

# Brooklyn Treatment Court Treatment Application

## The Court

Located in the Kings County Supreme Court in downtown Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Treatment Court opened its doors for business in June of 1996. The Treatment Court sentences defendants arrested for non-violent, felony offenses to participate in substance abuse treatment. It then uses the authority of the judge to monitor their performance and encourage accountability.

To support defendants' treatment involvement, the Treatment Court has created a network of partners -- criminal justice agencies, treatment providers and social service organizations. These partner agencies were intimately involved in the design and implementation of the Court; they continue to play a critical role in supporting each defendant's engagement in treatment. Court-based case managers assess each defendant when s/he arrives at the Court, identifying services needed, matching the defendant to appropriate treatment settings and supportive services and then monitoring his/her progress throughout the life of the case.

## The Treatment Application

The Court's information system, the Treatment Application, was designed to provide Court staff -- judge, attorneys, case managers, researchers and others -- with the tools they need to handle a large number of cases effectively and efficiently. In particular, the Court uses the Treatment Application to increase the standard of accountability at the Court and to expand the information available to courtplayers about defendants and their participation in treatment.

Four principles governed the design of the Treatment Application:

1. Better Information
2. Increased Accountability
3. New Partnerships, New Tools
4. Evaluation

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Treatment Court - [Defendant: DOE, JANE Id: 001]". The interface includes a menu bar (File, Go To, Window, Help) and several tabs: Summary, Compliance, Appearance, and Rap Sheet. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Court Mandate:** Includes fields for Plea Date (1/13/97), Plea Type (Felony), Tx Duration (12-18 mos), and Jail Alt. (5 mos).
- Release Status:** A button labeled "Released".
- Case Manager:** A text field containing "J. Smith".
- Open Status:** A dropdown menu showing "Active - Phase III".
- Treatment Program:** A text field showing "ELMCOR Youth and Adult Activities inpatient (long-term) starting 03/24/97".
- Band:** A row of buttons numbered 1 through 6, with button 3 highlighted as "Current".
- Treatment Summary:** A dropdown menu showing "06/19/97".
- Language:** A dropdown menu showing "Rumanian".
- Judge's Note:** A large empty text area.
- Criminal History:** Fields for Open Warrants (0), Open Court Cases (0), Currently On Parole (No), and Currently On Probation (No).
- Drug Use History:** Fields for Drug Use Severity (Severe), Primary Drug (Cocaine), Requests Treatment (Yes), and Prior Treatment (never entered treatment).
- Housing:** Fields for Type (apartment - shared rent), Duration (more than 5 yrs), Verified (Yes), and Ever Homeless (No).
- Employment - Support:** Fields for Status (Unemployed, looking for work) and Fin. Support (Welfare, including AFDC, ADC).
- Education:** Fields for Status (not currently in school and unemployed) and Type (11).
- Health:** Fields for Reported Conditions (Yes) and Pregnancy.
- Sanctions/Rewards:** A table with columns for Date, Event, Date, and Response.

Date	Event	Date	Response
10/28/97	2 add'l mos no sanctions (Misd)	12/11/97	Advance to phase 3
8/28/97	4 months w/no sanctions	8/28/97	Advance to phase 2
7/24/97	90 days clean in compl	7/24/97	hard cover journal
3/24/97	Dirty or missed urine	3/21/97	2 days jury box

At the bottom of the window, there are buttons for "Save" and "Close", and a set of navigation buttons: "Infraction", "Achievement", "Print", "Sanctions", and "Rewards".

Summary screen from the Treatment Application

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The Treatment Application was built by the New York State Unified Court System, Division of Technology and the Center for Court Innovation. Development of the Treatment Application was supported by the Drug Courts Program Office at the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the New York State Unified Court System. The Treatment Application is used at drug courts throughout New York State.

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Four principles governed the design of the Treatment Application:

1. Better Information
2. Increased Accountability
3. New Partnerships, New Tools
4. Evaluation

The screenshot displays the 'Summary' screen of the Treatment Application for defendant DOE, JANE (ID: 001). The interface includes a menu bar (File, Go To, Window, Help) and a toolbar (Summary, Compliance, Appearance, Rap Sheet). The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Court Mandate:** Plea Date (1/13/97), Plea Type (Felony), Tx Duration (12-18 mos), Jail Alt. (6 mos).
- Release Status:** Released.
- Case Manager:** J. Smith.
- Open Status:** Active - Phase III.
- Treatment Program:** ELMCOR Youth and Adult Activities, inpatient (long-term) starting 03/24/97.
- Band:** Current band 3.
- Language:** Rumanian.
- Judge's Note:** (Empty text area).
- Criminal History:** Open Warrants (0), Open Court Cases (0), Currently On Parole (No), Currently On Probation (No).
- Drug Use History:** Drug Use Severity (Severe), Primary Drug (Cocaine), Requests Treatment (Yes), Prior Treatment (never entered treatment).
- Housing:** Type (apartment - shared rent), Duration (more than 5 yrs), Verified (Yes), Ever Homeless (No).
- Employment - Support:** Status (Unemployed, looking for work), Fin. Support (Welfare, including AFDC, ADC).
- Education:** Status (not currently in school and unemployed), Type ( ), High Grade (11), GED (No).
- Health:** Reported Conditions (Yes), Pregnancy ( ).
- Sanctions/Rewards:** A table listing events and responses.

Date	Event	Date	Response
10/28/97	2 add'l mos no sanctions (Misd)	12/11/97	Advance to phase 3
8/28/97	4 months w no sanctions	8/28/97	Advance to phase 2
7/24/97	90 days clean in compl	7/24/97	hard cover journal
3/24/97	Dirty or missed urine	3/21/97	2 days jury box

At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Save' and 'Close', and a navigation bar with 'Infraction', 'Achievement', 'Print', 'Sanctions', and 'Rewards' tabs.

Summary screen from the Treatment Application

1. Better Information Leads to Better Decisions

Defendants lead complicated lives, so deciding to sentence a defendant to drug treatment rather than jail involves taking a risk. But when the judge has detailed information about each defendant that comes before her, the chances of failure decrease. The Treatment Application is designed to provide a comprehensive picture of all relevant aspects of defendants' lives. For example, what kinds of drugs is the defendant using? What is the defendant's criminal history? And what stands in the way of the defendant successfully completing treatment?

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Treatment Court - [Interview: DOE, JANE Case: 001 |". The window has a menu bar with "File", "Go To", "Window", and "Help". Below the menu bar is a grid of tabs for various assessment categories: Hospitalization Medication, HIV, AOD History, Drug Use, Treatment History, Treatment Barriers, Abuse, Service Needs, Criminal, Impressions, Demographics, Residence, Second Contact, Identifications, Education, Family, Children (highlighted), Family Court, Employment, Physical Health, and Mental Health. The "Children" tab is active, displaying two sections: "Children Situation" and "Custody Related".

**Children Situation**

- How many children have you given birth to or fathered? ..... 1
- How many children do you support? (natural, step and foster children)..... 1
- How many of these children are under the age of 18?..... 1
- How many children under the age of 18 live in your home? (natural, step and foster children)..... 1
- Where are your children? (not living with you)..... with other family
- Are you still in contact with these children?..... Yes

**Custody Related**

- Have you ever lost custody of your children?..... No
- If Yes, what was the reason?.....
- Have you ever regained custody?.....
- If Yes, what is the date?..... 00 - , 0000
- Has treatments been required for you to regain custody?.....
- How important it is for you to regain custody?.....

At the bottom of the window are buttons for "Prev.", "Next", and "Close".

*Information about a defendant's children from the psycho-social assessment screen*

Before a defendant appears in Court for the first time, case workers conduct a detailed assessment using the Treatment Application. The assessment, a complete psycho-social overview which covers 120 questions, helps the case managers determine what drugs the defendant is using, the extent of addiction and the barriers (such as lack of housing, lack of child care, or an immediate health problem) which may undermine the defendant's chance of success in treatment.

The assessment has an automated scoring function, which establishes a quantitative 'score' of the defendant's addiction and suitability for treatment. By using the Treatment Application and entering information directly into the system, case managers have cut the time it takes to perform an assessment in half.

Case managers use the information collected in the assessment to develop a treatment recommendation for the judge. Their recommendation, as well as a summary of the assessment interview, is available to the judge from her computer at her bench.

## 2. Increased Accountability

The judges who sentence drug-addicted defendants to treatment, and the communities in which these defendants enter treatment, demand a high standard of accountability from both defendants and treatment providers. This standard is especially critical to maintain when the drug treatment sentence is an alternative to jail. Neighborhoods are hard pressed to accept defendants back into their communities for treatment if they do not have confidence in the Court's ability to track defendants' progress through a treatment program. The Treatment Application provides the Court with the means to ensure that confidence.

The screenshot displays the 'Treatment Court' application window for 'Monitor: DOE, JANE Case: 001'. It features three tabs: 'Onsite Treatment', 'Drug Test', and 'Treatment Program'. The 'Attendance' tab is active, showing a table of dates and attendance status. The 'Treatment Programs' tab is also visible, showing details for 'Interfaith Rehab', 'ELMCOR Youth and Adult Activities', and 'National Recovery Institute'. The interface includes buttons for 'Next Date', 'New', 'Delete', 'Modify Programs', 'Rolodex', 'Save', and 'Close'.

Date	Status	Notes
03/10/97	Attended	
03/09/97	Attended	
03/08/97	Attended	
03/07/97	Attended	
03/06/97	Absent	violated program rules
03/05/97	Attended	
03/04/97	Attended	
03/03/97	Attended	enrolled in GED class
03/02/97	Attended	
03/01/97	Attended	
02/28/97	Absent	left without permission
02/27/97	Attended	
02/25/97	Absent	missed appointment
02/24/97	Attended	
02/22/97	Excused	attended family court
02/21/97	Attended	

**Treatment Programs**

Interfaith Rehab  
ELMCOR Youth and Adult Activities  
National Recovery Institute

Start Date:  
Modality: outpatient  
Inactive reason:

107-10 Northern Blvd, Corona, NY 11368

Phone (718) 651-0096 Fax (718) 533-1357  
Operates 9 am- 5 pm  
Facility Type therapeutic community  
Treatment Yes  
Social Services No

*Tracking of defendant's progress in drug treatment*

The Treatment Application is a powerful and precise tool that the judge uses like a close up lens to reveal the unique characteristics of each case that comes before her. It carefully monitors each defendant's attendance in treatment and their drug test results. For instance, if a defendant fails to appear for treatment -- or tests positive for drugs while in treatment -- the judge can respond, terminating treatment and sending the defendant to jail if the failures are chronic.

Thus, the Treatment Application raises the bar of accountability for treatment providers and court-based case managers. As judges become accustomed to reviewing detailed, electronic information about the progress of defendants in treatment, high quality records become the standard and incomplete information is quickly detected. As a result, staff and treatment programs are encouraged to become more diligent in maintaining careful records.

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### 3. New Partnerships Require New Tools

Courts cannot perform their work alone. As they take an aggressive, problem-solving approach to addressing drug crimes, they must turn to new partners for help. Drug treatment providers, social service agencies and other criminal justice agencies all have a role to play in the process -- providing treatment, addressing the barriers that defendants face in treatment, and ensuring that the criminal justice system speaks with one voice about each defendant's treatment plan. In developing these relationships, an accessible, shared method of communication is essential. The Treatment Application is designed to link everyone involved in the process, providing a common mechanism for sharing information.

*Screen with details and history of a defendant's drug testing results*

The Treatment Application includes a direct connection between the Court and off-site treatment providers. Through this link, providers enter attendance and test data directly to the Court's computer system, eliminating the need for court-based case managers to phone for attendance and drug test information.

A different kind of connection has been established between the Treatment Court and New York's Rikers Island Detention Center. Failing in treatment, a defendant may be remanded to Rikers for several days. Court-based case managers use a video-conferencing link to remain in contact with the defendant and keep the focus on returning to treatment.

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#### 4. Evaluation

Like other alternative courts, drug courts are essentially experiments, trying a new approach to justice. Carefully evaluating the results of the drug court is critical: 1) problems must be identified and addressed and 2) achievements must be broadcast. In addition, such ambitious new projects must be able to examine their impacts on the criminal justice system and defendants. The Treatment Application has a built-in capacity to help analyze the drug court program's impacts.

#### *Defendant's compliance record of participation in drug treatment program*

For example, the compliance record screen in the Treatment Application provides an easy-to-read, graphic summary of a defendant's progress in treatment. Dots represent a defendant's attendance at treatment, detox or court. By clicking on a particular date, the judge can view detailed information about treatment and drug testing. Such level of detail also provides the raw material for the Treatment Court to evaluate its program performance, answering such questions as: what percentage of defendants complete treatment? What percentage of defendants with children to support drop out of treatment before completion?

The database keeps track of the Court's progress and provides outcome measures for quantitative research. Compliance rates with drug treatment and community service, court appearance rates, and types of referrals for service can be generated on a regular basis. These 'snapshots' of the Court help staff gauge what needs fine-tuning. In addition, this information can be used -- in conjunction with more qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews -- to support an evaluation which measures the impact of the Court.

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**Specifications**

The Treatment Application is written in Powerbuilder 5.0. In Brooklyn, the application is running on a Digital Alpha running UNIX. The Treatment Court database is a Sybase SQL 11 database.

Treatment Court users run both Windows 3.11 and Windows 95 on the client PC's. Currently there are 25 users at the Brooklyn Treatment Court.

Appearance history information and the New York State rap sheet are delivered to the Treatment Court through an open gateway from the mainframe system in Albany, NY.



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**Center for Court  
Innovation**

Located in New York City, the Center for Court Innovation works in partnership with the New York State Unified Court System to improve public confidence in justice. The winner of a 1998 Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, the Center is the only one of its kind in the nation: an independent unit, broken out from day-to-day court administration, that works to improve how courts do business. Administered as a project of the Fund for the City of New York, the Center functions as the Court System's research and development arm, conceiving, planning and implementing new court prototypes. The Center's model projects include:

- § Bronx Domestic Violence Court
- § Brooklyn Domestic Violence Court
- § Brooklyn Treatment Court
- § Crown Heights Community Mediation Center
- § Harlem Community Justice Center
- § Manhattan Family Treatment Court
- § Midtown Community Court
- § Red Hook Community Justice Center

With the support of a grant from the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Center for Court Innovation also assists planners in other states who are developing community-focused court initiatives. The Center's technical assistance team:

- § answers questions and provides information about all of the Center's projects
- § hosts site visits to New York and uses the Center's projects to demonstrate the impacts of new court prototypes
- § sponsors *www.communitycourts.org*, a web site with tools and practical advice for community court planners
- § offers individualized assistance to jurisdictions that are developing community courts

For more information, please call Jimena Martinez at (212) 373-8098.