

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Diversion programs offered to 241 defendants in District Court**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – In the first quarter of 2018, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office offered at least 241 people charged with misdemeanors the opportunity to participate in programs that will allow them to earn a dismissal of their charges and thus, a clean record.

These defendants are first-time offenders who are charged with misdemeanor, nonviolent crimes such as misdemeanor possession of marijuana, underage possession of alcohol, shoplifting and trespassing. If a defendant successfully completes the program, a dismissal of the charge is granted. These 241 defendants were offered enrollment in diversion programs between January and March 2018 at their first appearances in courtroom 1130. These numbers only reflect defendants who were offered enrollment during that first appearance, however, many more similarly-situated defendants will receive these opportunities at a later court date.

In addition to providing access to programs in order to address underlying issues that may have led the individuals to commit a crime, it is the goal of the District Attorney's Office to ensure that these first-time offenders have the opportunity to avoid the lasting consequences of a conviction.

From January to March 2018:

- Prosecutors offered enrollment in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention programs to at least 71 defendants. These programs are 12-hour courses that aim to improve participants' decision-making, conflict resolution and anger management skills. Participants must attend in person.
- Prosecutors offered enrollment in drug/alcohol education programs to at least 170 defendants. These are 15-hour programs that allow participants to examine the consequences of drug and alcohol use in their lives and explore changes they can make to prevent negative outcomes associated with drug and alcohol use. Participants must attend in person.

*Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit [www.charmeckda.com](http://www.charmeckda.com). For updates and other information, "like" the DA's Office on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/charmeckda](http://www.facebook.com/charmeckda) and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.*

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