

# NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney

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## **391 defendants offered diversion, recovery programs**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – In the final quarter of 2019, at least 391 defendants were offered the opportunity to participate in programs that aim to change behaviors, provide treatment for addictions or mental illness, and address underlying issues that may have led a defendant to commit a crime. In some cases, first-time offenders charged with nonviolent crimes were given the chance to earn a dismissal, allowing them to avoid the lasting consequences of a conviction.

These programs further the goal of the District Attorney's Office to make our community safer by intervening in the lives of defendants and preventing them from becoming caught in a cycle of crime that affects not only their futures but also the wellbeing and security of the entire community.

### 45 referred to Recovery Court programs

From October to December 2019, a total of 45 defendants were referred to one of the four adult STEP Recovery Court programs. Eighteen were referred to District Recovery Court, 14 were referred to Superior Recovery Court, seven were referred to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Court), and six were referred to DWI Recovery Court. Twenty of those defendants have since enrolled.

In addition, five Recovery Court participants successfully graduated during this period. Two participants from District Recovery Court and one from Superior Recovery Court participated in graduation ceremonies in October, and two Wellness Court participants also celebrated their graduation from the program during the court sessions.

### Diversion programs offered to 329 in District Court

Between October and December of 2019, the District Attorney's Office offered at least 329 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 underage possession of alcohol, shoplifting and trespassing. If a defendant successfully completes the program, a dismissal of the charge is granted. These 329 defendants were offered enrollment in diversion programs at their first appearances in courtroom 1130. These numbers only reflect defendants who were offered enrollment during that first appearance. Many more similarly-situated defendants will receive these opportunities at a later court date.

From October to December 2019:

- Prosecutors offered enrollment in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention programs to at least 102 defendants. These programs are 12-hour courses that work 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 227 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.

Crimes Against Property Team offers first-time offenders the opportunity to earn dismissal

The Crimes Against Property Team offers first-time offenders charged with a low-level, nonviolent crime the opportunity to earn a dismissal through a conditional discharge of the offense. These defendants comply with probation for about two years and must meet other conditions such as community service, restitution to a victim or drug testing when appropriate. If a defendant complies and commits no new crimes, a dismissal of the offense is granted. Between October and December 2019, the Crimes Against Property Team offered at least 17 defendants the opportunity for a conditional discharge.

*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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