

Samaritan Project, Inc. in Partnership with Milwaukee Municipal Court

Municipal Court proposes to partner with Samaritan Project, Inc. (Samaritan), utilizing Samaritan's existing training services as part of a court referral program.

Samaritan has been presenting two training sessions a year, one on Job Readiness and another on Driver's Education. Their plan is to expand to a quarterly offering in 2015.

For 2016, Municipal Court proposes a pilot project between one of the Branches and the Samaritan Project. The judge would refer defendants to Samaritan; Samaritan would be providing two training sessions a month, with a 30 person/session capacity.

The Court would be referring defendants whose driver's license (DL) is suspended. The defendant would attend one of the two-hour training sessions. Once completed, the defendant would return to Court as a walk-in, with proof of attendance/completion, and the DL suspension would be lifted without having to make any payment. The defendant would then have 30-60 days to begin making payments.

The defendant could then be referred back to Samaritan for the session not yet taken. Once completed, the defendant would return to Court with proof of attendance/completion and be given even more time to pay, again with no money down. The end result is that defendants participating in this referral program would be allowed up to 120 days before they needed to begin making payments on their judgment, while still maintaining a valid DL.

This is intended to address the concern of defendants who are struggling to make payments, but need to have a valid license for work.

Without this referral program, people must pay 30% of the total owed to the City in order to lift the DL suspension, and continue to make payments every 60-90 days to stay valid. Most Wisconsin municipalities require 100% payment of the judgment before lifting a DL suspension.

For the referrals to the Job Readiness session, Samaritan will institute a process for follow-up with each attendee to collect self-reported information related to employment.

The goal for the first year is to improve the lives of a minimum of 360 people. Based on outcomes, further expansion may be considered after the first year.