

# ORANGE COUNTY COURT DIVERSION PROGRAM

FEBRUARY, 2016 NEWSLETTER

## THE YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SAFETY PROGRAM:

An update on the new protocol

Since July 1, 2015, OCCDP has been following the new statewide YSASP protocol developed by the VACDP.

The big change for Orange County was the end of Diversion Review Board meetings with clients cited for underage drinking and marijuana possession. Additionally, clients are not automatically required to meet with a licensed substance abuse counselor.

Instead, an online screening and interview with a Diversion case manager provides a first look at a client's substance use patterns and impacts. As expected, we have found most clients at low risk for a substance abuse issue. In those cases, they are not referred on to a licensed counselor. This is a cost savings for clients and decreases the burden on services available for substance abuse.

When a client does present factors indicating a potential or existing substance abuse issue, they are required to meet with a licensed counselor and complete any follow-up recommended. Because there are fewer, we are able to focus more attention on these clients, encouraging them to access the services they need.

Through this transition Diversion case workers have had an open dialog about how to improve the new protocol and client outcomes. Here are some things we have learned...

1. The in-person interview is still the most important part of the program. The personal information and reflections client's share strongly enhance the program's effectiveness.
2. Clients are generally open and straightforward about their substance use. We can trust our tools and process.
3. Clients benefit from having the option to do the screening person-to-person. Difficulties reading or with technology make computer screenings challenging for some.
4. Verifying the information client's share through the screening leads to good conversations about substance use, community impact and consequences.

At the end of FY 2016, we will compare collected data to previous years'. With this information, we will better understand the impact of the protocol and be able to continue improvements.

## Happy New Year!

In this newsletter, we're bringing you up-to-date on the implementation of the new protocol for processing cases involving minors "ticketed" for underage drinking and/or possession of marijuana. Additionally, we address the decrease in Review Board Meetings.

Respectfully,

*—David Savidge*

*Executive Director*

*—Jessie Schmidt*

*Case Manager*

## REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS:

### Decreases in cases lead to fewer meetings

Some of you may have noticed a decrease in the invitations from our office to participate in Review Board meetings. There are two primary factors contributing to this decline. First, VACDP's new protocol for civil violations of underage drinking and marijuana possession no longer requires these clients to meet with a Diversion Review Board. Since this is over half of our caseload, it is the main factor contributing to the decrease in Review Board meetings.

Now, the only cases "reviewed" by a Diversion Review Board are those referred from court involving individuals charged for a criminal or delinquent act. This year, we have found these referrals are also in decline.

Typically, the court docket in Orange County contains a number of relatively low level misdemeanor crimes that eventually end up being referred to Diversion. However, that trend seems to be shifting. Today, we are seeing more serious crimes, often drug related, being filed in court. These cases, due to the nature and seriousness of the offense, are usually not referred to Diversion.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteer Review Board members ready and willing to serve when notified to attend a scheduled board meeting. Low level misdemeanor crimes are still being filed in court, and we rely on you to make our Diversion Program successful. As both the legislative and enforcement landscape shift to respond to community needs, we will keep you informed of the role Diversion can play in creating a restorative alternative to the criminal justice system.

#### **Addison County Court Diversion**

PO Box 881, Middlebury, VT  
802-388-3888

[courtdiversion.com](http://courtdiversion.com)

#### **Bennington County Center for Restorative Justice**

439 Main St., Bennington, VT  
802-447-1595, [bcrl.org](http://bcrl.org)

#### **Caledonia & Essex County Court Diversion**

NE Kingdom Youth Services  
24 Bagley St., St. Johnsbury, VT  
802-748-8732, [nekys.org](http://nekys.org)

#### **Chittenden County Court Diversion**

184 King St., Burlington, VT  
802-864-1585, [chitccd.org](http://chitccd.org)

#### **Franklin Grand Isle Court Diversion**

5 Lemnah Dr., St. Albans, VT  
802-527-5560

[fgicourtdiversion.org](http://fgicourtdiversion.org)

#### **Lamoille Restorative Center**

PO Box 148, Hyde Park, VT  
802-888-5871, [lrcvt.org](http://lrcvt.org)

#### **Orange County Court Diversion**

PO Box 58, Chelsea, VT  
802-685-3172

#### **Orleans County Court Diversion**

NE Kingdom Community Action  
71 Seymour Ln Newport VT  
802-334-8224, [nekcavt.org](http://nekcavt.org)

#### **Rutland County Court Diversion**

50 Center St., Rutland, VT  
802-775-2479

TASP: 802-786-3840

[rutlandcountycourtdiversion.org](http://rutlandcountycourtdiversion.org)

#### **Washington County Court Diversion**

322 No. Main St., Ste 5, Barre, VT  
802-479-1900, [wcdp-vt.org](http://wcdp-vt.org)

#### **Windham County Court Diversion**

PO Box 6008, Brattleboro VT  
802-257-0361

[youthservicesinc.org](http://youthservicesinc.org)

#### **Valley Court Diversion Programs**

PO Box 474, White River Junction, VT  
802-295-5078, [vcdp.org](http://vcdp.org)

#### **Vermont Association of Court Diversion Programs**

Willa Farrell, Director

Office of the Attorney General: Court Diversion Office

109 State Street, Montpelier VT 05601

802-282-1360, [vtcourtdiversion.org](http://vtcourtdiversion.org)