

CENTER
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INNOVATION

FOR TRAINERS

FROM
DRUG COURT
TO
CLASSROOM

Training Program Interns



FROM DRUG COURT TO CLASSROOM: TRAINING PROGRAM INTERNS *FOR TRAINERS*

ABOUT

The New York Drug Court Higher Education Initiative represents an institutional collaboration of the Unified Court System, State University of New York, New York Association of Drug Treatment Court Professionals, and the Center for Court Innovation.

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INTRODUCTION

The New York Drug Court Higher Education Initiative (“Initiative”) is a statewide Initiative that seeks to provide New York drug court participants with enhanced access to the State University of New York (“SUNY”) system. The program was started in 2011 with the creation of two pilot sites: at the Albany County Drug Treatment Court in partnership with Hudson Valley Community College and at Binghamton Adult Drug Treatment Court in partnership with Broome County Community College. The Initiative’s goal is to successfully build a system for adult drug court participants that increases their chances of entering and successfully performing in a college environment.

The Initiative operates through partnerships between drug courts and local community colleges.¹ Drug treatment courts integrate the Initiative into their established policies and procedures by referring drug court participants to community colleges as part of the participants’ treatment program. The community college administrators are aware drug court participants are being referred to their programs and can provide extra services for the drug court participants. The drug court coordinator at your court can give you more information about the relationship between your drug court and local community college.

Even with these unique partnerships, the Initiative’s success depends on drug court interns guiding participants through the application process. Drug court participants are unfamiliar with the college enrollment process and many of them experience extra hurdles that are indirect consequences of their addiction. These hurdles range from unfamiliarity with the education system after being separated from it for years to experiencing extra anxiety and frustrations at setbacks. Without your support, many would never even make it through the enrollment process to their first class.

This manual is a guide for assisting drug court participants through the application process. The first part outlines your responsibilities and supervision, the second part provides information for beginning the process with drug court participants, the third part goes through the entire application process and the final part offers various documentation forms.

This version of the Intern Handbook offers guidance to the drug court coordinator or other drug court personnel who are training and supervising the Initiative interns. This manual contains tips and instructions for training interns to work with drug court participants who are interested in attending college. This document is, word-for-word, the same as the Intern Handbook but features callout boxes, in orange (like this one), with important points to make with the interns. The text in the callout boxes is intended to guide the trainer, but the trainer should use his best judgment to determine the most effective way to communicate the concepts contained in the callout boxes to the interns. The ultimate goal is to have well-trained interns. When there are multiple callout boxes on one page, the callout boxes are alphabetically labeled to make it easier to follow them. The trainer should go through each page of the manual with the Intern.

¹ *This manual was written with community colleges in mind but is applicable for four-year colleges as well.*

◆ **Trainer Manual**

This document, “From Drug Court to Classroom: Training Program Interns,” referred to as the Practitioner Manual, provides information on training interns to assist drug court participants in the application and enrollment process. Three companion documents explain different aspects of the program. Those documents are:

- “From Drug Court to Classroom: Creating the Court-to-College Program,” which provides an overview of the New York Drug Court Higher Education Initiative;
- “From Drug Court to Classroom: Helping Participants Attend College,” which is a manual for the interns to use when assisting drug court participants in the college application and enrollment process;
- and, “From Drug Court to Classroom: Your Guide to Enrolling in College,” which is a guide for drug court participants on applying to and enrolling in college.

THE PROGRAM

1: RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPERVISION

Although the admission and enrollment process can be frustrating and tedious, you are the participant's *support* – you should not be performing the steps instead of the drug court participant. The drug court participant is responsible for taking all actions, with you there to guide them.

◆ Intern Responsibilities

This section explains the intern's role. Review this description of the intern's role before meeting with him for the first time. Read each bullet point and discuss with the intern to make sure he understands what is being required of him.

Interns are responsible for guiding the drug court participant through the application and enrollment process at your local community college. This manual outlines all of the steps for successfully applying and enrolling a drug court participant. This process includes, but is not limited to the following responsibilities:

- Assisting the participant in gathering important documentation including high school diploma and GED transcripts, Certificates of Residency, health and immunization records, and documents for financial aid
- Directing the participant to important offices/staff at the community college
- Assisting the participant with the admissions application
- Guiding the participant through the online financial aid process
- Ensuring the participant is ready for the first day of classes with a course schedule and books
- Providing general support and answering questions

Make clear to the intern his job is to SUPPORT the participant, not do the work for him.

As an intern you have access to the drug court participant's highly confidential and sensitive information, especially during the admission and financial aid processes. The drug court participant and court trust you to keep this information confidential and not abuse this knowledge in any way. Any abuse of this knowledge could result in dismissal from the internship or possible legal ramifications. Please review the Intern Protocol located in Part 4: IMPORTANT FORMS section of this guide that reiterates your responsibilities as an intern. **After reviewing the Intern Protocol, sign it and, if applicable, have your school supervisor sign it, before returning it to the drug court coordinator.**

Underscore the importance of confidentiality to the intern with a statement such as **“You are going to have access to the participants' highly confidential information when working on this project such as their social security numbers and financial information. The drug court takes confidentiality very seriously. Violating this confidentiality can have serious ramifications for your internship. Let's turn to page 17 and read the Intern Protocol together.”** Then have the intern read and sign the protocol agreement.

Interns are also responsible for filling out Participant Tracking Forms in order to track participant progress and the success of the program in your drug court. **We ask that you fill out this form on a biweekly basis (or more frequently if requested) and give it to the drug court coordinator.** The Participant Tracking Form is located in the Part 4: IMPORTANT FORMS section.

The tracking form is important for the intern, the drug court team and the participant. Explain this to the intern with a statement such as **“Part of your responsibility is filling out a participant tracking form on a biweekly basis. This form helps track participant progress and also provides a form of institutional memory so that if the participant is not enrolled by the time the internship is over, the next intern can pick up where the first intern left off. Let’s turn to page 18 and take a quick look at the Participant Tracking Form.”** *Then turn to page 18 with the intern and go over the form.*

Finally, you should alert the drug court coordinator if the drug court participant misses appointments or is uncooperative. This is especially important if enrollment in community college is part of the drug court participant’s treatment mandate and/or his drug court graduation requirements. Do not hesitate to speak-up for fear of getting the drug court participant “in trouble.” As easy as it is for the drug court participant to lean on you, you are not going to be available to assist him throughout his academic career. The participant must make decisions and learn these processes for himself if he is going to function effectively at community college.

The intern must understand that part of his responsibilities are to inform the drug court team if the participant is being uncooperative. Make sure the intern knows who to contact should he wish to discuss the participant’s behavior.

◆ Intern Supervision

Interns are responsible to the Drug Court Coordinator and school supervisors if your internship is a part of a program at your local community college (i.e. Chemical Dependency) or another school. Please follow all of your local drug court and community college’s rules and procedures, which your supervisors are providing for you.

These supervisors are here to support you. You are not expected to have all of the answers or be able to navigate all of the situations that arise as you work with drug court participants. If you have any questions or are in a difficult situation at any point throughout this process, **do not hesitate to contact any of your supervisors.**

The intern is taking on a lot of responsibility by agreeing to assist participants through this process. Reassure the intern: “Do not hesitate to speak to your school supervisor or the drug court coordinator at any point throughout this process. You are not expected to have all the answers. They are there to support you”.

2: WORK WITH DRUG COURT PARTICIPANTS

Drug court participants are likely to have a low frustration threshold, meaning any obstacle they encounter in the enrollment process could cause them severe anxiety or make them want to quit. You are there to keep them on track and provide them with problem-solving support to get them through this complicated process. These are the instructions for getting started.

The extent to which the intern is able to relate to the participant depends on, among other things, the intern's life experience and the college program from which he is assigned. Do not assume the intern understands that the participant likely suffers from low tolerance for frustration. Tasks that the intern might find easy can seem like an insurmountable barrier to someone dealing with drug addiction. This is an important point to explain to the intern.

◆ Introductions

Introduce yourself and explain your role to the drug court participant.

Go over the following points with the participant:

- Explain your role as a drug court intern in the court, including your student status.
- Tell the participant where you go to school, especially if you are a student at the community college where he is seeking to enroll.
- Tell the participant that you were informed by the drug court staff that he is interested in attending community college and that you were assigned to act as his mentor throughout the application and enrollment process.
- Explain that during the process you are going to ask the participant personal questions but that all of the information is kept completely confidential and that you signed a confidentiality form. Also explain that you are going to give progress reports to the drug court coordinator. Then show the participant a copy of the Participant Tracking Form.
- Finally, end with a quick discussion about the participant's responsibility for getting himself into community college. For example, say: "We are going to work on this process together as a team. It's going to require work from both of us, but because this is your application, it is mainly your responsibility. But I am here to support you and answer your questions as someone who has been through the process before. Now let's get started!"

Perhaps role play with the intern, with you as the participant, and have the intern explain these bullet points to you. Have the intern become comfortable explaining that, for this process to work, the participant must share some personal information with the intern. The intern should reinforce that it is the participant's responsibility to do the work and meet the deadlines. The intern's responsibility is to provide support and guidance.

◆ Getting Started

Give the drug court participant a copy of the Applying to Community College Handbook and make plans to begin the application process. After performing introductions, move on to explaining the community college process. Give the participant a copy of the Applying to Community College Handbook if they don't already have one. Next, get a general sense of the participant's knowledge of the community college program while trying to get him excited about the process. Ask the participant:

- Have you ever been to (name of community college), even just for a visit?
- What degree programs are you interested in?
- What kind of job would you like to get? Do you have experience in this field or a related field?
- Do you have any friends or family who have attended (name of community college)?

The participant does not need to have answers to the second and third questions yet. Getting him to start thinking about them is important.

From here, you should encourage the participant to look at the community college's website and read through the handbook. Then **plan your next meeting where you are going to go over the application process**. From this point forward, you should plan your next meeting at the end of every meeting. Do not wait longer than a week between meetings and remember to **keep college application deadlines in mind**.

*Important note on the ACCES programs: Some drug court participants may be involved in the Adult Career and Continuing Education Services Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) program, which is a state funded education and vocational program serviced through the New York State Department of Education. Though the focus of ACCES-VR is on younger people graduating high school, a person of any age who meets the eligibility requirements may utilize their services. ACCES-VR's Transition Services works with students, parents and school districts to create a plan for the student to find employment or enter and succeed at post-secondary education. Persons with substance abuse issues make up the largest group of people seeking ACCES-VR services.

To determine what services a participant may be entitled to, you and the participant can contact the district office for that county. Every county has a liaison assigned to assist the participant access services. The ACCES-VR website, www.acces.nysed.gov, contains an interactive map to help locate and contact the district office and liaison. **Be sure to speak to your drug court coordinator about any existing relationship they may have with the ACCES-VR office.**

◆ Boundaries

Set and maintain strict boundaries with the drug court participant. Remember to set and maintain strict professional boundaries with the participant even though you may be similar ages and soon-to-be school colleagues. Use your best judgment about maintaining professional boundaries and keep these guidelines in mind:

- Only meet with the participant at the court, community college or other public place. Do not ever go to the participant's home or invite him to yours.
- Do not spend time with the participant in a social setting or develop a sexual relationship with the participant.
- Do not lend money or give gifts to the participant.
- Do not accept money or gifts from the participant.
- Do not share personal information with the participant.
- Do not give the participant your personal e-mail or home address.

- Do not engage with the participant over social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.

Go over each bullet with the intern. Drive home the “boundaries” message as clearly as possible.

The participant may try to cross some of these boundaries with you because you are working together in a close setting involving personal information. The participant may also feel attached to you as someone who is helping him achieve his personal goals. Do not be afraid to tell the participant (in a non-accusatory manner) if he is breaking professional boundaries. You can use these rules as an explanation for why a behavior is inappropriate (For example, say “I cannot go to your house because it violates the rules in my internship agreement.”). As always, let your supervisors know if a situation becomes uncomfortable.

Making the intern understand why a participant may become attached to him helps the intern avoid crossing any boundaries. Reinforce, once again, that the intern should speak to a supervisor if anything makes him uncomfortable.

3: APPLY TO THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Every community college has its own admission process. This is a general guide based on most community college's application and enrollment processes. Your first step should be to look at your local community college's website, which has specific application instructions for your college.

◆ Academic Calendar

Visit your local community college's website, print the Academic Calendar, and mark important dates and guidelines in your drug court participant's personal calendar.

It helps to begin the application and enrollment process by setting deadlines and goals with your drug court participant. This helps you and the participant to move forward in the application process and to avoid missing important dates.

There are many important dates and deadlines for the participant. The intern should become aware of these dates as well and stress their importance to the participant.

◆ Using a Checklist

Print and review a community college admission and enrollment checklist with the drug court participant.

Begin the drug court participant's application process by logging on to your local community college website with the participant and visiting the admissions page. The website has the most accurate information on each community college's application process. Some community colleges even provide checklists of important application documents and steps. **Use the checklist in Part 4: IMPORTANT FORMS if your community college does not offer its own.** This checklist is a very useful tool because it includes every step from completing the application to registering for classes. You and the participant should each have a copy of the checklist, crossing off items as you complete them.

Enrolling in college requires numerous forms and documents. *Review the checklist in Part 4 of this manual with the intern.* Discuss how the intern should go over this checklist, or one provided by the college, with the participant.

◆ Scheduling a Tour

Plan a visit to your local community college campus.

You and the participant should take a tour of your local community college. Either arrange the tour through the college, or if you feel comfortable, give the participant your own tour. Make sure you show the participant all of the important offices including admissions, financial aid, health services, learning assistance, and counseling.

Encourage the intern to give the participant a tour of the college if the participant is not currently familiar with the campus.

◆ Admissions

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Determine the drug court participant's New York State residency status and obtain the participant's proof of residency documentation. Drug court participants must meet local residency requirements in order to benefit from in-state tuition rates. Tuition doubles for all non-New York State residents so residency is essential to making education affordable. Otherwise, the participant likely needs to live in New York State until he becomes eligible for in-state tuition.

The drug court participant is required by New York State law to present a Certificate of Residency indicating that he has been a legal resident of the State of New York for one year and of a county for six months. A Certificate of Residency obtained from the participant's home county is the only proof of residence that qualifies the participant for in-state tuition. You must present the Certificate of Residency to the community college every year.

New York State counties issue certificates up to 60 calendar days prior to the start of the semester and until 30 calendar days into the semester. Counties are permitted by law to refuse applications after the 30th day of the semester. Many counties adhere to this deadline with no exceptions. The community college's admissions office should have your county's information about where the drug court participant can obtain a Certificate of Residency.

Establishing residency can be the difference between a participant being able to afford college or not. The intern should become familiar with the process of obtaining a Certificate of Residency, including associated deadlines.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Identify whether the participant has a high school diploma, GED, or neither.

Suggest that the drug court participant make an appointment with a counselor at the community college's admission office. Admissions can be very difficult for participants depending upon their level of education. Your first step must be to determine whether the participant has a high school diploma, General Educational Development ("GED") or neither. If the participant has a high school diploma, you must also determine his high school grade point average. There are going to be extra hurdles for a participant with a GED or without either a high school diploma or GED. The following sections describe most of the situations you may encounter through the admissions process.

The admission process can be very confusing, especially if you have not previously applied for admission at this community college. The participant can easily **schedule an appointment with the community college's admissions counselors**. The counselors are able to provide the participant with admissions information specific to his education history and background. Your drug court coordinator should give you a contact in the admissions office or simply look on the college's website. Ask whether the participant would like you to attend the meeting with the counselor – he may want you there or he may want to have a private meeting.

A participant does not need a high school diploma or GED to enter a community college, but does need one to obtain financial aid or receive a degree from the school. Accordingly, the participant should be encouraged to get a copy of his high school diploma or obtain a GED. Review with the intern the processes for obtaining these documents.

OBTAINING HIGH SCHOOL AND GED TRANSCRIPTS

Work with the drug court participant to obtain a copy of his HS diploma or GED transcript.

Finding your drug court participant's proper education documentation is no simple task, especially if the participant has been away from the education system for many years. Try to keep in mind that if the process is stressful for you, it is even more stressful for the participant. Your assistance in finding the documentation is invaluable to him.

To find high school diplomas: Records of transcripts and diplomas are kept by the school that granted them. To obtain these documents, you must go to the correct school. The best source for addresses and telephone numbers of secondary schools is the Directory of Public and Non-Public School Administrators available at: www.nysed.gov/admin/bedsdata.html.

If the school that the participant attended has closed, contact the school district office for the geographic area in which the school was located. Whether the school was public or private, the school district should have information about where the school's records were transferred when the school was closed.

To obtain GED transcripts: GED transcripts are held at the State Education Department in Albany. Visit this website for instructions and for the form needed to obtain a copy of the participant's GED: www.access.nysed.gov/ged/diplomas_transcripts.html. There is a \$4 fee for duplicate transcripts.²

OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED

If your drug court participant has neither a high school diploma nor GED, explore your community college's matriculated student and Educational Opportunity Center programs with the participant so he can determine the best route for meeting community college admission requirements.

If the participant does not have a HS diploma or GED, the local community may have a matriculated student program or an Educational Opportunity Center. The intern should become familiar with these programs and whether the local community college offers them.

Matriculated Student Programs: Most community colleges have 24-credit hour matriculation programs for students without a high school diploma or GED. The student can then apply for a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma at the successful completion of the program. Visit the community college website to determine the college's eligibility requirements and again, make an appointment with an admission counselor.

Unfortunately, the Department of Education recently stopped federal financial aid for matriculated student programs. At the time of publication, New York State had not yet decided whether state financial aid would still be available for these programs. Please ask the Financial Aid office for more information regarding available state aid. The lack of financial aid makes it much more likely that the participant needs to visit an Educational Opportunity Center (below) and receive a GED instead.

Educational Opportunity Centers: The State University of New York ("SUNY") manages a network of Education Opportunity Centers ("EOC") located in major urban areas across the state.

²This reflects the current price as listed by the New York State Education Department at the time of this manual's publication.

These centers offer computer training, job training, academic services, employment opportunities, and **free GED programs**. The participant must be economically disadvantaged and educationally underprivileged to be eligible for these programs. If an EOC is available in your area, you and the participant may want to explore the programs available through the EOC before applying as a matriculated student because EOC programs are free. Even participants with a GED might want to take advantage of the EOC's computer trainings and academic services. Visit the SUNY EOC website to determine if an EOC is in your area:

www.sunyeoc.org

EOCs have eligibility criteria which can be obtained from the website.

ACCES: As part of ACCES services, the Adult Education Programs and Policy (AEPP) office provides information on preparing to take a GED, places where the GED is offered, and downloadable preparation materials. Visit the New York State GED Testing Office web page for more information: **www.acces.nysed.gov/ged**.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

The local community college has its application for admission on its website. Direct the intern to familiarize himself with this resource.

Log onto your local community college's website to apply for admission. Once you have the proper diploma and/or transcript, you and the participant can begin the application process. Start by visiting the local community college's website for application instructions. Applications can be submitted online through the community college's website.

You and the participant can begin the financial aid process while you wait to hear from admissions about your application. **Please see the Financial Aid section for more information about applying for financial aid.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS

Discuss the admission process for persons with criminal backgrounds with the drug court participant and their attorney.

Because each participant is coming from drug court, he either has a conviction or has charges pending against him. Every SUNY school has a review process for persons with criminal convictions. The interns should learn what the process is for the local community college, advise the participant of that process and involve the participant's attorney in this aspect of the application. The intern must be cautioned against offering advice or suggestions for going through the evaluation process. Only the attorney may do that.

For this part of the admissions process you **must meet with the participant's attorney to review his criminal record and discuss the implications of misdemeanor and felony convictions**. This is especially important because the participant may not know his entire criminal background and it is important that the participant reports an accurate history to the college. Discuss the impact of any pending or dismissed cases, acquittals, and youthful offender adjudications.

Each community college has its own process for reviewing applicants with criminal backgrounds, but the process usually utilizes a campus committee that reviews appropriate information and decides whether an applicant should be admitted. New York State Law allows an institution to

deny admission to an applicant based on prior criminal convictions only where such admission would involve an unreasonable risk to property or would pose a risk to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the public (*i.e.* violent crimes). The drug court has admission criteria similar to the community college when it comes to violent crimes. If the participant is in a drug court program then most likely the drug court participant's criminal background is acceptable for the community college.

The participant is likely going to be invited for an interview with the committee and asked to submit letters of recommendation. Although drug court staff cannot give letters of recommendation, the participants should ask their defense attorney and staff at their treatment program(s) for letters.

Although the entire admissions process involves discussing sensitive information, this may be the most difficult step for you to navigate with your drug court participant. Reassure the participant throughout this process that he has your support, as well as support from his attorney and the drug court treatment team. The community college admissions office is also aware applicants are applying from the drug court.

PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS

The intern should be aware of the circumstances requiring a placement exam, such as for students with no high school diploma, or for certain study areas.

Once accepted, determine whether the drug court participant needs to take a placement examination. Placement examination requirements vary by community college, but usually occur after the participant has been admitted to the college. Some community colleges require every entering student to take a placement examination. However, students who do not have a high school diploma are more likely to be required to take a placement examination. Even a participant who has a high school diploma may be required to take a placement examination depending on his high school grades and the community college's requirements. Some community colleges may require a placement examination to enter certain degree programs. After the placement examination, the community college may recommend the student take pre-requisite classes before entering his chosen community college degree program. Check the community college's website for information on placement examination requirements.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Determine whether the drug court participant qualifies for the Educational Opportunity Program. Community colleges have Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP), which provide one-on-one tutorial and counseling services for New York State applicants who are defined by the State University of New York as academically at-risk and from low income households. EOP students are entitled to \$150 to \$300 in personal expenses per academic year. **Please have the participant meet with a financial aid officer to determine whether he meets the EOP guidelines.** Also, see Appendix A: Educational Opportunity Program Guidelines in Part 5: APPENDIX.

◆ Financial Aid

It is NOT NECESSARY for the intern know the financial guidelines and rules. The participant should be referred to the financial aid office for guidance. The information is here for informational purposes only. The intern should be strongly cautioned against giving any form of financial or legal advice.

The following Financial Aid information is for your understanding. You should strongly urge the participant to make an appointment with your community college's financial aid office. **Do not attempt to guide the participant through the financial aid process without first having the participant speak to a financial aid counselor.**

Have the intern read the above callout box and then reinforce the need for the intern to refer the participant to the financial aid office.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Almost every participant attending community college needs to apply for financial aid. Participants can and should apply for both federal and state financial aid. You should explain to participants who have never applied to college before that financial aid includes grants, work-study and loans, and that he needs to repay the loans whether he completes his degree program or not. Be sure your participant speaks with the financial aid office about the amount of money to request.

You need to:

- Gather important documentation for the drug court participant's financial aid application using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid Checklist.
- Have the drug court participant make an appointment with your local community college's financial aid office.
- After the participant speaks with the financial aid office, understands the process and does not have any major issues, then the participant can apply for both federal and state financial aid at **www.fafsa.gov** with your help.

Again, the following information on financial aid is for informational purposes only.

For federal aid: Start by visiting the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website and reading about the different types of student grants, work-study opportunities, and loans offered by the federal government: **<http://studentaid.ed.gov>**. Here are short summaries of these three broad financial aid areas:

- **Grants** – Student aid funds that do not have to be repaid but other conditions apply (such as need, full or part time enrollment, and education cost).
- **Work-Study** – Provides part-time jobs for undergraduate students with financial need so they can earn money towards education costs.
- **Loans** – Student aid funds that you must repay with interest. The amount of interest depends on the type of federal loan.

After reviewing the information on the website, the participant can complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application at **www.fafsa.gov** with your assistance. When the participant submits his application, he automatically applies for all three financial aid areas. When the participant's application is complete and he is admitted to the community college, he

should receive an award package that explains his financial aid awards. Here is what a sample financial aid award package may look like:³

Sample Financial Aid Award Package	
Total Cost of Attendance	\$20,000
Expected Family Contribution	\$1,823
Outside Scholarship	\$1,000
Financial Need	\$17,177
Federal Pell Grant	\$3,700
State Scholarship Grant	\$1,500
Institutional Grant	\$7,500
Federal Perkins Loan	\$1,000
Federal Direct Loan	\$1,477
Federal Work-Study	\$2,000
Total Award	\$17,177

We have provided you with a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid Checklist* (located in Part 4: IMPORTANT FORMS section) of documents the participant needs before starting the FAFSA application. The financial aid process can be particularly frustrating for both you and the participant. Gathering the documents together is likely the most difficult part for the participant. For example, if the participant does not have income tax returns, he should calculate his last year's income through other means (contacting all previous year's employers, looking at bank statements, etc.). Additionally, we strongly recommend that the participant fill out his tax return if he had taxable income in the last year because the Department of Education may ask for it at a later date. Once the participant has gathered the appropriate documentation, the application process should go fairly smoothly.

For state aid: New York has its own financial aid program that also provides grants and loans. The majority of the assistance falls under New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). You and the participant have the option to link directly to the TAP application from the FAFSA submission confirmation page. Note, HESC sends the participant an email or postcard notifying him to complete the TAP application online if you and the participant did not select the TAP link on the FAFSA page. Information about NYS financial aid can be found at this website: www.hesc.com. You and the participant should also visit HESC's website for more information on other grants, scholarships and awards that New York State offers.

For more information please see Appendix B: Special Circumstances Regarding Financial Aid. Again, please refer the participant to the financial aid office. If the participant was previously in college and receiving financial aid, special laws may apply. Inform his defense attorney and provide the attorney with a copy of Appendix B.

FINANCIAL AID DISBURSEMENT

Ensure the drug court participant has a bank account so he can easily deposit financial aid disbursements.

³ From the Federal Student Aid website, available at https://studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/pay_for_college/award.html.

The intern should ensure that the participant has discussed the need for a bank account with financial aid. If opening a bank account is necessary and the participant is unsure how to go about it, the participant should be referred to the financial aid office. The intern can also refer the participant to websites that offer tutorials on opening a bank account, such as <http://banking.about.com/od/openanaccount/ff/openbankaccount.htm>

After applying for financial aid through FAFSA, you and the participant can check on the status of his application at www.fafsa.gov. Once the application is approved, the participant receives an award letter by email. The participant must then go to the financial aid office and accept the award (if he agrees with the disbursement). The funds are distributed to the community college's financial aid office. The community college uses the funds to pay school tuition and fees and then distribute the balance to the participant for books and living expenses. The participant needs a bank account to deposit the disbursement check. Some community colleges have student-friendly banks/credit unions associated with the college.

◆ Academic/Career Counseling

Strongly encourage your drug court participant to meet with an academic/career counselor before selecting a degree program.

Every community college offers academic/career counseling. Your participant must **meet with an academic counselor before enrolling in a degree program because some careers are not available to people with criminal backgrounds**. Academic counselors are also able to help your participant with course selection because the counselors can tell him if there are any pre-requisite courses or other required courses. If the academic counselor does not have information on the participant's criminal background from the application process, then please ask the participant's defense attorney to provide this information to the counselor.

◆ Registering for Classes

Log on to your community college's website with your drug court participant to choose classes and register.

After meeting with an academic/career counselor, your participant should know his first semester classes. Most community colleges use online course selection and registration. You and the participant should browse the course catalogue, choose courses and register together before the close of the registration period (dates are on the registration or academic calendar). Ensure the participant is registered for any pre-requisite classes required for his degree program. The participant can choose classes even if his financial aid award has not come through yet, but the participant can only register after tuition bills are paid. Remind the participant to do this before the close of the registration period (usually the week before the start of classes).

◆ Final Steps

HEALTH SERVICES

Submit proof of your drug court participant's MMR immunization with the community college's health services office. New York State law requires that all students enrolled for 6 or more credits in any term must provide proof of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella ("MMR"). The drug court participant can provide proof of immunity in several ways:

- Medical facility or high school records indicating vaccinations that are sent directly to the community college.
- Medical facility or high school records indicating vaccinations that are delivered by the participant but which contain the original stamp or signature of a physician or school nurse.
- A blood test proving immunity (the community college's health services office should be able to refer the participant to a medical facility for this testing).

If none of these is available: Proof that the participant attended a primary or secondary school in the United States after 1980 is sufficient proof that the student received *one dose* of live measles vaccine (measles is two doses). If this option is used, then the *second* measles vaccine **must be given within one year of admission** to the community college.

OTHER COUNSELING

Inform the drug court participant about personal and learning assistance counseling available on campus for him to use as needed.

- **Personal:** Most community colleges provide counselors to assist students with personal problems and concerns. Ensure your drug court participant is aware of these services and where to access them.
- **Learning Assistance:** Most community colleges have a learning assistance center where students can access academic support services. These services may be particularly beneficial to your participant who is likely to have been out of school for several years. You should take your participant over to your college's learning assistance center to explore what services are available to students.
- **Learning Disabilities:** If you know your participant has a learning disability, make sure he tells the school at the learning assistance center. The school can only provide services to a student who indicates he has a learning disability.

BOOKS

Assist the drug court participant in buying/renting books. After the participant is enrolled in classes, you and the participant should either visit the campus bookstore to obtain the participant's books or if possible, help the participant buy his books online. The choice is up to you and the participant.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Again, you are not alone in this process. You have the support of the drug court coordinator and staff on campus. If you encounter problems, have questions, or experience any uncomfortable situations, **do not hesitate to reach out to your supervisors – or if required, call 911.**

The intern should never hesitate to reach out to his supervisors or call 911.

CONGRATULATIONS! The participant is ready to ATTEND CLASS!

You now have a well-trained intern who, with your support and the guidance provided by the Intern Manual, is prepared to help drug court participants get into college and get a college degree. Thank you for being a part of the New York State Drug Court Higher Education Initiative.

IMPORTANT FORMS

This section contains the following forms:

- Intern Protocol
- Participant Tracking Form
- SUNY Community College Admission and Enrollment Checklist
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Checklist

INTERN PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned Drug Court Intern, agree to the following responsibilities and conditions as an intern at the _____ Drug Court and participant in the New York Drug Court Higher Education Initiative:

1. I will keep all drug court participant information, including but not limited to all financial and health records, completely confidential throughout this internship and after.
2. I will not use any drug court participant's information for any action not substantially related to the drug court participant's application, admission, financial aid and enrollment in community college without prior permission of the drug court participant and drug court coordinator.
3. I will not engage in any sexual activity with participants or their significant others.
4. I will not use my position to exploit drug court participants.
5. I will read and follow the instructions outlined in the *From Drug Court to Classroom: Helping Participants Attend College* intern manual.
6. I will consult the drug court coordinator with any questions or if a situation arises that requires the drug court coordinator's attention.
7. If applicable, I will consult my school supervisor with any questions or if a situation arises that requires the school supervisor's attention.
8. I will fairly and accurately complete and submit the Participant Tracking Form to the appropriate drug court staff on a biweekly basis.

I understand that breaching any of the above requirements could result in termination from the internship program and/or criminal prosecution if my actions are in violation of federal or state law.

Intern Name (print): _____

Intern Signature: _____ Date: _____

Drug Court Coordinator Name (print): _____

Drug Court Coordinator Signature: _____ Date: _____

If applicable:

School Supervisor Name (print): _____

School Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

Intern Name: _____

Community College: _____

Current Status of Admission: (Check all that are completed)

High school/GED transcript obtained Application filed Accepted

Financial aid application filed Certificate of Residency provided

Health and immunization records provided Textbooks obtained Registered for classes

Please provide notes on the current stage of the admission process, any obstacles you have encountered and any other important information:

Participant's Engagement:

How would you rank the participant's engagement in the admission and enrollment process?

Very engaged Engaged Somewhat engaged Not engaged

Is the participant on time to meetings/appointments?

On time Sometimes late Often late Often misses appointments

Does he call you when he is late or going to miss an appointment? Yes No

Please provide notes on the participant's overall behavior and interest throughout the process:

Next Steps:

SUNY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

Please fill in the contact information for your local community college in this checklist. Please also note that the order of the application steps may vary between colleges:

Important Steps	How to Complete	Date due	Campus location/Phone #
Apply for admission (usually online).	Go to your local community college website.		
Request official: -High school transcript or GED, -Other college transcripts, if applicable.	Contact your high school, and/or previous colleges attended For GED transcripts visit: www.acces.nysed.gov /ged/diplomas_transcripts.html		
Apply for Financial Aid online.	Visit www.fafsa.gov .		
Call to schedule a placement assessment if required.	Check your admission letter and/or your local community college website.		
Submit your immunization records to health services.	Visit your local community college website or the health services office at the school.		
Meet with a college counselor about admission, course requirements and career options.	This is a MUST before choosing your degree. Call your local community college counseling office.		
Register for classes.	Go to your local community college website.		
Submit NY residency forms to student accounts.	A Certificate of Residence is obtained from the county of your permanent address – your local community college website has location specific information.		
Check your financial aid status and ensure your tuition bill is paid on time.	Visit www.fafsa.gov and your community college website and financial aid office.		
Purchase or rent your textbooks.	Visit your campus bookstore.		
Sign up for NY-Alert online to receive immediate notifications of campus emergencies and closings.	Visit NY-Alert for more information: www.suny.edu/sunyalertsec		
Check Academic Calendar for important dates, print final class schedule, ATTEND CLASSES!	Go to your local community college website.		

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) CHECKLIST

- Social Security Number (can be found on Social Security card).
- Driver's license (if any).
- Alien registration number or permanent residence card (if not a U.S. citizen).
- Records of income and assets earned in the year prior to when you start school for you and your spouse (if married) or your parents (if dependent) including:
 - Prior year W-2 Forms and other records of money earned.
 - Prior year Federal Income Tax Return - IRS Form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or foreign tax return.
 - Prior year untaxed income records – Social Security (including Supplemental Security Income [SSI] or Social Security Disability Insurance [SSDI]), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, welfare, child support, veterans benefits records, etc.
 - Most recent bank statements.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM GUIDELINES

In 2012 the income criteria was as follows: A student's household income must not exceed the amount shown for its size in the applicable category or the student's circumstances must conform to one of the exceptions indicated.

Household Categories

- A. Supported by one or more individuals whose combined total annual income is from Social Security or sources *other than employment* and which does not exceed the applicable amount under "Category A" below.
- B. Supported by *one or more worker(s)* whose combined total annual income does not exceed the applicable amount under "Category B" below.
- C. For households supported by *one worker who has two or more jobs*, which does not exceed the applicable amount under "Category C" below.

Household Size (including head of household):

Total Annual Income in Prev. Calendar Year*

	<u>Category A</u>	<u>Category B</u>	<u>Category C</u>
1	\$16,060	\$21,630	\$24,420
2	\$21,630	\$27,200	\$29,990
3	\$27,210	\$32,780	\$35,570
4	\$32,790	\$38,360	\$41,150
5	\$38,360	\$43,930	\$46,720
6	\$43,960	\$49,530	\$52,320
7	\$49,500*	\$55,070*	\$57,860*

* Plus \$5,570 for each additional family member in excess of seven.

Income guidelines also do not apply if:

- The student's family is the recipient of Family Assistance or Safety Net payments through the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; or through a county Department of Social Services; or Family Day Care payments through the New York State Office of Children and Family Assistance;
- The student lives with foster parents who do not provide support for college and the student's natural parents provide no such support;
- The student is a ward of the state or county.

APPENDIX B: SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDING FINANCIAL AID

◆ Prior Loans in Default

If the drug court participant has federal student loans in default than he is not able to receive federal financial aid until he either: 1) repays the loan in full, or 2) makes arrangements with the Department of Education to repay and makes six consecutive, on-time, monthly payments. Visit www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/index.html for more information on addressing defaulted student loans. If the participant is unsure about the status of his prior federal loans, his credit report should reflect any defaulted loans. The participant can access free credit reports at www.annualcreditreport.com. Defaulted loans are incredibly difficult to deal with and we strongly recommend that **the participant contact the financial aid office if he has defaulted loans.** Additionally, the financial aid office or drug court coordinator may know local legal assistance organizations that can offer free advice on working with defaulted loans.

◆ Special Rules/Laws Regarding Federal Financial Aid

There are two rules/laws to keep in mind when the drug court participant is applying for financial aid. The first is the 150% rule and the second is the Suspension of Eligibility for Prior Drug-Related Offenses Law.

The 150% rule: The 150% rule is a federal academic standard that determines the amount of time that a student can attend college and receive financial aid. The rule requires the participant to graduate from his program of study within 1½ of the time that the program is projected to take, usually measured in credit hours. For example, if the participant is in a program of study that requires 60 credit hours to graduate then he must be able to complete the degree by the time he has attempted 90 credit hours. Attempted credit hours include classes that were failed, dropped or withdrawn (with some exceptions). If the participant cannot graduate within the allotted time frame he loses eligibility for *all federal financial aid* including student loans. The participant then has to pay for the remainder of his degree out-of-pocket or with private loans (that usually have higher interest rates). All of the participant's attempted credit hours that the participant received financial aid for count toward that number—including credits from a matriculated student program or if the participant previously attended college.

Suspension of Eligibility for Prior Drug-Related Offenses: This law only applies to those participants who received financial aid in the past. **Contact financial aid immediately if the participant might be subject to this rule.** Federal law (Higher Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1091(r)) says that any student who is *convicted* of any federal or state offense involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance for *conduct that occurred while the student was receiving federal financial aid* is not eligible to receive federal financial aid from the date of that conviction for the period of time specified in the following table:

	Possession of Illegal Drugs	Sale of Illegal Drugs
1st offense	1 year from date of conviction	2 years from date of conviction
2nd offense	2 years from date of conviction	Indefinite period

3+ offenses	Indefinite period	
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Fortunately for your drug court participant, there are ways to resume eligibility before the period of ineligibility ends if he successfully completes a qualified drug rehabilitation program as described below::

- A qualified drug rehabilitation program must include at least two random drug tests and must satisfy at least *one of the following* requirements:
 - Be qualified to receive funds directly or indirectly from a federal, state or local government program or federally or state-licensed insurance company.
 - Be administered or recognized by a federal, state, or local government agency or court.
 - Be administered or recognized by a federally or state-licensed hospital, health clinic or medical doctor.
 - The drug court you are participating in most likely satisfies the second requirement.