



ITASCA COUNTY WELLNESS COURT

What is Wellness Court?

Wellness Court is a post-conviction specialty court which provides for a non-adversarial community based approach to treat members with drug/alcohol dependence violations of law. The overall goals of Wellness Court are rehabilitating substance abuse offenders, thereby reducing crime and recidivism through intensive supervision, frequent court appearances, substance abuse treatment/counseling, and drug/alcohol testing.

The Mission of the Itasca County Wellness is to unite judiciary, criminal justice entities, substance abuse treatment providers, and the community to:

- Enhance public safety
- Ensure offender accountability
- Reduce the illicit substance use of non-violent addicted offenders
- Restore offenders to law-abiding productivity
- Reduce the financial impact on society.

Wellness Court recognizes the direct connection between substance abuse and crime, and the importance of providing rapid entry into appropriate levels of treatment for persons charged with felony drug possession, gross misdemeanor or felony DWI, and accompanying offenses. The Itasca County Wellness Court served as a national model for a growing number of joint jurisdiction courts that have a Joint Powers Agreement with a Tribal Court (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe). Itasca County Wellness Court was one of the first Joint Jurisdiction Courts in the United States. Judge Korey Wahwassuck, District Court Judge, and Judges Megan Treuer and Paul Day, Leech Lake Tribal Court Judges, preside jointly over Wellness Court hearings.

Who is eligible to participate in Wellness Court?

Participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Any felony possession of controlled substance crime in the 3rd, 4th, or 5th degree, or gross misdemeanor or felony level DWI crime involving an adult defendant
2. Resident of Itasca County or resides within a 20 mile radius of Grand Rapids
3. Non-violent criminal history
4. Chemical Health assessment with a minimum of outpatient services recommended
5. Voluntarily agrees to participate in Wellness Court

Who is on the Wellness Court Team?

The Wellness Court Team consists of: District Court Judge, Tribal Court Judge, Coordinator, Law Enforcement, County Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Officer, and a Licensed Alcohol/Drug Counselor. Several other interested parties attend the weekly pre-court meetings.

When is Wellness Court held?

Wellness Court is held once a week on Friday mornings at 10:00 am, and is located in the Itasca County Court House, Courtroom 321. It is an open court and the public is welcome to attend. The Wellness Court Team conducts a "pre-court conference" at 8:30 am each Friday morning concerning cases scheduled for court.

Questions or inquiries?

Chad Christofferson, Wellness Court Probation Officer
Phone: 218/244-8822
Email: chad.christofferson@state.mn.us

Michelle Anderson, Itasca County Probation Agent
Phone: 218/327-2869
Email: michelle.anderson@co.itasca.mn.us

Abby Kuschel, Wellness Court Coordinator
Phone: 218/999-7550
Email: abby.kuschel@courts.state.mn.us

Wellness Court Step Program

	Duration	Participant Requirements
Step I - Treatment	Minimum of 120 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of primary treatment • Appear in court once a week for review hearings • Meet with probation officer a minimum of once per week • Random PBTs by law enforcement and probation • Daily call-ins for random UAs (urinalysis)/Chemical Tests (CTs) • At least two weekly UAs/CTs and also random UAs/CTs • Attend at least two meetings per week after completing primary treatment • Obtain a sponsor • Progression to Step II requires no sanctions within 30 days of step change, and payment of at least \$100 of your Wellness Court fee • Electronic Home Monitoring as determined by the team for DWI offenders • Pay \$100 of the \$400 Wellness Court fee
Step II - Skills	Minimum of 120 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Phase II of treatment and be following all treatment recommendations • Develop and follow individual recovery plan • Appear in court every other week for review hearings • Attend at least two meetings per week after completing primary treatment • Meet with probation officer a minimum of once per week • Continued daily call-ins for random UAs/CTs • Random PBTs by law enforcement and probation • Minimum of 2 home visits with probation officer during Step II • If not fully employed, active job search or working on diploma/GED • Be actively involved with a sponsor • If applicable, reinstatement of driver's license, if eligible • Obtain stable, chemical-free residence • Progression to Step III requires no sanctions within 90 days of step change, and total payment of your \$400 Wellness Court fee
Step III - Growth	Minimum of 120 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court appearances a minimum of every other week • Meet with probation officer a minimum of every other week • A minimum of one home visit by probation officer • Continue to follow individual recovery plan • Attend at least two meetings per week after completing primary treatment • Random UAs/CTs a minimum of two times per month as directed by probation officer • Be actively involved with a sponsor • Must prepare Community Volunteer Action Plan showing how the participant will meet the volunteer requirement in Step IV • All fines and fees must be paid prior to moving to the final step • Must have a minimum of 180 days of verified sobriety before moving to final step
Step IV - Transition	Minimum of 180 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly court appearances • Random UAs/CTs with a minimum of two UA's during Step IV • Meet with probation officer once every other week • Attend at least two meetings per week after completing primary treatment • Be actively involved with a sponsor • Develop and follow individual recovery plan • Must meet the volunteer requirement of Wellness Court, which consists of a 40-hour equivalent of some or all of the following: mentoring; community work service; speaking to probation, treatment or other community service groups; restorative justice; driving other Wellness Court participants to court hearings; or other suitable service. • Must have a minimum of 180 days of verified sobriety before graduating from the program

**Participants must petition the Wellness Court for permission to progress to next step.*