



Contact: Diversion Strategies Group, 602-372-7300

Justice Court Diversion Overview:

On March 15, 2021, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office (MCAO) revised its Justice Court Diversion Program, by offering evidence-based education curricula and implementing the use of a screening tool to better address offenders' needs. MCAO is committed to the efficient and just resolution of misdemeanor and citation cases assigned to the various justice courts. In lieu of pursuing prosecution, the Justice Court Diversion Program will permit MCAO to respond more effectively to the needs of adult offenders who have been charged with specific misdemeanors and citations. Benefits to diversion include: allows the offender to gain insight into the harm their behavior caused, reduces the offender's contact with the criminal justice system, increases the offender's connections to appropriate community-based systems of care, and holds the offender accountable for criminal conduct through their participation in an educational program.

How the Justice Court Diversion Program Works:

- Eligibility: will be determined by the Deputy County Attorney (DCA) for a range of eligible misdemeanor offenses;
- The DCA is solely responsible for referring offenders to the Justice Court Diversion Program. Post-file cases only. Offender is given 90 days to complete diversion;
- Contractor: SAGE Counseling Inc., a community-based behavioral health organization;
- The offender is instructed on how to contact SAGE Counseling to schedule their intake appointment and education class;
- Referred offenders will be ¹screened and placed into a "Track" depending upon the outcome of the screening tool: either Track 1 for substance use needs or Track 2 for non-drug issues/cognitive skills development. Each Track provides an education class with unique evidence-based² curriculum specific to the offender's needs, addressing the specific underlying behaviors and attitudes that affect criminal behavior;
- SAGE Counseling must submit documentation to the Justice Courts, supporting successful or unsuccessful completion within the 90-day time frame; and
- If the offender successfully completes the Justice Court Diversion Program, the DCA will file a motion to dismiss the charges with prejudice. If the offender fails to successfully complete the Justice Court Diversion Program, the DCA will file a motion to reinstate prosecution.

The Education Class:

General Information:

- Locations and class schedule vary throughout Maricopa County; some classes may be offered virtually;
- Payment is due at the time of service or may be prepaid through SAGE Counseling's client portal;
- At the end of the class, offenders will receive a certificate of completion and SAGE Counseling will send verification to MCAO; and
- If the offender is verified to be insured on an Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)

¹SAGE Counseling staff are trained to utilize the Texas Christian University Drug Screen V (TCUDS V) to measure substance use disorders and needs ranging from None, Mild, Moderate, and Severe. ²SAGE Counseling staff are trained to deliver the [Living in Balance](#), [Getting Motivated to Change](#), and [Unlock Your Thinking: Open Your Mind](#) curricula.

health plan, the required AHCCCS Comprehensive Assessment will be conducted, and program fees may be covered if approved by AHCCCS.

Track 1:

- 1, 8-hour education class focusing on substance use
- Learn about the biological aspects of addiction, triggers, and cravings, and how to avoid relapse.
- Curriculum: Drug Education Program as adapted from Hazelden's Living in Balance

OR

Track 2:

- 1, 8-hour education class focusing on cognitive skill development (improving decision making)
- Explore motivation, self-talk, and healthy thinking, as well as the consequences for their past decisions and recognize how faulty thinking patterns are related to criminal behaviors.
- Curriculum: Cognitive Skills Program as adapted from Texas Christian University's Getting Motivated to Change and Unlock Your Thinking: Open Your Mind