



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present

NEW JERSEY DRUG COURT AND THE EXPANSION OF PROSECUTOR-LED MUNICIPAL DRUG COURT PROGRAMS THROUGH OPERATION HELPING HAND

**February 17, 2021
2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

WEBINAR

Program Summary

New Jersey's Drug Court is a Superior Court program offering adult criminal defendants charged with eligible indictable offenses motivated by their addiction an incarceration alternative that focuses on treatment and rehabilitation. NJ's Drug Court Program is a best practice model for addressing defendants in the criminal justice system who commit crimes due to substance use. Although most of the cases filed in NJ courts are heard at the municipal level, there is no formal drug court program for municipal courts. In the absence of a Municipal Drug Court Program, law enforcement agencies in NJ have established alternate models to connect low-level offenders with treatment and recovery support services before their criminal conduct escalates to indictable offenses which can be prosecuted in Superior Court. This has been achieved through Operation Helping Hand, which has expanded to include models that involve outreach and connection to services including the establishment of prosecutor-led Municipal Drug Court Programs. This panel of experts will offer insight into NJ's Drug Court Program and how OHH has expanded the Drug Court model to various Municipal Courts.

Eligibility

Registration for this program is limited to LPS attorneys in the Division of Criminal Justice, the Division of Law, and the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, assistant prosecutors and selected attorneys in the Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Health who have been invited to attend. Registrants will receive the course materials prior to the program date.

Faculty

Judge Christine M. Heitmann is the Presiding Judge of the Middlesex County Municipal Courts. She supervises and advises all municipal courts within the vicinage; trains and mentors all newly appointed judges both within the vicinage and statewide; and provides substantive and procedural training to all municipal judges and staff. Judge Heitmann is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of all administrative rules, policies and directives of the Supreme Court, AOC Director and Assignment Judge, and for monitoring compliance with R 7:6-2(d), regulating plea agreements and downgrading of matters in municipal courts. She is also the Chief Judge of the North Brunswick, Milltown Borough and East Brunswick municipal courts. She has additionally served as a Superior Court Judge presiding over civil commitment hearings. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Heitmann was an assistant prosecutor for the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, served as a municipal prosecutor, and worked as a criminal defense attorney for Shamy, Shippers & Lonski, P.C. Judge Heitmann graduated Cum Laude from the New England School of Law.

Senior Assistant Prosecutor Michelle Resha Jeneby is a supervisor to the Narcotics Unit, Gang Guns and Narcotics Task Force, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program, Drug Court, and the Operation Helping Hand Program at the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office. She spearheaded the development of OHH's "Road to Recovery" and successfully opened Prosecutor-led Municipal Drug Court Programs and Straight to Treatment programs in five police departments in 2020. Her goal is to open five additional Prosecutor-led Municipal Drug Court Programs and Straight to Treatment programs by the end of 2021. AP Jeneby previously served in the Grand Jury, Appellate, PCR, Forfeiture, and Juvenile Units of the GCPO, as well as on a trial team handling mostly narcotics and forfeiture cases. Before joining the GCPO, AP Jeneby served in the Salem County Prosecutor's Office, where she handled over 30 jury trials, appeals and post-conviction relief matters and was the office's lead prosecutor of narcotics cases. She graduated from Widener University School of Law and worked on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant for Congressman James P. Moran of Virginia.

Municipal Prosecutor Lorraine Nielsen has worked exclusively in the criminal field, specializing in municipal court practice. During the last 18 years, she has worked as a municipal prosecutor in Milltown, Spotswood, Helmetta and South River Boroughs and North Brunswick and East Brunswick Townships. She has also served as acting municipal prosecutor for Plainsboro and Cranbury Townships, and as a substitute municipal prosecutor for Old Bridge, Sayreville, Franklin, New Brunswick, Metuchen, Piscataway, Woodbridge, Edison, South Brunswick, Highland Park, Monroe, Linden, Carteret, South Amboy, Rumson, Hazlet and Freehold. In 2019, Prosecutor Nielsen became involved in the Blue Cares Program, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office's Operation Helping Hand Program. The program established a prosecutor-led municipal drug court in the North Brunswick, Woodbridge, New Brunswick, and East Brunswick municipal courts that gives municipal court defendants with substance use disorders the option to be connected to care. When municipal courts shut down due to COVID-19,

Prosecutor Nielson assisted in developing a plan to allow these courts to resume functioning on a remote basis, including permitting the four established Blue Cares Prosecutor-led Municipal Drug Court Programs to run virtually. Prosecutor Nielson is a graduate of Seton Hall University School of Law.

CLE Credit

NJ CLE Credit: This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 1.2 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 0.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism.

Registration

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.