

Anchorage Municipal Wellness Court

Mission Statement

The mission of the Anchorage Municipal Wellness Court (AMWC) is to have a positive impact on the community by increasing public safety; reducing the cost associated with re-arrest, criminal case processing, confinement, and jail overcrowding; and breaking the cycle of criminality of drug- and alcohol-addicted persons, to enhance the quality of life for the addicted person. Using evidence-based practices, AMWC supports participants' abstinence from drugs and alcohol and promotes self-sufficiency while they reside in the community and rebuild their lives.

Who is eligible?

The Wellness Court is a voluntary court for state and municipal misdemeanor defendants who want to overcome addiction to alcohol and other drugs and achieve sobriety.

What are the program benefits?

- Expedited substance abuse treatment
- Reduced jail time and fines
- If eligible, financial assistance for treatment services, housing, and other basic needs
- Case management support to assist you in accomplishing your goals
- Achieve lifetime sobriety and avoid future criminal involvement
- After successful completion of the program, become eligible to receive a limited driver's license

How Much Does It Cost?

There is no direct cost to participate in the program. The first 12 weeks of the program will be at no cost to the participant. After the initial 12 weeks, the participant will be assessed for program fees based on the participant's budget and on a sliding fee scale.

How does AMWC work?

The program involves a team of designated and specially trained professionals who meet regularly and participate consistently in AMWC proceedings.

The AMWC case plan requires each participant to:

- Work with a case manager
- Participate in a substance abuse assessment
- Participate in substance abuse treatment
- Adhere to any referrals for services outside of the scope of the court or substance abuse treatment, such as mental health, medical, behavioral health, or vocational/employment services.
- Attend community-based recovery meetings as assigned
- Participate in Moral Reconciliation Therapy
- Maintain engagement in structured activity
- Undergo regular alcohol and drug testing
- Maintain sobriety
- Participate for 18 months

The judge will monitor the defendant's case plan through regular status hearings and standardized reporting from various members of the AMWC team.

How do I enter AMWC?

Defendants who want to be considered for AMWC should ask their defense attorney to schedule their case for the next AMWC calendar. Interested defendants may observe AMWC proceedings with no commitment to participate. If they desire to enter the program and the AMWC team agrees, defendants may “opt in” to the program. If they decide they are not interested, their case will proceed in the district court as usual.

What is required to enter?

- The defendant will be asked to complete an application packet and forms.
- The defendant will be scheduled for court observation and informed whether or not he/she will be eligible to continue through the admission process.
- The defendant will be given an opportunity to “opt in” to the AMWC.
- A case coordinator is assigned to assist in completing the remaining requirements of the referral and admission process.
- The prosecutor offers a Criminal Rule 11 agreement that incorporates the AMWC case plan.
- The defendant accepts the agreement and enters a plea of guilty or no contest.
- The AMWC judge approves the negotiated sentence agreement.

Invitation

Everyone is invited to observe the Anchorage Wellness Court sessions.

Municipal Wellness Court

Thursdays at 2:00 P.M.

Room 31, Boney Courthouse
303 K Street, Anchorage, AK

Please call (907) 264-0573 to confirm that Wellness Court is being held on its regularly scheduled day.

Anchorage Municipal Wellness Court

AMWC is a problem-solving court, or therapeutic court, that hears cases involving defendants with substance abuse problems who are charged with misdemeanor offenses. The court ensures public safety while focusing on treatment and rehabilitation of the individual.

The Anchorage Wellness Court is a cooperative effort by:

- Alaska Court System
- Alaska Department of Law
- Alaska Public Defender Agency
- Alcohol Safety Action Program
- Anchorage Municipal Prosecutor’s Office
- Denali Law Group

For more information:

Anchorage Wellness Court Project
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