



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Chief Justice to attend Kanawha County Adult Drug Court graduation

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Brent D. Benjamin will attend a ceremony honoring six graduates of the Kanawha County Adult Drug Court at 3 p.m. Thursday, May 23, in the ceremonial courtroom, also known as Courtroom No. 4, in the Kanawha County Courthouse in Charleston.

This ceremony, led by Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Jennifer Bailey, occurs in a week in which the McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court opened and there are juvenile drug court graduations in Randolph, Monongalia, and Harrison Counties.

Adult and juvenile drug courts are intensive probation programs. Juvenile drug court participants are usually in the program for six to eight months. Initially, a participant meets with the drug court judge weekly and a probation officer several times per week. Juvenile drug court is intended for youth who are at risk of becoming addicted, not those who are already addicted.

Adult drug court is for those who already are addicted. Participants complete a treatment program of no less than twelve months. They are required to attend group and individual counseling, to take drug tests multiple times per week, and to do community service work. They meet with a probation officer frequently and see the drug court judge at least weekly in the beginning of the program.

The average annual cost incurred by the state for one adult drug court participant is approximately \$7,100 compared to \$18,000 in jail or \$25,000 in prison. About 10 percent of drug court graduates return to jail, but 30 percent of traditionally incarcerated defendants return. Drug courts, there, are proven budget and recidivism solutions.

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