the new treatment court structure.

Drug Treatment Courts divert appropriate cases of individuals suffering from substance abuse, and offer substance abuse treatment, possibly mental health treatment, and ancillary services as well. Key features of the model include rigorous treatment services, intensive judicial monitoring, and coordination among the various

stakeholders. Programming will be individualized and will strive to incorporate best practices.

Referrals for the RCTC may be made by defense counsel, prosecutors, clinicians, probation, and other sources. Potential participants will be assessed to determine eligibility for substance abuse, healthcare, housing and other services and benefits. Participants may have their charges reduced or dismissed upon successful completion of treatment and other court requirements. The RCTC will not bar participation in the program based upon race, color, national origin, language, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability unless such disability prevents the participant from complying with the requirements of the program.

Hon. Amy Puerto, who presides over the new Rockland County Treatment Court. Judge Puerto, said, "I am honored to be given the opportunity to serve the people of Rockland County by presiding over the Drug Treatment Court and grateful to work alongside the talented, dedicated, and hard-working members of our team. I am confident that together, and with the support of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Richardson, Administrative Judge Anne Minihan, and Judge Toko Serita, we will have a significant impact on some of the most vulnerable members of our society."

"We in the Ninth Judicial District are grateful for the opportunity to continue our work assisting people who struggle with substance use disorders in their journey towards leading a healthy life without further involvement in the criminal justice system. Rockland County was an early adopter of this treatment model and, in this new iteration, the Rockland County Treatment Court exemplifies what has been learned in the decades since. We are excited to be able to continue this important and necessary work," said Administrative Judge Minihan.

Judge Richardson, who oversees the court system's Office for Justice Initiatives, said, "The court system is always striving to ensure that our treatment courts serve all New Yorkers because treatment courts do work to change behaviors, reduce recidivism, reunite families, and save lives. The RCTC is looking forward to working with all agencies to provide a myriad of services to its participants."

"The Rockland County Treatment Court will provide accountability and oversight and will focus on rehabilitation instead of incarceration. With a network of case management, treatment programs, and service providers, participants will be encouraged to be active in their recovery. Graduates of the court will return to the community as contributing members, with employment, educational, parenting, and life skills," said Judge Serita.

Rockland County District Attorney Thomas E. Walsh II said, “The Rockland County District Attorney’s Office gladly partnered with the Office of Court Administration in its establishment of the Treatment Court in Rockland County. My office strongly supports problem-solving courts and alternatives-to-incarceration programs that are tailored to address a participant’s needs through specific services and experienced, high-quality supervision from treatment providers and the Court. As District Attorney, my Office will continue to partner with the Court and our treatment providers to benefit the community and people of Rockland County. I firmly believe that the Treatment Court here in Rockland County will be a tremendous success.”

James D. Licata, Rockland County Public Defender, said, “The Rockland County Public Defender's Office is dedicated to upholding the rights of our clients while supporting the rehabilitative goals of the drug court. Our office strives to ensure that participants receive fair representation and access to the necessary resources for successful recovery. Through our collaborative efforts with the drug court team, we aim to provide a path toward positive life changes and reduced recidivism.”

Joseph DiCarlo, Director of Rockland County Probation, said, “Rockland County Drug Treatment Court is an exceptional collaboration towards early intervention into the justice system, creating the opportunity to rehabilitate justice-involved individuals, reducing crime, and promoting safety in Rockland County. We look forward to our continued collaborative efforts.”

There are 113 Drug Treatment Courts statewide, with these specialized courts operating in each of New York’s 62 counties. For more information about New York’s Treatment Courts and other problem-solving courts, visit:

https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/problem_solving/

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