



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Office of the District Court Executive

LORETTA A. PRESKA
Chief Judge

EDWARD A. FRIEDLAND
District Court Executive

SDNY Young Adult Opportunity Program

August 17, 2015

On July 1, 2015, the Southern District Board of Judges authorized the implementation of an intensive judicially supervised pretrial pilot program for non-violent young adults charged in this District (the “Young Adult Opportunity Program,” or the “Program”), an overview of which is included as Exhibit A.

Counsel for any eligible defendants interested in participating in the Program should submit a letter of interest to Lauren Blackford, the Program’s Pretrial Services Officer, at opportunitycourt@nyspt.uscourts.gov. The letter should be no more than three pages in length and include the following information:

- The Defendant’s name and age;
- The Defendant’s case number and the nature of all pending charges (both in this District and elsewhere), including the charging statutes;
- A criminal history, including any crimes of violence or sex offenses;
- A summary of any drug abuse or addiction, or any other mental health issues;
- A summary of the Defendant’s relevant family, educational, and employment history; and
- Any other information that counsel feels is relevant to Defendant’s eligibility for, or ability to succeed in, the Program.

As described in Exhibit A, upon receipt of such letter, the Court will, in conjunction with Pretrial Services and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, assess the eligibility of each candidate. Any candidates selected for participation in the Program must sign a comprehensive consent form as a condition of participation.

Any questions regarding the Program or the eligibility of a particular defendant should be directed to Pretrial Services Officer Lauren Blackford, at the e-mail address provided above.

EXHIBIT A

SDNY Young Adult Opportunity Program (Pilot)

The proposed SDNY Young Adult Opportunity Program (the “Program”) will provide selected young adult defendants with intensive supervision by Pretrial Services (“Pretrial”) and regular interaction with supervising federal judges (the “Program Judges”). The Program will provide young adult defendants with structure and access to employment, counseling, and treatment resources. Program participants, if they are successful, may receive a shorter sentence, a reduction or deferral of the charges filed against them, or possibly a dismissal of the charges entirely.

Criteria for, and Selection of, Program Participants: The pilot Program is intended to benefit non-violent young adult (i.e., between 18-25 years old) defendants. Defendants over 25 years old may be considered for participation on a case-by-case basis.

Participants may be recommended for participation in the Program by any federal judge, Pretrial, defense counsel, or the United States Attorney’s Office (the “USAO”). After a participant has been recommended, the judge handling the case, Pretrial, the USAO,¹ or counsel for the defendant may object to the candidate’s participation in the Program. The Program Judges will select the participants in the Program, subject to the consent of the district judges to whom the defendants’ cases are assigned. Upon approval, each participant’s case will be transferred to the Program’s district judge for all purposes, including sentencing.

Candidates for the Program must be willing to participate voluntarily in the Program. Candidates must execute an agreement setting forth the obligations and potential benefits of Program participation, and must consent to the transfer of their case to one of the Program Judges. As a general matter, candidates should have limited criminal history (e.g., neither current charges nor prior convictions of crimes of violence, firearms offenses, sex offenses, or crimes against children, including child pornography offenses), and candidates should have no other pending criminal cases or active warrants; however, exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the circumstances (e.g., if a candidate is a defendant in a multi-defendant case that is expected to proceed to trial), the candidate may be required to plead guilty as a condition of his continued participation in the Program.

Program Duration: Participants generally should begin their participation in the program within 45 days of their arrest. Most defendants are expected to complete the program within a 12 to 18-month period.

Benefits of Program Participation: The Program will provide youthful defendants with structure and access to employment, counseling, and treatment resources. If successfully completed, program participants may potentially receive a shorter sentence, a reduction or deferral of the charges filed against them, or dismissal of the charges entirely.

¹ The USAO will work with the Court, Pretrial, and defense counsel to assess candidates who might benefit from the program. If the USAO does not approve a candidate for participation, the USAO will provide its reasons for rejecting the candidate, unless those reasons cannot be disclosed without compromising witnesses, investigations, or ongoing cases. In circumstances where the USAO believes it cannot disclose the reasons, the USAO would be prepared to provide an explanation ex parte to the Program Judges, with notice to the defendant’s counsel.