



SAN FRANCISCO COLLABORATIVE COURTS

Young Adult Court

Introduction

Young Adult Court (YAC) is a collaborative justice court program for transitional aged youth (ages 18-25), many of whom have extensive trauma histories, inadequate support systems and housing, and minimal educational and employment histories. Some youth also have substance abuse issues and co-occurring mental health disorders. The program began in July 2015 and is a partnership among the Superior Court of California; Office of the Public Defender; Office of the District Attorney; Adult Probation Department; Family Services Agency (Felton Institute); Goodwill Industries; Department of Children, Youth and Their Families; Sheriff's Department; Jail Reentry Services; and the Department of Public Health.

YAC offers eligible participants intensive clinical case management; individual, group, and family counseling; dialectical behavior therapy; drug monitoring; and referrals for substance abuse treatment, housing, parenting, academic and vocational support through linkages in the community. Participants are given an opportunity to engage in a therapeutic process to learn new skills, to reduce and recover from alcohol and/or drug (AOD) addiction and to promote physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Mission

The mission of Young Adult Court is to enhance long term public safety and reduce recidivism by working in partnership with young adults ages 18-25, supporting them to make a successful transition into adulthood. YAC provides a comprehensive program of strength-based, trauma-informed and evidence-supported educational, vocational, and counseling opportunities, in conjunction with court supervision, to engage and empower young adults to reach their full potential.

Case Identification and Referral

Cases may be identified for YAC referral by criminal justice stakeholders. The Office of the District Attorney requires its staff to obtain approval from their Managing Attorneys to refer cases in the following situations:

- Any case that cannot be referred as an open matter (e.g. not eligible on a pre-plea or DEJ basis) per YAC eligibility guidelines;
- Any case with disqualifying conditions per YAC eligibility guidelines;

- Any case referred post-preliminary hearing in which there is a named victim.

Legal Eligibility

- Felony cases will be prioritized over misdemeanor cases.
- There is no residence restriction; however, given YAC'S limited capacity, priority will be given to individuals with connections to San Francisco, including family and other supports.
- For more detailed information about legal eligibility, see the YAC Eligibility Guidelines: <http://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/collaborative/yac>

Clinical Eligibility

Participants must also meet the following eligibility criteria.

- Participant's background and social service needs have seriously affected their quality of life and likely resulted in their involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Participant is amenable to obtaining training, education and services including substance abuse and mental health treatment, if appropriate, and is motivated for participation in YAC.

Expectations for Program Completion

- To graduate successfully, clients must demonstrate adherence to their wellness plan.
- YAC participation is usually one year or longer. The duration is determined by individual need and progress attained in meeting specific goals.
- Upon graduation, the case will be resolved pursuant to the negotiated agreement between the District Attorney, the defense attorney and the Court.

Service Delivery

Community treatment and case management is provided by the Family Service Agency/Felton Institute (FSA) which uses a trauma-informed model for service delivery including intensive case management and therapeutic assessments for clients who are facing misdemeanor or felony crimes. FSA provides a strengths-based and client-centered approach with youth who also are challenged by substance abuse and co-occurring disorders and are deemed high-risk to reoffend in the community. Clients are ideally engaged in YAC for a period of one year by transitioning through four phases, with an ongoing relationship of care in the areas of job readiness, housing, educational support and parenting.

Statistics (June – December 2015)

- Sixty three young adults were referred to and participated in YAC.
- Fourteen were in custody at the time of referral, 49 were out of custody.
- 6 were terminated from the program before the end of 2015.
- 9 YAC participants were parents to 1 or more children.