What is a Problem-Solving Court?

A Problem-Solving Court (PSC) is a specialized program that gives participants a supportive pathway to address substance use, mental health, and other underlying challenges. These programs focus on treatment and recovery to help participants build healthier and more stable lives. Problem-Solving Courts are voluntary, personalized and structured programs that last approximately 15 to 24 months. Each program is made up of phases that include regular court check-ins, treatment services, drug and alcohol testing, and ongoing support from a dedicated team. Participants also work with community partners, peer support, and recovery resources to strengthen long-term success. Through these efforts, participants are supported in achieving personal goals, improving health and wellness, and successfully reintegrating into the community.

Ready to take the first step?

How to Get Started

- **Consult Your Attorney:** Your lawyer can provide guidance on your eligibility and help start the referral process.
- **Contact the Coordinator:** Reach out to the PSC Coordinator below to learn about specific criteria and application steps.
- **Complete an Evaluation:** If you qualify, you will be referred for a risk and needs assessment to determine the best treatment plan.

61st District Court
180 Ottawa Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
PSC Coordinator - Andrew Leighty
Phone (616) 632-5640
PSCreferral@grcourt.org
www.grcourt.org

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61ST DISTRICT COURT

PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

Sobriety and Drug Treatment Court Programs

61st DISTRICT COURT

GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Sobriety Court Judges:
Honorable Angela T. Ross

Honorable Nicholas S. Ayoub

Drug Court Judge:
Honorable Michael J. Distel

Sobriety Courts

Sobriety Courts are specialized treatment courts for individuals with substance use disorders who have committed alcohol-related offenses, including repeat Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) offenses. 61st District Court has 2 different types of Sobriety Court depending on your charges.

Program Eligibility

The participant must be convicted of multiple offenses directly related to alcohol use, such as repeat OWI offenses (e.g., OWI 2nd or 3rd). Other offenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Program Specializations:

Felony Sobriety Court

Referral Process

You must have a qualifying felony offense to be considered, such as OWI 3rd. The Circuit Court probation department will conduct a risk and needs assessment and refer you for treatment and mental health evaluations. After the Circuit Court or your attorney refers your case, it will be reviewed by the District Court probation department. You will then meet with a case manager to discuss program requirements, and approval from the presiding PSC Judge will be required for admission.

Misdemeanor Sobriety Court

Referral Process

You must have 2 or more qualifying misdemeanor offenses, such as OWI 2nd. Your case will be referred to the PSC department, where the case manager will conduct a risk and needs assessment. If you qualify, you will be referred for a substance use evaluation to assess your substance use and mental health needs. Upon approval, your case will be set for sentencing with the presiding PSC Judge.

Drug Treatment Court

Drug Court is a specialized treatment court designed for individuals with substance use disorders who have committed drug-related offenses.

Program Eligibility

The participant must be charged with or convicted of an offense directly related to drug use.

Referral Process

You must have a qualifying offense and receive approval from the prosecutor. Once approved, your case will be referred to the PSC department for a risk and needs assessment conducted by the case manager. If you qualify, you will be referred for a substance use evaluation to assess your substance use and mental health needs. For felony charges, your case will be set for a misdemeanor plea.

Exclusionary Criminal History

An individual is not eligible if they are currently charged with, or have a past conviction for:

- any offense that caused death or serious bodily injury to another person
- Criminal Sexual Conduct in any degree

Any individual with a current or prior conviction for a violent offense will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Previous charges related to drug distribution will also be assessed individually.

Restricted License

Some PSC program participants may qualify for a treatment court restricted license while in treatment court.

Below are comments from past program participants, reflecting on their experiences and the impact of the program:

"Treatment court taught me how to cope with difficult situations and truly made my life better. I owe so much gratitude to the team for all my blessings," S.R.

"Treatment court allowed me to continue being a mother and take care of my family by understanding that I'm human, just like everyone else. We all deserve a second or third chance in life. The courts work for you, if you work for yourself," T.J.

"Being in this program has allowed me to grow into the person I always dreamed of becoming, achieving goals I once only imagined. Now, after the program, I'm still actively working on those goals," M.C.

"I once lost everything that was precious to me, but I've been able to regain it because of treatment court and recovery. Not only that, but I'm so much better now because I'm truly grateful for everything this time," R.H.