



A DWI Court Program for the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law

Role of the Judge for SOBER Court

1. The Presiding Judge of each SOBER Court leads a collaborative team composed of herself, a prosecutor, a defense attorney, a case manager, a court liaison officer, a court coordinator and a treatment provider. Leadership begins with her decision to approve an assessment based recommendation by team members for admission of a new defendant to the program, and preside over the plea and sentencing that includes participation in SOBER Court.
2. Twice monthly, the Judge reviews, with the team, case status reports detailing each participant's compliance with the treatment mandate, drug test results, and progress toward abstinence and law-abiding behavior. The decision to present an incentive, or impose a sanction is within the sole discretion of the judge.
3. During each court review the Judge upholds an appropriate balance between courtroom formality and dignity and therapeutic informality and familiarity necessary for an effective and successful program to increase each participant's accountability for his or her recovery, based on a graduated system of sanctions and incentives, further assuring continued public safety.
4. The Presiding Judge of each SOBER Court ultimately decides whether participants have earned the right to graduate, or whether the jail alternative should be considered for failure to successfully complete the treatment mandate.
5. Contribute to SOBER Court efforts in community education with the public, peers in other jurisdictions, and the judiciary on effectiveness and value of the program