



City and County of San Francisco

Young Adult Court

Participant Handbook

APRIL 2019

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Welcome to Young Adult Court

This handbook is intended to:

Answer your questions and concerns
Give you information about Young Adult Court (YAC)

This handbook explains what is expected of you and what you can expect from YAC during your participation in the program.

Young Adult Court (YAC) is a court within the San Francisco Superior Court.

Entering and successfully completing YAC may result in important legal benefits in your case, which will be explained by your attorney. If you are successful in this program, your case may be dismissed or cleared from your record.

This program is designed to support you in your personal and professional goals. You should consider your goals when you decide to enter into YAC.

As a participant in this program, you are expected to follow the instructions given in court by the Judge and follow the agreements you create in your Wellness Care Plan, which you will develop with your YAC case manager.

If you have any questions about the information in this handbook or about Young Adult Court, it is important that you ask your case manager, probation officer (if you have one) or your attorney. We want you to make an informed decision about joining Young Adult Court.

Program Basics: What is Young Adult Court?

YAC is for adults ages 18 to 25 arrested in San Francisco who have been charged in criminal court, have legal needs, could benefit from support, and are given the opportunity to participate in YAC instead of the regular criminal court process.

YAC is one of several “collaborative courts” within the San Francisco Superior Court system. Collaborative courts use a team approach to support participants to reach their goals and connect participants to community services. The goal is to support participants so they do not commit new crimes. The YAC team includes a Judge, Case Managers, Assistant District Attorney, Deputy Public Defender, Defense Attorney, Probation Officer (for some participants) – and you.

Wellness Care Plan

YAC case managers will work with you to create a Wellness Care Plan. This plan is based on your individual needs and goals, and becomes an important agreement between you, your case manager and the rest of the YAC team.

Participants usually address both important and urgent needs and goals (for example, housing), as well as longer-term goals, such as developing a career plan and/or seeking training for employment. Other topics may include accessing financial benefits (such as General Assistance), mental and physical wellness, recovery, parenting, and expanding your life skills.

Court Appearances

You will appear in court before the YAC Judge on a regular basis. For your first several months in the program you will likely come to court every week. As you show progress towards meeting your goals, you will be required in court less often.

You will have an opportunity to sign-in when you arrive outside the court room – how early you sign in may influence the order in which your case is called. **It is essential that you are on time for court.**

In the court room, respect for self and others is expected, including no use of cell phones, no conversations while court is in session, and keeping guests limited to those who are supportive of your positive engagement in YAC, such as other service providers and mentors.

Please be courteous and respectful of all people in the courtroom. As with the rest of your YAC appointments and meetings, it is most helpful to treat court appearances as you would an important employment opportunity – regarding how you dress, treat yourself, and treat others. The Dress Code policy later in this handbook will provide you with specific information about expectations for clothing in court.

Court is in session one day per week, in the morning and the afternoon. Both morning and afternoon sessions may last about 2 hours. Usually you will be assigned to come at the same time each week.

My Court Hearing is on: _____ (day of week) at _____(time).

Probation and YAC

Some participants in YAC are also on probation during the program. If you are on probation, it is mandatory that you report to your probation officer as scheduled. Your Wellness Care Plan will help you to meet your probation obligations. It is important that you know who your assigned officer is and that he or she has your updated contact information at all times. Your successful participation in YAC can result in reduction of your time on probation or other favorable legal outcome.

Length of Program

The length of time you participate in YAC depends on the progress you make addressing the goals on your Wellness Care Plan. There is no set

period of time for being in YAC, but **participants can expect to be in the program for at least one year** to meet their goals.

While you are participating in YAC you will be aware of your progress at all times. You and your case manager (and probation officer, if you have one) will continually refer to your Wellness Care Plan and will keep the Judge informed of your progress. You and your team will work together to determine when you are ready to graduate.

Some individuals cannot or choose not to complete YAC. If this happens to you, your case will return to the regular criminal court process.

The Benefits of YAC

Services and Resources: Once accepted into YAC, you will be linked to some or all of the following services: case management, housing, job training and placement, education support, group and/or individual skill-building, parenting resources, health care, and benefit enrollment (CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Assistance). We recognize that housing is a major challenge for young adults in San Francisco. The YAC team will work with you to find the safest and most secure environment for you.

Recognition of Progress: As you progress through your Wellness Care Plan and the program, your achievements will be publicly recognized by the Judge and the team. You may benefit from rewards such as reduced court appearances and gift cards.

Legal Benefits: If you successfully complete your Wellness Care Plan and graduate, you will leave the criminal justice system in a better position than the more traditional criminal court process. For example, your probation may be terminated early, your charges may be dismissed or reduced, and/or your record may be cleared or expunged. Every case is different. Your attorney will discuss the specifics of your legal case and explain the benefits for your case/s if you successfully complete YAC, as well as the legal challenges you may face if you do not complete the program.

Opportunity: YAC offers you a chance to connect and receive services and support, practice and develop skills that lead to success in adulthood and receive a better legal outcome than if you had remained in regular criminal court.

Rewards and Reponses

There are rewards and responses for your conduct while you are a participant in YAC – whether positive or negative.

Rewards are received for doing well in YAC and are awarded on a case by case basis, as determined by the YAC Team. “Doing well” means:

- Arriving on time for court hearings and scheduled appointments
- Following the Judge’s recommendations
- Completing the tasks you set out in your Wellness Care Plan
- Being actively engaged in court and with your case manager and/or probation officer
- Developing and practicing accountable behaviors

Responses are consequences for not meeting your commitments to YAC. Responses are intended to keep you on track, encourage you to make effective choices, and help you to succeed in meeting your program goals. Reponses are given in order of increasing seriousness.

The following behaviors may result in the Judge ordering one or more responses:

- New criminal offenses
- Missed court appearances
- Missed appointments with your case manager, probation officer if you have one, or other service providers
- Verbal threats of violence or violence towards others
- Inability to manage the agreements in your Wellness Care Plan
- Refusing to drug test as required
- Inability to follow conditions of probation
- Leaving your treatment program or supervised housing

Termination from YAC

New arrests could result in being terminated from participation in Young Adult Court. Other behaviors which may result in termination include:

- Inability to meet program commitments
- Inability to follow instructions of the probation officer
- Violence or threats of violence directed at the YAC Team or other participants

The YAC Judge makes the final decision about termination from YAC. If you are terminated from YAC, your case may be returned to the regular criminal court process.

Remember that there are many people who make up your YAC team - including you. Your whole team wants you to succeed. If you take advantage of the assistance offered, you can discover many ways to make a better life for yourself.

The Young Adult Court Program

Working with Your Team

The Young Adult Court program is a four-phase program lasting around 10-18 months. The length of time varies depending upon your goals and your progress towards meeting those goals

Each phase includes activities and expectations for your participation and includes achievements ("deliverables") that are necessary for you to move into the next phase. These agreements (deliverables) are included in your Wellness Care Plan.

You and your case manager or probation officer, as well as the rest of your YAC team, will determine your readiness for phase advancement based on your goals.

Following your Wellness Care Plan

The Wellness Care Plan is a map that helps you move forward in your participation in YAC. It is the agreement you make with the program to create positive changes in your life.

Your plan will include some of the following components:

- Skill-building groups
- Individual skill-building with your case manager
- Meeting with your probation officer (if you have one)
- Recovery and wellness strategies to deal with substances (as needed)
- Housing, education, employment and parenting support

Case Management Services

Your case manager will connect you to services in the community to achieve your goals and will inform the Court about your progress on completing your Wellness Care Plan. You are expected to attend all scheduled appointments, both with your case manager and with agencies that you are referred to by your case manager.

Substance Abuse or Alcohol Intervention Strategies

YAC takes a harm reduction approach to substance use among participants who are abusing drugs and/or alcohol. This means that we work with toward increasing your health and safety and changing or decreasing your use. YAC recognizes that substance abuse often compromises the safety, wellbeing, and mental health of our participants, and we work with you to move towards improving your health and safety, and away from problematic drug and alcohol use.

Drug Testing

Initial drug testing will take place during phase one. The YAC Team is informed about all drug test results, including any failure to test. The Judge may order a drug test at any time. Tampering with the drug test or refusal to be tested is considered a positive test and may result in a

remand or termination from the program (if a urine test is used, this includes flushes, diluting, using someone else's urine) or other negative consequences. A positive or "dirty" test may result in a negative response from the court.

Additional Services and Activities

Your Wellness Care Plan will likely include a number of activities including skill-building, employment and education programs, and other services that will help you meet your goals. Completing these activities is your road map to successful completion of the YAC program.

Your plan may change over time as you complete activities and/or adjust your goals. Your case manager will provide the court with reports about your attendance and progress and will contact staff at various community agencies to confirm that you are attending and engaged and that the services are meeting your needs.

Moving Through the 4 Phases of the Program

The more engaged you are with your Wellness Care Plan, the better your progress and outcomes in the program. Success requires more than “showing up” – your life skills and your daily functioning should also improve in ways that you are able to see and feel, and that support you in meeting your plans for your next steps in life.

As you move from one phase to another, the important people in your life are invited to join you in court to celebrate your success.

	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
	Engagement and Assessment	Stability and Accountability	Wellness and Community Connection	Program Transition
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake • Assessment • Orientation • Attend court • Meet with case manager • Develop Wellness Care Plan • Attend skills groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend court • Meet with case manager • Work toward Wellness Care Plan goals • Attend skills groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend court • Meet with case manager • Work toward Wellness Care Plan goals • Attend skills groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Transitional Care Plan (TCP) • Transition from YAC while maintaining wellness and positive community connections
Expected Length of Phase	2-3 months	2-5 months	4-6 months	2-4 months
Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appear in court according to schedule 2. Make all meetings with case manager (and probation officer, if assigned) 3. Complete tasks you have created as part of your Wellness Care Plan 			
Advancement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet all expectations consistently (see above) 2. No Motions to Revoke probation or probation sanctions 3. Consistent progress or completion of Care Plan tasks 4. Consistent meeting of all program requirements 5. Agreement of YAC team 			

On your graduation day, you will be invited to share with the YAC Judge what has changed for you since you started the program. The Judge will present you with a certificate of completion and will recognize your accomplishments. Your support network is invited to join you to celebrate your success.

Program Agreements

Your success in YAC is important to all of us and we are here to help, but it is ultimately your responsibility.

Substance Use Agreement

Young Adult Court recognizes that substance use and/or abuse may be a problem that our participants are trying to overcome. We are here to support you and will work with you to address problematic drug and alcohol use.

The YAC team believes that how you present yourself in Young Adult Court reflects your commitment to the program and is your responsibility. Being under the influence will hinder the open and honest communication needed to progress through the program. Attending court and other program commitments while you are clear and sober will allow for better communication and more effective ways for you to meet your goals.

Coming to court or any other Young Adult Court programming under the influence of any substances (marijuana, alcohol, un-prescribed medications or any illegal substances) is not permitted. This rule applies to meetings with Felton, Adult Probation Department, or Employment Services, individual appointments, groups, pre-employment assessments, employment classes, and referrals to other agencies. If you are under the influence of any substances, staff will address it during court.

Drug Testing

Everyone in Young Adult Court has to undergo a drug test when they enter the program. This "initial base line" drug testing happens during Phase One. The YAC team receives your drug test results and is notified if you miss a test. The Judge may order a drug test at any time during your participation in YAC. Tampering with the drug test or refusal to be tested is considered a positive test. The Judge will respond to tampers very seriously and may place you back in custody or terminate you from the program (if a urine test is used, a tamper includes flushes, diluting, or using someone else's urine).

There are several possible responses you may experience for coming to court under the influence of a prohibited substance:

First time

When your case is called and the team is aware of substance use (either Felton, Goodwill, CASC or Probation) you will be asked to return to your seat. Your case will be called last. The following day you will meet with your case manager to discuss possible outpatient support, coping strategies, or interventions, and to review rules to ensure that you understand appropriate behavior and your accountability to your program commitments.

Any substance use directly after Life Skills class or near the building will be addressed in court. This is in keeping with professional behavior and adherence to your Wellness Care Plan.

Second time

You will receive a referral to the Community Assessment and Service Center (CASC) for a drug screen(s). You will discuss the ramifications of your behavior with your case manager. The court will ask for a two to three paragraph essay (with support from your case manager) in which you discuss what is acceptable and not acceptable in court.

Third time

You will receive a referral to the Treatment Access Program (TAP) for outpatient treatment. You will continue to be drug tested. You may be turned away from activities and counted as a no show. The Judge may increase your requirements in order to continue participating in YAC.

By signing this document, you agree that you fully understand your responsibility to remain sober and drug free while engaging in the YAC program.

Print Name _____
Sign Name _____
Staff Name _____

Date: _____

Presentation of Self and Dress Guidelines Agreement

One part of Young Adult Court (YAC) is developing your skills to succeed in many different environments. The Court is a professional environment, and a place where you are expected to practice dressing more formally, the way you will dress for many types of jobs.

Following the *Please Wear* list is an important part of your participation in the YAC program. This list is here to help you dress appropriately for the environment in which you are a part. It is about accountability, professionalism and establishing the habits you will need for your future success.

Your Felton, Goodwill and Court team are here to provide support in these areas. If you are unable to follow the expectations for dress and hygiene in court, this can impact your ability to successfully complete the program, graduate, and have your charges dismissed.

Please Wear – Professional Items	Items that are Not Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clean clothing ➤ Tops & bottoms that cover the midriff (stomach) and the hips/underwear ➤ Tee-shirts that are plain ➤ Pants without holes, rips or tears ➤ Skirts without rips or tears ➤ Shirts with a collar ➤ Clean sneakers (ok for some work environments) ➤ Shoes with a closed toe ➤ Shoes with an open toe (ok for some work environments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flip flops, some sandals ➤ Clothing that shows the midriff or underwear ➤ Shorts ➤ Hats/hoods over the head ➤ Halter or tube tops ➤ See-through tops ➤ Ripped or torn jeans ➤ Baggy pants that fall below the hips ➤ Clothing with an emblem or wording that promotes illegal or inappropriate activity ➤ Clothing that depicts or promotes violence, sex acts, illegal drug use or profanity ➤ Gang colors on any item of clothing or accessories ➤ In Memoriam pictures, messages, lanyards

Personal hygiene is also essential in the work place. Smelling of smoke, heavy perfume or cologne are not permitted in most work places and can impact whether people take you seriously. Flashing gang signs, or making gang related statements is prohibited in the court room, the building, and surrounding property in order to maintain the safety of all participants, and maintain a professional environment.

By signing this document, you agree that you fully understand the expectations for presentation of self while in the YAC program.

Print Name _____

Sign Name _____

Date: _____

Staff Name _____

Travel Agreement

Young Adult Court is an opportunity to participate in a court process that is different from traditional criminal court. You are still facing pending charges and are responsible for reporting to court and following Young Adult Court guidelines.

As a result, all participants must request permission to travel. Since permission to travel is not guaranteed, you must submit your request before scheduling travel plans. Your case manager will give you a travel request form. This includes travel plans that do not include missing court.

Traveling outside of San Francisco County or your verified county of residence while in Young Adult Court is subject to permission from the court. This includes court appearances in other counties, medical appointments, and family visits lasting longer than 1 day.

You must submit a travel request to your case manager at least 1 month prior to scheduling your travel plans. **Verification of travel (itinerary, airline ticket, bus ticket) must also be submitted to the court prior to approval.** If an emergency occurs, such as a death in the family that requires travel, an exception to the 1-month guideline will be considered.

Do not purchase tickets or make arrangements until you have obtained approval from the court.

By signing this document, you agree that you fully understand your responsibility to gain prior permission from the court for any travel outside of your county of residence.

Print Name _____

Sign Name _____

Staff Name _____

Date: _____

Commitment to Participate in Young Adult Court

Young Adult Court is a program that will help you to change your life. It is an opportunity that requires your full participation. Please read each expectation carefully, then initial. By initialing, you are stating that you fully understand and commit to meeting each expectation.

The YAC team is committed to supporting you in your success.

- _____ I will appear in Court for my scheduled progress hearings.
- _____ I will attend weekly case management sessions and required YAC group sessions.
- _____ I will contact my case manager and/or probation officer as scheduled.
- _____ I will work to meet the goals of my Wellness Care Plan.
- _____ I understand my progress will be monitored and that rewards and responses will be applied as appropriate.
- _____ I will meet the terms and conditions of my probation.
- _____ I will comply with drug testing requirements if applicable. If I miss a test, I understand that I am subject to a response from the court.
- _____ I understand this is a phased- based program and that I progress through four different phases, and that the program typically takes a minimum of 1 year.
- _____ I understand that my progress and engagement will be discussed at pre-court team meetings at which I will not be present.
- _____ I am accountable to all YAC expectations.

Print Name _____

Sign Name _____

Staff Name _____

Date: _____

Important Names and Numbers

My attorney:

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

My case manager:

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

My housing program:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

My probation officer: (if on probation)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Other Contact:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Other Contact:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____