

Columbia Bridge Program

A Federal Drug Court



What is the Columbia Bridge Program? *The Columbia Bridge Program is essentially a behavioral modification program which is administered via a drug court.*

Who “runs” the Columbia Bridge Program? *The program is operated by the U.S. District Court with U.S. District Judges J. Michelle Childs and Mary Geiger Lewis overseeing the program. The U.S. Probation Office in cooperation with U.S. Attorney’s Office, Federal Public Defender’s Office, local treatment providers, and mentors help to administer the program.*

What is the purpose of the Columbia Bridge Program? *The goal of the program is to identify those individuals who are **truly addicted** to drugs or alcohol and whose addiction led to their involvement in a federal offense. The program hopes to modify an individual's behavior using various treatment modalities, intensive supervision, swift and certain consequences, positive reinforcement, as well as rewards.*

Who has the opportunity to participate in the Columbia Bridge Program? *As previously noted, the program is designed for those individuals who are **addicted** to drugs and alcohol and require assistance in learning to maintain abstinence. This program is not intended for the causal drug user.*

How do I get my client in drug court? *Clients can be considered for the program via a referral request. The request for consideration form will be located on the U.S. Probation Office's website found at: <http://www.scp.uscourts.gov>. Additional information regarding the program will also be found on the website.*

What would prevent my client from getting into the program even if they are addicted to drugs and alcohol? *The following are a few examples of cases which could prevent participation, but are not necessarily determinative:*

- *Career Offender/Armed Career Offender or Instant Offense is a Crime of Violence*
- *Pattern of violent behavior and danger posed to the community*
- *Sex Offenders*
- *Individuals with serious mental health issues*
- *Unrelated pending criminal cases and active warrants*

- *Individuals facing mandatory minimums e.g., Life sentence*
- *Assigned Judge does not agree to client's participation.*
- *Judges Childs and Lewis do not agree to client's participation.*

How long does the Columbia Bridge Program last? *The program is broken down into three phases. Based upon a defendant's compliance with the phases' criteria (e.g., sobriety), the program can last up to 18 months.*

What are the benefits for my client should they successfully complete the Columbia Bridge Program? *The number one benefit is living their life in recovery and the ability to function as a productive member of society. Additionally, the following are **possible** rewards for successful participation: 1) The U.S. Attorney's Office, in their sole discretion, may move for a downward departure/variance regarding sentence; 2) reduce the charges; 3) recommend a non-guideline sentence; 4) refer to Pretrial Diversion; or 5) move for a reduction in the term of probation or supervised release.*

Who can I contact should I have additional questions about the program? *U.S. Probation Officer Gina C. Earle's preferred method is email at gina_earle@scp.uscourts.gov or at 803-253-3278.*