



COMAL COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURT

Accountability Court Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria

The Comal County Accountability (CCAC) targets offenders for admission who are offenders with misdemeanor offenses of DWI-2nd and/or those offenders with a DWI-1st offense with multiple other alcohol related arrests. Defendants who are charged solely with DWI-1st are usually not eligible for the program, unless there is more than one pending offense charged as DWI-1st.

After an appearance before a magistrate and prior to formal sentencing, eligible offenders are screened and evaluated via the use of a the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) screening instrument and the Substance Abuse Evaluation (SAE), which are normed and validated to the offender population, are considered clinical assessment tools, and are objective and evidence-based instruments used to determine the level of care needed for a defendant receiving services in a community corrections environment in Texas. The SASSI determines the probability of the potential participant to have a substance use disorder. The SAE is used to determine the level of care needed. The SAE includes appropriate collateral information: police reports, prior offense history, previous or current probation information, & information from significant others. The SAE also provides a basis to assess for statuses such as determination of trauma history/symptoms and PTSD, systems related to employment, financial, medical, mental health, and social support, motivation to change, and other criminogenic risks/needs allowing to determine strengths and weaknesses causing the creation of a well-reasoned and individualized case plan.

The findings of the SASSI and SAE are then presented to the CCAC team. After reviewing the findings of the screening and evaluation, as well as discussion surrounding the offense, the CCAC team reaches a consensus on whether or not the candidate may be treated safely and effectively in the program. The team never applies subjective criteria or personal impressions to determine a participant's suitability for the program.

During the screening and evaluation of potential participants, it may be found that the candidate for the program has disorders or issues in addition to substance abuse. Such disorders and issues may include mental health disorders, that the potential participant may be a Veteran, or may be facing family-related legal challenges. When these issues are identified, referrals will be made to the appropriate resources.

A candidate with co-occurring disorder(s) who is receiving treatment from the Local Mental Health Authority or private medical personnel, and is in good standing, may be considered for acceptance into the Court. If the candidate is not in good standing, in the best interest of the candidate, efficacy of the Court, and of the community, referrals to appropriate resources will be made. Referrals may be made to the Comal County Veterans Treatment Court and/or the Comal County Mental Health Court programs, should the offender meet the criteria for the screening process for those specialty courts.