

East of the River Community Court's Mission

The mission of the District of Columbia Superior Court's East of the River Community Court (ERCC) is to reduce low-level and quality-of-life offenses in east of the Anacostia River neighborhoods by utilizing a collaborative, problem-solving approach to crime to protect rights and liberties, to hold defendants and offenders accountable, and to increase the public's confidence in the court system. The ERCC seeks to partner with government agencies, residents, community organizations, faith-based groups, social services providers, and businesses to improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IN ACTION



District of Columbia Superior Court
East of the River Community Court
(ERCC)

Courtroom 221

500 Indiana Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20001

Judge Craig Iscoe, Presiding Judge



For more information about the East of the River Community Court, contact Michael Francis, Community Court Coordinator at 202-879-1950 or michael.francis@dsc.gov

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**EAST OF THE RIVER
COMMUNITY COURT
(ERCC)**



*Judge Craig Iscoe, Presiding
Courtroom 221
D.C. SUPERIOR COURT
500 INDIANA AVE NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20001*

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia is the trial court of general jurisdiction in the District of Columbia. It is composed of divisions that handle a wide array of matters including civil, criminal, family, domestic violence, probate and tax cases.

The Court’s Vision Statement is: “Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.”

The East of the River Community Court (ERCC)

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Superior Court) established the East of the River Community Court (ERCC) in September 2002. This problem-solving court was a response to the high rates of poverty, crime, and disorder in neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River. Additionally the Superior Court sought to achieve more efficient misdemeanor case processing and to reduce police overtime.

The ERCC adjudicates misdemeanor cases originating east of the Anacostia River (the Sixth and Seventh Police Districts) not involving domestic violence, such as drug possession, sexual solicitation, unlawful entry, simple assault, and illegal dumping.

One Judge presides over the ERCC and hears all phases of a case from arraignment to final disposition. Such continuity allows for more informed judicial decision-making. However, if a defendant decides to go to trial, the case is then certified to another judge for trial. If the defendant is convicted at trial, he or she is then sentenced by the trial judge.

The ERCC involves the partnership and collaboration of several agencies and organizations, and works to identify the social service needs of a defendant or offender that may remedy his/her criminal behavior. After fully assessing an individual, including strengths and challenges, the ERCC explores diversion or plea alternatives geared toward addressing the identified social services needs.

Another important aspect of the ERCC is the use of community service as an essential component of diversion or sentencing. The ERCC holds firmly to the notion that defendants who are adversely affecting the quality of life of a community should engage in restorative justice measures by providing services to that community.

Since the ERCC’s inception, the calendar’s Presiding Judge, Superior Court staff, and representatives from entities such as the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA), Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), United States Attorney’s Office (USAO), Superior Court Trial Lawyers Association (SCTLA), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) have regularly participated in community meetings, Town Hall Meetings, and other events held in the neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River.

Diversion Options

If a defendant enters and completes a “Diversion” program, the Court may dismiss the case. The decision on whether to offer a defendant Diversion is made by the United States Attorney’s Office and is usually based on the nature of the offense and the defendants prior record, if any. Most Diversion programs require defendants to perform community service, remain drug-free, and prove that they are working or in school. Diversion programs vary in length from four to nine months.

The following summary briefly describes some of the requirements of some Diversion programs but is not a complete listing of program requirements:

First Time Offender Agreement (FTO): Offered to first-time offenders charged with non-violent offenses who admit their criminal responsibility. Must perform community service, remain drug-free, and work or be in school.

Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA): Similar to an FTO, but more closely supervised by the ERCC. Offered to defendants with few prior convictions.

Deferred Sentencing Agreement (DSA): Similar to a DPA, but offered to defendants with more prior convictions. Defendants must plead guilty before entering a DSA. If the DSA is revoked due to poor performance, the case proceeds directly to sentencing.

Drug Court: Offered to defendants who cannot remain drug-free. Requires twice-weekly drug testing and sanctions for failing to meet program requirements. Drug treatment may be residential or out-patient.

STET Docket: Offered to defendants charged with unlawful entry. Requires defendant to stay away from the area at issue for nine months.

Angels/Project Power: Offered to defendants charged with offering to perform a sexual act in return for money. Both residential and out-patient drug treatment is available, followed by counseling and classes addressing prostitution-related issues.

Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS): Offered to gay, lesbian, or transgendered defendants charged with offering to perform a sexual act in return for money.

John School: Offered to persons charged with seeking to pay someone to perform sexual acts for money. Defendants must pay for and complete a one day educational program.

Mental Health Diversion Court: Offered to defendants, generally those charged with non-violent offenses, who are diagnosed with and receiving treatment for mental health issues.

Mediation: Offered to defendants charged with simple assault or destruction of property, when the complaining witness (victim) and the defendant have an on-going relationship and the complaining witness agrees to meet with the defendant to try to resolve the matter without going to trial.

ERCC Community Advisory Board

In 2008 the East of the River Community Court (ERCC) Community Advisory Board was established. It is designed to involve community stakeholders in problem-solving justice. The ERCC Community Advisory Board serves as a vehicle for community stakeholders to engage, assist, and collaborate with the ERCC. The ERCC Community Advisory Board members live east of the Anacostia River, and provide ideas, suggestions, critiques, and recommendations regarding how the ERCC can better serve the east of the Anacostia River community and improve the administration of justice.