

Lancaster County Drug Court History

The Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas began operation of the adult Drug Court in January 2005. This court-driven initiative, first considered as far back as 2000, was the culmination of the cooperative efforts between several county and court agencies. A Drug Court task force was established to provide guidance and develop preliminary criteria for implementing the local Drug Court model.

The Drug Court team, led by the Drug Court Judge, is composed of members of the different agencies including an Assistant District Attorney, Public Defender, Drug Court Coordinator, drug and alcohol treatment provider, Drug and Alcohol Commission case manager, and probation officers was selected to attend federally sponsored Drug Court training sessions and begin implementation of the Drug Court program. Today this team oversees the daily operations and supervision of Drug Court participants.

After accepting its first client in February 2005, the Drug Court now includes, on average, 50 participants at any given time. The Drug Court participants must complete an intensive program that includes drug and alcohol treatment, supervision/probation appointments, frequent drug testing, judicial review hearings, community service, and other pro-social activities. The four-phase program requires a commitment of at least one year, but typically two, from the participant. The intense nature of the program is designed to assist participants seeking a sober lifestyle, while addressing their Drug Court charges. In 2006, Drug Court celebrated the graduation of its first participant, and as of 2013, over 100 participants had graduated from Lancaster County Drug Court.

The Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas Drug Court remains committed to its goals of improving public safety, reducing drug-related crime, saving money and improving the quality of offenders' lives. ***Drug Court sessions are open to the public at 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays in Courtroom 5.*** An account has been established at the county treasurer's office to accept donations from the public. These donations are used directly to enhance the Drug Court program operations. Members of the Drug Court team welcome the opportunity to speak to community groups and organizations.