

PINELLAS COUNTY ADULT DRUG COURT PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



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Welcome

Welcome to Pinellas County Adult Drug Court. This handbook is designed to answer any questions you may have regarding Drug Court and to help guide you through the Drug Court process. The members of the Drug Court team understand you may be somewhat unsure about your decision to participate in Drug Court, but we are all here to support you and help you successfully reach your goal.

You have been brought into Pinellas County Adult Drug Court because you have been arrested and your criminal behavior / charges have been determined to be drug-related. In other words, you may have a substance abuse problem, and it is contributing to your criminal behavior.

Pinellas County Adult Drug Court provides judicial supervision while giving you an opportunity to receive substance abuse treatment for your substance abusive behavior. In essence, this court is designed to help you obtain both a crime-free and drug-free lifestyle. This program requires a total commitment to remain clean and sober as well as lead a law-abiding life.

This handbook provides an overview of the program rules, goals and expectations. If there is anything that you do not understand or have questions about, do not be afraid to ask a member of the Drug Court team for clarification.

As a participant of Pinellas County Adult Drug court, you will be expected to follow all orders and instructions given by the Judge and Drug Court team.

Welcome to Pinellas County Drug Court – we wish you all the best!

Judge Kimberly Todd and the Pinellas County Adult Drug Court Team

Mission Statement

Pinellas County Adult Drug Court aims to save the lives of individuals with substance-use disorders and enhance community safety through evidence-based treatment and practices by promoting honest, personal responsibility, wellness and recovery.

Overview of Drug Court

The Pinellas County Adult Drug Court program consists of a two-track intervention program for substance abusive adults who have committed non-violent felony crimes and possible traffic related offenses. While you have been brought into Drug Court by selection of the State Attorney, your participation in the Drug Court program is completely voluntary. Only YOU can determine whether you are successful in the program.

The Drug Court program is a hybrid of judicial supervision and treatment. As a result, you will be required to report before the court on a regularly scheduled basis (usually once a month) while also participating in treatment. It is important to talk with your treatment counselor to help schedule and manage all of your appointments, including group treatment, one-on-one treatment, sober support meetings, urine tests, as well as court sessions. Completion of these responsibilities will result in you maintaining your freedom as well as constant progress through the program.

As noted above, Drug Court is a voluntary program but, should you decide to take part in the program, you will be required to follow and complete a treatment plan that may include some of the following:

- Outpatient treatment
- Inpatient / Residential treatment
- Transitional housing placement
- Random drug testing
- Counseling / therapy
- Education / vocational / employment programs
- Participation in self-help groups
- Job training
- Medication management

The Drug Court program is designed to last 24 months. Your needs and progress will ultimately determine the length of your Drug Court participation which could result in early termination or an extended stay in Drug Court. A treatment plan will be developed to meet your individual needs and will be reviewed with you frequently. Additionally, the program includes self-help recovery support group meetings, case management, regular court appearances, random drug testing, reporting to probation, and the requirement to maintain consistent employment and/or schooling. These requirements will be based on the each individual's needs and abilities.

The Drug Court Team

The Drug Court team combines court supervision with substance abuse treatment and is made up of members from the criminal justice system as well as treatment providers. The Drug Court team staffs each and every case individually, designs a treatment plan for each participant, decides incentives and sanctions, and when a participant is eligible for graduation or if a participant should be terminated from the program. The team includes:

- Judge
- Drug Court Program Manager
- Drug Court Case Managers
- State Attorneys
- Public Defenders
- Department of Corrections Officers
- Clinicians
- Treatment Providers
- Housing Providers
- Law Enforcement

How Do I Get Into Drug Court?

There are two different ways you may have entered Pinellas County Adult Drug Court:

- The first is through *diversion* through the **Pre-Trial Intervention (PTI)**. Successful completion of Drug Court through the PTI program will result in your charges being dismissed. This program is eligible to those who have little to no prior record.
- The other is through *probation*. Those who are not eligible for the PTI track will automatically fall into this category. Drug Court offers a Withhold of Adjudication for all pleas that occur within Drug Court. You may also avoid your Driver's License being suspended by going through Drug Court. Upon successful completion of Drug Court, the charges will not be dismissed but, if you have not already been convicted as a felon, you will be still not be considered a *convicted felon* after completion.

The State Attorney is responsible for identifying eligible cases and bringing them into Drug Court. The State Attorney is also responsible for identifying and offering the PTI program.

If you do not know what type of case you have, please consult with your attorney.

How Drug Court Works

Drug Court hearings are scheduled every day at between 9:00AM and 10:00AM in Courtroom 10 on the fourth floor of the Pinellas County Justice Center located at 14250 49th Street N, Clearwater, FL 33768. Judge Kimberly Todd is the presiding Drug Court Judge and court will take place in her courtroom. Free parking is available in the parking lots in the front of the Justice Center. It is very important to show up drug and alcohol free as you will be tested frequently.

Your first appearance in Pinellas County Adult Drug Court will be at your arraignment. At arraignment, you will be assigned one of two Public Defenders (if you cannot afford a Private Attorney), both of which have extensive knowledge of Drug Court processes and will guide you through the program.

The first requirement of any participant in Drug Court is to receive a Substance Abuse Evaluation from a licensed treatment provider. This evaluation helps the Drug Court team to determine which form of treatment is applicable to each participant, ranging from outpatient to residential. *Agreeing to participate in this evaluation does not obligate you into participating in Drug Court – you are free to OPT OUT at any time before you are referred to treatment.* It is important to be completely honest and open during your evaluation so the Drug Court team can place you in the proper form of treatment.

If you have any needs, such as housing or transportation, or even just assistance in getting your ID or finding employment, please let the evaluator know. Drug Court has an abundance of resources to assist you through your journey and can provide much more than just treatment referrals!

After an evaluation is completed, a recommendation for treatment is provided to the Drug Court team, who will decide which form of treatment is applicable to each participant.

TREATMENT OPTIONS*

- OP2 - Outpatient treatment, 2 times per week for 12 weeks
- OP3 - Intensive outpatient treatment, 4 times per week for 12 weeks
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING – Housing usually paired with outpatient treatments
- RESIDENTIAL - Residential treatment, 8 to 18 months + Aftercare

After your evaluation is complete, it is time for your second court date where the results of your evaluation will be discussed and your requirements for completing Drug Court will be shared with you. At this time, you must make a decision on whether you are amenable to participation in Pinellas County Adult Court and the recommended treatment plan.

You are, again, free to opt out of participation at this time but, if you desire drug treatment, it is highly advised against doing so and you are urged to participate in the Drug Court program. Once a plea is entered to treatment, a participant can no longer opt out of Drug Court.

If you are amenable to treatment and participation in Drug Court, you will need to either plea to your charges (for a Withhold of Adjudication) or enter into a Pre-Trial Intervention agreement with the State Attorney. Once completed, the Drug Court team will provide a referral to the required treatment and will set up your treatment plan. For those referred to outpatient treatment, it is now your job to attend orientation and begin treatment! For those that require a housing component or residential treatment, intakes and pick-ups from the jail are scheduled. *Once you are in treatment, it is now your job to focus on yourself and your journey to sobriety.*

As you progress through treatment, you will have to attend court once monthly, on average. Prior to your arrival in court, the Drug Court team will conduct a staffing. During that staffing, the court will receive progress reports regarding your drug tests, attendance, and participation in your treatment program(s). These reports will come from your treatment counselor, PTI/probation officer, transitional housing liaisons, and any other agency involved in your care. The Drug Court team will discuss your case and your progress, as well as determine if sanctions or incentives are appropriate.

When your case is called in court, you will be called up before the Judge. Judge will speak to you about your progress and any issues you may be having. *This is your chance to ask any questions of the Judge and the entire Drug Court team – we are here to help!* At this time, we encourage you to share any victories you have won on your journey or any struggles you might be enduring. *Again, we are here to help and want to provide you with the resources and tools to help you succeed!*

Sometimes you will experience a relapse or a program violation. A program violation, including but not limited to: missed, positive, diluted or tampered drug screenings, tardiness, failure to attend treatment or meetings, or missing a court hearing, which may result in court-imposed sanctions (more on this later). If you have a program violation, the Judge will inform you of your alleged violations, give you a change to explain, and issue an *appropriate* sanction. Repeated violations of program expectations may result in the ultimate sanction of discharge from the program.

Before leaving the courtroom, you will be given your next court date both verbally by the Judge, and in writing by form of Notice of Appearance. You may also be provided with treatment, housing or resource referrals in court.

Failure to appear on your court date will result in a warrant being issued for your arrest. If you cannot appear to court as scheduled, you must notify your lawyer, probation officer or case manager. If you cannot reach any of the aforementioned parties, notify the Clerks' Office prior to the time set for your court appearance. *If you have any questions regarding your court appearances, contact your attorney.*

After completing treatment and paying all fees, including Cost of Supervision (can be waived by completing challenges), Court costs, UA fees and DOC fees, you may be eligible for graduation! Generally, the earliest this can occur is around 9-12 months into the Drug Court program but this is different for every participant. At this time, the Drug Court team will celebrate your success, provide you a completion certificate and challenge coin, as well as terminate your probation (or dismiss charges if you are participating in the Pre-Trial Intervention program). Congratulations, you're now a graduate of Pinellas County Adult Drug Court! *This is the ultimate goal of all of our participants and we will do whatever we can to help you succeed as long as you put in an honest and forthcoming effort.*

Drug Court Terms and Activities

The following are terms commonly used by people in the Drug Court Program. Some of you have never heard many of the terms or may recognize them in a different setting. The purpose of this section is to help you understand some of the words used and understand many of the required activities of the program. If you have any questions, please contact a Drug Court team member for clarification.

Case Management: Case management is when a Drug Court staff member works to make sure you can get services you need beside group and individual sessions. Case management includes, housing, employment, education, anger management and other services. While Drug Court does not provide these services directly, they will help you succeed not only in Drug Court, but in life. Our case managers will work with other Drug Court staff in obtaining these services if available.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality means privacy and refers to not talking about program issues outside the Drug Court setting. This means if you hear someone say something in a group setting about an issue they have, you cannot discuss this outside of Drug Court. It simply means “what happens in Drug Court, stays in Drug Court”.

Counseling: Counseling occurs when you talk about your problems or issues related to your substance abuse behavior. Counseling may happen in a group or alone during one-on-one sessions with your primary counselor. While each treatment track differs, you will be required to attend a certain amount of counseling groups and one-on-one sessions. Your primary counselor is the person with whom you discuss issues during your participation in the program.

Groups: Groups are when two or more people meet with a counselor or therapist to discuss issues related to their substance abuse behavior. Issues may include family, career, education, free time, etc. In each phase, each participant is required to perform a certain number of groups each week. Participants are required to attend two or four groups weekly.

Probation: Probation is a form of legal supervision where a person who has committed a crime is allowed to continue to live in the community while being supervised by an Officer of the FL Department of Corrections. While on probation, there are certain restrictions placed upon the person which the officers will go over with you. If you break or violate any of these restrictions, you may be violated and placed in jail. Your Probation Officer (PO) will go over all requirements with you during your first visit with him or her.

Public Defender's Office: The Public Defender's Office (PD) provides legal representation to people who are unable to pay for a private lawyer. Many Drug Court participants are represented by the PD's office. If you are unsure if you are represented by the PD's office, please discuss this issue with the Drug Court Judge to make sure you are represented legally.

Recovery Meetings: Recovery meetings, also known as self-help or sober support meetings, are held at various locations in the community. You may choose the meeting which works best for you. This is also where you will find your sponsor for the program.

Sanction: A sanction is an action the Judge takes in relation to your progress or lack of progress in the Drug Court program. If a person tests positive on a urine test, the sanction may include community service, jail or some other action the Judge orders. The sanction is in response to your progress.

Sponsor: A sponsor is someone in recovery from drugs and/or alcohol abuse or addiction and has at least two years “clean” time. The sponsor is someone you meet at a recovery group who agrees to help you when you are having problems keeping away from drugs or alcohol.

State Attorney’s Office: The State Attorney’s Office (SAO) is tasked with protecting and enforcing public safety, advocating for the participant’s best interests, and holding the participant accountable for their obligations in the program. All cases are investigated and decided upon by the State Attorney before being brought into Drug Court. The SAO offers the Pre-Trial Intervention diversion program.

Veteran’s Coordinator: A Veteran’s Coordinator is someone who can provide referrals and outreach service to Drug Court participants that are veterans. The Veteran’s Coordinator is available to assist with various veteran specific needs.

Program Fees: There are fees associated with participating in Drug Court including Cost of Supervision, Court Costs, UA fees and costs for treatment. You are responsible for all treatment costs. Treatment or access to Drug Court will not be denied, however, due to inability to pay. Judge’s Challenges or Community Service Hours are available to help alleviate you of some of the costs incurred in Drug Court.

Community Service: Community service is when you work at a local, non-profit organizations to accrue community service hours. Community service may be used as a sanction or as an incentive. As a sanction, it may be assigned due to not completing certain requirements or the failure to complete other phase requirements. As an incentive, it may be assigned to help a participant pay their fees in the event of the loss of a job or inability to pay.

Challenges: Challenges are available to participate in and completing a challenge may result in Cost of Supervision fees being waived in part (or even altogether!) Some of our challenges include the Art Challenge, the Fitness Challenge, the Reading Challenge and the No Smoking Challenge. You can even take part in the Hair Cut Challenge or, if you have a suggestion for a challenge of your own, Judge may include it as a special Judge’s Challenge! *Please ask for a Challenge handout for more information.*

Pre-Trial Intervention: A diversion program offered by the State Attorney’s Office. Successful completion of this program results in any charges against you being dismissed. Eligibility depends on the person’s previous criminal record and is usually offered to those with minimal previous records.

Rules and Regulations

1. **Have a good, positive attitude.** Rule number one is to TRY. Our court is designed to help you but that won't happen unless you put forth an effort. If you are trying and are *honest* with the Judge and Drug Court team, you will succeed in this court, regardless of other problems you may have.
2. **Do not use or possess any drugs or alcohol.** Sobriety is the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a lifestyle free of drugs and alcohol is very important in your recovery process. If you are prescribed medication or are taking over-the-counter medications, you must notify your treatment provider / Drug Court team immediately. You may not take medications not prescribed to you or medications prescribed to others. Use and/or possession of alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia on county or treatment program property may result in arrest and/or dismissal from the Drug Court program.
3. **Drug tests are required.** Expect to take random and on-demand drug tests. Do not tamper, substitute urine, dilute or chemically alter your test. Failure to provide a urine sample will be treated as a positive result. Not attending a scheduled urinalysis is treated as a positive result.
4. **Be on time and attend all ordered treatment sessions.** This includes individual and group counseling, educational sessions, and self-help meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session, you must contact the treatment provider prior to missing the session. Although notifying your provider will not necessarily excuse your tardiness or absence, it will allow the provider to consider any special circumstances that might be involved.
5. **Report to your PTI / Probation Officer as directed.** All participants in Drug Court are supervised by the Florida Department of Corrections through the form of either a PTI officer or a Probation officer and, as such, you must comply with their directives. You must notify your probation officer prior to any change in residence or employment. You must also receive permission from your probation officer if you would like to leave Pinellas County.
6. **Be on time and attend all court appearances.** Court appearances are *mandatory* and it is imperative that you attend all scheduled court appearances. *We suggest you arrive to all scheduled events ten to fifteen minutes early.* In the event you are unable to attend any Drug Court function, it is your responsibility to call your attorney and provide any required information of your absence. Clients must personally contact their attorney and/or program staff prior to being late or absent from any Drug Court activity. Failure to personally contact program staff will be considered a "no show". Chronic absences or tardiness may result in sanctions or dismissal from the program.
7. **While in court, remain seated and quiet at all times.** It is very important to observe appropriate behavior in court for the benefit of yourself *and* others present. *Turn off* all cell phones and electronic devices. Headphones are not permitted unless provided by the court for those who are hearing impaired. Gum chewing or food consumption is not allowed in the courtroom.

8. **Dress appropriately for court and treatment sessions.** In the courtroom, it is recommended that all participants wear a shirt or blouse with pants, dress or skirt of reasonable size and length. Shoes must be worn at all times. Clothing bearing drug or alcohol-related themes is considered inappropriate. If you wear excessively revealing clothing or gang-related attire, you may be asked to leave the courtroom. Hats and sunglasses may not be worn during program activities or Drug Court hearings. Speak with the Drug Court team if you need assistance with obtaining suitable clothing. *Incentives may be provided for those who dress exceptionally well for their court appearance.* Clients may want to leave all valuables at home or in their cars, rather than leaving these items unsupervised. Drug Court staff will not be held responsible for any lost, stolen or misplaced items.
9. **Be respectful of other participants and staff. Do not make threats or behave in a threatening manner.** Violent or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and may result in a sanction from the Judge or termination from the Drug Court program.
10. **No smoking or vaping in the courtroom or treatment facilities.** Smoking/vaping will not be allowed while participating in program activities, in group rooms, or attending court hearings.
11. **Visitors are allowed to accompany Drug Court participants to court.** All visitors are subject to the same rules as Drug Court participants.
12. **Possession of weapons, knives, glass items, aerosol cans, sharp objects, or any other contraband that may cause injury to clients or others is prohibited on county or treatment program property.** Possession of these items may result in termination from the Drug program.
13. **Childcare is the responsibility of the participant.** Children may NOT attend any program activity. You are not to leave your child unattended at any Drug Court activity, including court hearings or treatment. If there is a special need, let your counselor know, and arrangements may be made.
14. **Participants are expected to treat their peers and staff members with respect. Comments** referring to race, color, creed, religion, etc., in a negative or demeaning manner, will NOT be tolerated. Profanity and vulgar language are prohibited.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are arrested and any new charges are filed by the State Attorney's Office, you will face possible termination from the Drug Court Program. Also, if your actions are found to be inappropriate or detrimental to the program in any way, you may face possible termination from the Drug Court program.

If you have any questions about these rules, please do not hesitate to ask a member of the Drug Court team for clarification.

Program Responses

When you do something well, the Drug Court team will attempt to acknowledge and reward that behavior. If you do something wrong, on the other hand, there may be consequences. These responses will be tailored to your individual progress and needs, as well as your capabilities, at that particular time. Drug Court recognizes the effort it takes in attempting to improve behaviors, choices, and ultimately, your lifestyle.

Possible Incentives:

- Applause in court
- Verbal praise, compliments from Judge
- Fishbowl drawings
- Handshakes and/or hugs
- Bracelets and key chains
- Recommendation letters
- Reduction in fines / costs
- Early Probation termination
- Graduation from Adult Drug Court

Possible Sanctions:

- Reprimand in court
- Increased drug testing
- Writing an essay/paper
- Increased court appearances
- Community service hours
- Increased supervision
- Incarceration
- Termination from the program

Possible Therapeutic Adjustments:

If you are honest about substance use or you fail to follow rules, you may not be fully capable of following, the response from the Drug Court team may be a therapeutic adjustment or “treatment response” instead of a sanction being imposed. These responses are not designed to punish you but rather to provide what you need to be successful. They are imposed to help you learn from your choices and to not repeat them. Possible treatment responses may include:

- Essay or writing assignments
- Increased self-help meetings
- Increased contact with treatment
- Increased level of treatment
- Increased drug testing
- Increased mental health support meetings
- Extension in treatment

Common Violations include, but are not limited to:

- *Missed / tampered / positive drug tests*
- *Failure to comply with orders*
- *Failure to gain employment*
- *Unexcused absences*
- *Disrespect*
- *Substance use without prompt honest*
- *Failure to complete a previous sanction*
- *Criminal behavior / activity*
- *New arrest*
- *Absconding*
- *Falsifying documents*
- *Lying to the Judge / Drug Court team*

Your honesty is the most important factor in the determination of sanctions. Other factors the team will consider include, but are not limited to, length of time in Drug Court, number of prior violations and sanctions, attitude, efforts to correct the problem promptly, and overall progress in treatment.

Medications and Other Substances

It is important that you tell us when you are prescribed any medications by your doctor or when you are taking any over-the-counter medication. Following this rule helps us gauge your willingness to receive treatment and will also help us not assign a positive to a urine sample that you submit.

Illegal drugs are not permitted and are not to be taken by any Drug Court participant. This includes drugs such as amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, prescription drugs that are not yours, marijuana, kratom and other manufactured substances, etc.

Alcohol, while legal, is NOT allowed to be consumed by Drug Court participants. Use of alcohol violates Drug Court program rules, and you will be sanctioned for its use.

Psychiatric medications are allowed, but proof must be provided to your treatment counselor to ensure you are taking your medication properly. **Medical Marijuana prescriptions are permitted but can only be used if you are NOT enrolled in a Federal Grant program such as THRIVE or AURORA.**

Other prescription medications such blood pressure medication, antibiotics and such are allowed, but once again, it is important that you provide us with a copy of your most recent prescription, so we are aware that you are taking these medications.

Over-the-counter medications are allowed, but you must communicate with staff as some over-the-counter products are banned from the program, i.e., Nyquil, Sudafed, mouthwash. You must call staff and bring in the bottles or boxes ASAP for all such products. Many over-the-counter medications are abused for their effects.

It should also be noted, the use of over-the-counter medications are for short-term use. If you have persistent symptoms, we recommend you see a doctor or the ARNP for a more complete diagnosis.

Supplements such as vitamins, herbs, and minerals are allowed, but as with medications, should be taken with caution. Many supplements may have side effects when taken with prescribed medications. Please let staff know that you are taking a supplement.

Use and/or possession of alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia on county or treatment program property may result in arrest and/or dismissal from this program.

Medication Assisted Treatment

MAT is the use of medication, in combination with therapy, to treat substance use disorders. You are encouraged to explore MAT with the treatment team to determine if it might be a useful tool for your treatment and recovery. Any medication that is FDA approved for the treatment of substance use disorders is permitted in Drug Court. However, you must strictly follow all instructions given to you in order to ensure that your use of that medication is proper and lawful. The use of MAT will be closely coordinated and monitored by the Drug Court team and the prescribing medical professionals.

Confidentiality

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Federal Regulations and Florida law. In response to the regulations, policies and procedures have been developed which safeguard confidentiality. You may be asked to sign a Release of Information which allows the Drug Court team to read your evaluation and share it with referred treatment providers. You are expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of others.

Drug Court Contact Information

Judge Kimberly A. Todd

Sixth Judicial Circuit Judge

Katharine Sellers, Assistant State Attorney

Samantha Sealey, Assistant State Attorney

727-464-6221

Todd Landrigan, Assistant Public Defender

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Katie Kolar, Drug Court Program Manager

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727-453-7401

Closing

Please review this packet from time to time – it can help you progress through the program and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact a staff member for answers. You must also remember, the program changes from time to time, so this is a guide to help you understand the basics of the program. Some things never change, such as you making sure you complete all program requirements and testing negative on your urine samples.

The Drug Court program has been developed to help you achieve total sobriety from illicit and illegal drugs and abstinence from all criminal activity. The program is designed to promote self-sufficiency to return you to the community as a productive and responsible member. The Judge, the court staff and the treatment team are present to guide and assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. You must be motivated to make this change and commit to a better, more productive, sober, self-directed life.

Honesty is always the best policy, especially when it comes to how the Drug Court program will respond to your actions and behavior. When you are honest with Drug Court, you are rewarded with credibility and trust. When you are dishonest with Drug Court, you lose that credibility and trust which will have a direct impact in how the Drug Court program responds to you. If you want the help and are willing to let us help you, we will be here for you and will walk with you on your path to recovery. If you decide that you do not want help, please speak with your attorney about your options.

We hope this handbook has been helpful to you and has answered most of your questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns about the Pinellas County Adult Drug Court program, please feel free to ask your any member of the Drug Court team, your attorney or treatment provider.

The staff of Pinellas County Adult Drug Court wishes you much success during your time in Drug Court and in your life. It is our hope that you will use Drug Court as an opportunity to truly turn your life around and not simply go through the motions to get charges dismissed. While that is your right, the fact that you are in a Court Intervention Program, suggests that you may have some serious issues to confront in your life and that is why Drug Court exists, to help you become crime free and drug free and to be able to return to society as one who contributes and not as one who causes harm.

We wish you all the best in your future.

Sincerely,

Judge Kimberly Todd and the Pinellas County Adult Drug Court Team