

Drug Education and Community Service Program



The Pretrial Drug Education and Community Service Program (DECSP) is available for certain defendants who are charged with violating certain drug possession or drug paraphernalia laws. The DECSP gives eligible defendants a chance to get education or substance abuse treatment and do community service instead of going to trial. Any defendant who wants to take part in the DECSP must meet the eligibility requirements in section 54-56i of the Connecticut General Statutes and must submit an application to the court.

When a defendant applies for the DECSP, the court file is sealed, and the court will get a recommendation from the prosecutor in the case about whether the defendant should be allowed to take part in the program. If the court grants the defendant's application, the defendant must agree to the tolling of the statute of limitations (to give the state more time to prosecute the case if the defendant does not successfully finish the DECSP), to waive (give up) the right to a speedy trial, and to go into whichever drug education or substance abuse treatment program that the court orders within 90 days,

unless the court gives the defendant more time to start the program. The defendant must also agree to accept more treatment if the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) thinks that it is necessary.

If the defendant agrees to these conditions, the defendant will be sent to CSSD to confirm that the defendant is eligible for the DECSP, and then to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for an evaluation and determination to figure out which drug education or substance abuse treatment program the defendant should take part in. If the defendant is a veteran, however, the court may send the defendant to the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs or the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, instead of DMHAS, for the evaluation and determination. For the DECSP, a veteran is any person who was discharged or released under conditions that were not dishonorable from active service in the armed forces as defined in section 27-103 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

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After the court gets the evaluation and determination from DMHAS or the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the court will send the defendant to the appropriate program. If it is the first time that the defendant is using the DECSP, the defendant will be required to take part in either a 15-week drug education program or a substance abuse treatment program that has at least 15 sessions and do 5 days of community service. If it is the second time that the defendant is using the DECSP, the defendant will be required to take part in either a 15-week drug education program or a substance abuse treatment program that has at least 15 sessions and do 15 days of community service. If the court allows the defendant to use the DECSP for a third time, the defendant will be required to take part in a substance abuse treatment program and do 30 days of community service. If the defendant finishes the assigned drug education or substance abuse treatment program and the required community service successfully, the court will dismiss the charges against the defendant.

Any defendants who want to apply for DECSP must pay an application fee of \$100, a nonrefundable evaluation fee of \$150, and a nonrefundable program fee. The program fee is \$600 if the court orders the defendant to take part in the 15-week drug education program, or \$100 if the court orders the defendant to take part in a substance abuse treatment program. Defendants ordered to take part in a substance abuse treatment program will also have to pay the cost of the substance abuse treatment program to the treatment provider. The court may decide that the defendant does not have to pay some or all of those fees, though, if the court finds that the defendant is unable to pay or is indigent.



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