The Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court is a post-plea model, offered to eligible participants charged with but not limited to felony drug or related offenses. Entry into the program is completely voluntary, upon successful completion of program case may be dismissed, expunged or sentence modified. Typically, those found guilty of drug related offenses are sentenced to minimum 5 years to be served on probation, special conditions not limited to suspension of driver’s license, fines, fees, community service, drug screens, drug and alcohol assessment and follow up to the recommendations made in that assessment, etc.

Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court is also offered as an alternative at a revocation for those offenders who are on probation and may subsequently test positive for or are battling substance abuse. The probationer may enter the Accountability Court in lieu of incarceration that provides intensive rehabilitative services.

Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court offers a program for those offenders who have a substance addiction and want help fighting it. For example, the first time an Accountability Court participant tests positive for drugs or alcohol, the sanction will likely be 24 hours in jail. The sanctions will be progressive in severity if violations continue.

After arrest, defendants are identified by defense attorney, family members or Accountability Court team member as potentially eligible for the Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court Program.

The Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court Treatment Team consists of the Judge, Coordinator, District Attorney, Felony Probation, Law Enforcement, Defense Attorney, and Treatment Provider. The Treatment Team determines who will be offered entry into the program.

Goals/objectives/services

* Provide early screening, assessment and intervention.
* Eligible offenders receive substance abuse assessment within 21 days of referral to program.
* Provide effective court supervision, including regular hearings that track progress of both sanctions and incentives.
* Participants receive services that promote reduction in frequency of alcohol and drug abuse, through frequent random alcohol and drug screens.
* Reduce high levels of drug related crime in the Mountain Judicial Circuit.
* Provide every participant individual treatment program tailored to their needs with a certified state counselor.
* Active participants are required to attend programs to increase literacy skills or GED.
* Frequent reviews by Judge and Staff.
* Assistance to community resources.
* Family support system and training offered, to include but not limited to basic living skills, understanding of addiction, budgeting etc.

**For more information talk to your Public Defender, Private Attorney or Accountability Court Coordinator 706-968-7735 cell and office 706-839-0345.**

**MOUNTAIN**

**JUDICIAL**

**CIRCUIT**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**COURT**

The mission of the Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court is to enhance public safety through a coordinated effort of treatment and intense supervision within the judicial system by promoting abstinence, law abiding behavior, compliance and participation through prompt intervention thus reducing the recidivism rate. By offering the offender an alternative to incarceration and the tools to abstain from illegal activity, promoting rehabilitation that encourages the offender to become a productive and law abiding citizen.

**Honorable Russell Smith**

**Judge, Superior Court**

**Mountain Judicial Circuit**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Eligible participants will meet the following criteria:

* Currently facing, but not limited to felony charges due to substance abuse
* Meet criteria for high risk abuse or dependence
* At least 17 years old
* Presence in United States is legally documented
* May not reside with any individual (legally married or otherwise) that uses narcotic (prescribed or illegal)

Probation Eligibility

* Must test positive for alcohol/drugs, obtain new alcohol/drug-related offenses, or refuse to provide specimen to be tested for alcohol/drugs
* Must have at least 18 to 24 months left on probation sentence
* Must be at least 17 years old

### **Disqualification Criteria**

The following criteria disqualify an offender for the Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court Program:

* Violent convictions or history as outlined under 42U.S.C 3797 u-2.
* Involvement in trafficking, manufacturing or multiple sale of narcotics
* Severe and/or untreated mental/physical health problem which would impede their ability to actively participate in and complete the intensive program
* Presence in the United States is not legally documented
* Receiving medical management of pain medication (not to include prescribed psychotropic medication)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Habersham County** | **Stephens County** | **Rabun County** |
| 1st Friday of each month, starting 10:00 a.m. | 1st Tuesday of each month starting 4:00 p.m. | 2nd Tuesday of each month, starting 4:00 p.m. |
| 3rd Friday of each month, starting 10:00 a.m. | 3rd Tuesday of each month starting 4:00 p.m. | 4th Tuesday of each month, starting 4:00 p.m. |

The Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court is 18 to 24 months in duration and consists of five. Phase 1 is Preparation, Phase 2 is Education , Phase 3 and Phase 4 is Maintenance , and the Phase 5 is dedicated to re-entry into unsupervised society. Treatment Provider programs include, but are not limited to, substance abuse education, the concept of addiction, relapse, spirituality, anger management, life training skills, parenting skills, problem solving, communication, and some co-occurring issues such as depression and anxiety.  The curriculum will include, but not limited to motivation for change to assess treatment readiness, needs to address thinking errors, and criminality and addiction, in conjunction with 12-step philosophy, family systems and psychodynamic treatment models.

Graduation ceremonies are held regularly to celebrate the hard work and success of the participant and their families.

Incentives are responses to compliance, perceived as positive, by the participant. The Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court recognizes the importance of rewarding participants for good behavior. Incentives will also be swift to support program compliance. Incentives can range from praise from the Judge to having charges dismissed upon program completion.

Sanctions are imposed for failing to comply with guidelines. Sanctions will be swift and progressive with each violation.

There is a $175.00 per month fee. Counseling locations are set by the Treatment provider and schedules will be given to each participant.

Confidentiality is a must. There will be **severe consequences** for any violation of this rule. This applies to both participants and staff of the Accountability Court.

All clients are required to have random alcohol/drug screens for the duration of their program. Drug testing is performed on a random basis; however, a breath, saliva, hair follicle or urine specimen may be required at any time.

**Mountain Judicial Circuit Accountability Court is held:**

Our goal as the staff of the Accountability Court is to offer the tools to succeed, encouraging each participant and their family to build a solid future.