



Sharen Wilson Criminal District Attorney



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First-time offenders: Stay clean for 6 months and get your case dismissed

(Fort Worth, TX) - Some first-time offenders in Tarrant County are getting a second chance.

For decades, young offenders have been able to clear their criminal records of various offenses by participating in a program known as the Deferred Prosecution Program (DPP). Now older residents, who also are first-time offenders, have a similar opportunity through an expansion of that program known as the Deferred Prosecution Initiative (DPI).

"One of the goals of the criminal justice system is rehabilitation," Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney Sharen Wilson said. "Sobriety is the beginning of that rehabilitation.

"The question this year, as the backlog of cases rises because of coronavirus, was: How can we impact more people and achieve our rehabilitation goal with more people?"

The answer: Expand DPP, which is open to those between the ages of 17 and 24. Now DPI is open to first-time offenders 25 and older who are willing to get sober.

"We want to resolve these lower level drug cases so we can focus our resources on violent crimes with victims that are increasing in this time of COVID," Wilson said.

Here's how it works:

This is a six-month program administered by the Criminal District Attorney's Office. Participants must have no criminal history or record of participating in any other diversion program. And they must stay free of crime and drugs.

They must apply for this program within 90 days of their case being filed – and be approved to participate. Those accepted into the program will attend orientation, sign waivers, provide three drug hair follicle tests, pay a \$300 program fee and more. This is not a supervision program and there are no monthly check-ins.

Some participants may be required to take an online drug and alcohol class. Out of state residents, such as those cited for airport drug cases, are allowed to participate in this program.

Pass the DPI program and the case is dismissed. Participants are eligible for their cases to be erased from their records. Anyone who violates conditions of the program will get kicked out of DPI and their case will move forward in the courts.

Those eligible to participate in this program may face a variety of charges, including all misdemeanor and felony THC charges and a limited number of controlled substances, excluding heroin and fentanyl.

"Our job is to resolve these cases in the best way possible," Wilson said. "If we can get documented sobriety, then I am fine with this person's case being dismissed."

Go to this link - <https://youtu.be/yuDp5-X730s> - to see and download comments about DPI from Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney Sharen Wilson.

