

# TLINGIT & HAIDA WELLNESS COURT



## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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*Welcome to Tlingit & Haida's Wellness Court program!*

*We are so honored that you have agreed to work with us on your journey to wellness. As you get started, we wanted to provide you with a quick overview of our program.*

*We are a volunteer program offering support to those who currently struggle with or have a history of substance use or misuse. We use a mental health model that will provide you with intensive case management as well as clinical services to meet your needs and goals. We will partner with you on your journey to wellness, focusing on any areas of your life that you feel are important to address so that you can achieve a healthier future.*

*We are a court program that provides a culturally sensitive model by incorporating traditional healing practices which is different than a typical court setting. When you enter our court room, you will notice that everyone sits in a circle on the same level, including the Peacemaker/Judge. This reflects the equality and respect that we hold for our participants.*

*Throughout your 12-18 months in our program, you will learn new skills to help navigate life in a healthier way while creating lasting relationships and support that will continue even after you graduate. We hope this program is valuable to you and creates meaningful change within your life. Change is hard but you, your family and community are worth it!*

*Sincerely,  
Your Wellness Court Team*

## *Vision Statement*

*Increase cultural healing and wellness for our tribal citizens, their families, and their communities.*

## *Mission Statement*

*Working together to promote a healthier, safer and stronger tribal community by addressing personal and historical traumas while reconnecting to our traditional tribal values and offering a culturally supportive space to focus on wellness and living the process of healing.*

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# Design Description & Translation



The design for the Wellness Court is a representation of people coming together to create a space for healing and well-being:

The two people are connected by their backs and holding paddles to show they have support in one another and support from their culture. The hands on the outside are the community and program staff who are going to hold them up when they need them the most and are at their side so that they don't have to continue this journey alone. Below them is Devil's Club leaf, a medicine that has been used by Tlingit & Haida people since time immemorial. The salmon trout at the center of the Devil's Club is our culture and this serves as a seed for our growth. When you know who you are and where you come from, healing can take place, and this is why the Devil's Club is at the root of the journey to wellness.

The language translates to “we are walking towards the good life”.

*The Wellness Court design was commissioned from tribal citizen Miciana Hutcherson, Áak'w Tu Sháa, who is from the Raven Dog Salmon clan from Angoon and was raised in Juneau, Alaska.*

# Wellness Court Team

**Peacemaker / Judge:** The Peacemaker/Judge is the key leader for the Wellness Court program. They supervise and reinforce treatment by reviewing the reports from the Wellness Court team during staffing meetings, as well as input from the participant during their hearing. They encourage compliance and accountability through the use of Rewards and Responses.

**Wellness Court Coordinator & Specialist:** The Wellness Court Coordinator and Wellness Court Specialist oversee the Wellness Court program. They are primarily responsible for facilitating a participant's entry into the Wellness Court program and monitoring his or her progress throughout the program.

**Clinician:** The Wellness Court Clinician provides individual and group counseling services to address the underlying concerns that may be affecting a participant's current life and sobriety.

**Family Case Worker:** The Family Case Worker will work closely with the participant to select areas of their life that need additional support and set realistic goals to work toward their overall wellness. The Caseworker will monitor and report participants compliance with programming expectations to the Wellness Court team and Peacemaker/Judge on a regular basis.

**Administrative Clerk:** The Administrative Clerk is the point of contact when being referred to the program. They are responsible for enrolling a new Wellness Court participant and handling the day-to-day clerical tasks for program staff.

*"Promoting accountability, healing and tribal lifeways through culture for our tribal citizens."*

# Program Eligibility

To be eligible for Tlingit & Haida’s Wellness Court program, you must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolled tribal citizen or eligible for enrollment
  - » Or a household member of the above
- 14 years of age or older
- Experiencing or have a history of substance misuse
- Willing to participate in the program
- Approval from Tlingit & Haida’s Community & Behavioral Services division after completing a substance use assessment

# Program Approach

## Components

The programming will vary for each participant as it is designed around individual needs and circumstances. The basics of programming for all participants will include:

- Individual & group sessions with a clinician or assigned outside provider
- Intensive, personalized case management to achieve goals
- Regular/random substance screenings
- Regular court appearances
- Community give-back (community service) hours

## Program Phases

The Wellness Court program is divided into four phases with participants entering the program at the “Learning” phase:

- **Phase 1 (Learning):** Learning why you are in the program, the effects of substance use, the expectations of treatment, and consequences of past choices
- **Phase 2 (Accepting):** Accepting that you struggle with substance use, the effects it has on yourself, family, friends, and community, allowing healing, and making changes to improve your life



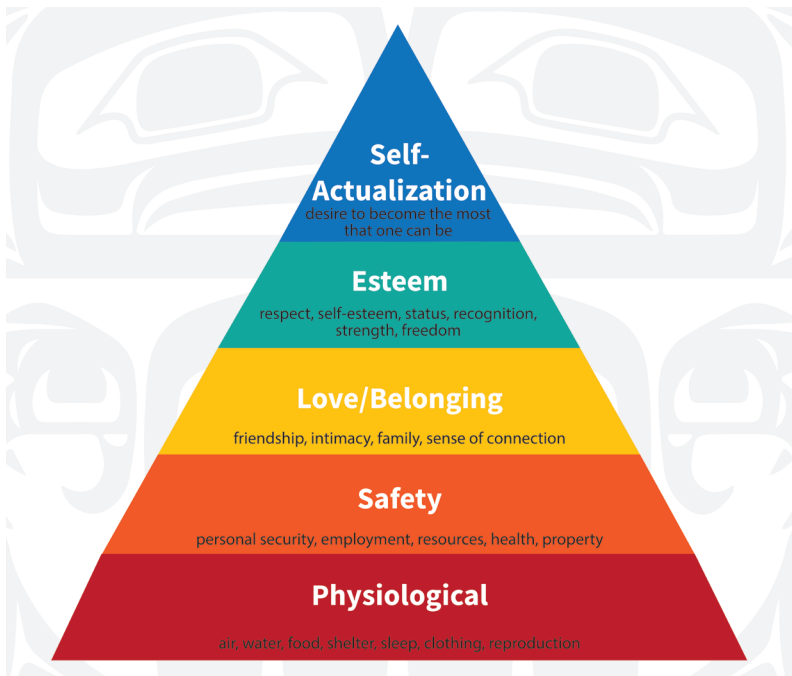
## Program Approach (Cont.)

- **Phase 3 (Willing):** Willing to cooperate and follow program expectations and meet your goals, encouraging others to do the same, making better choices to live a balanced life, developing plans to confront relapse
- **Phase 4 (Succeeding):** Succeeding in having a positive life without substance use, planning your continued wellness while focusing on long term goals and making a difference for yourself, your family, friends and the community

*Note: Movement through phases is based upon compliance with programming, substance screening results and is ultimately decided by the Peacemaker/Judge.*

### Graduation & Celebration

After successful completion of all four phases, the participant will graduate from the program. A ceremony will be held to celebrate their accomplishments and progress toward overall wellness.



## Alcohol & Drug Screening

All participants in the Wellness Court program are expected to refrain from using substances. Drug and Alcohol screening is required and plays an important role in the success of a participant in the program.

Frequency of substance screening is based on the participant's current program phase and participation in the program. The Peacemaker/Judge has the authority to add or reduce screenings.

Below are specific details regarding the screening and results:

- Screening will be conducted via oral swab.
- Participants will be notified immediately of a positive result by Wellness Court staff.
- If the result is believed to be incorrect, participants may request or be required to obtain a urine analysis test.
- Positive screenings may result in response from the court as well as more frequent testing.
- Participants are encouraged to only use over the counter or prescribed medications.
- Participants should be aware that certain energy drinks, poppy seeds and muscle enhancements may cause false positives which might result in a re-screen or requested urinalysis.

## Status Hearings

Participants are required to attend regularly scheduled status hearings. The frequency of these hearings is determined by participant's current phase and will decrease as they progress through the program.

Status hearings are court appearances attended by all Wellness Court participants together in one courtroom. The Peacemaker/Judge will briefly review each participant's progress toward their wellness goals.

Rewards and Responses may be issued during these hearings to acknowledge successes and encourage accountability.

# Rewards & Responses

The Wellness Court uses Rewards and Responses to assist and encourage participants in leading law-abiding, substance-free lifestyles. At the weekly status hearings, the Peacemaker/Judge will order Rewards to those who have made progress on their individual Wellness Plan, and Responses to those who need more program oversight.

## Rewards

Rewards are used to encourage participants to accomplish goals they have established for themselves and to celebrate successes.

Rewards may include, but are not limited to:

- Household items
- Water bottles
- Office or school supplies
- Gift cards
- Movie, event, or pool passes
- Expedited court appearances

## Responses

Responses are necessary to change participant behavior in meaningful ways. When applied appropriately, Responses may help an individual to avoid other consequences of their actions.

Responses may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning from the Peacemaker/Judge
- Increased court appearances
- Increased community give-back hours
- Letter of apology
- Writing assignment
- Delay in phase advancement
- Program dismissal

# Treatment Outline

Below is an example of a treatment schedule with an estimate of how long a participant may spend in each phase, as well as the number of times per phase they may be required to participate in the program components. Actual treatment protocol will vary based upon individual needs and progress:

	<b>Phase I</b> <i>Learning</i>	<b>Phase II</b> <i>Accepting</i>	<b>Phase III</b> <i>Willing</i>	<b>Phase IV</b> <i>Succeeding</i>
	<b>8 Weeks</b>	<b>16 Weeks</b>	<b>16 Weeks</b>	<b>10-14 Weeks</b>
<b>Individual Counseling</b>	1-2x/week	As Recommended	As Recommended	As Recommended
<b>Group Counseling</b>	3-4x/week	2-3x/week	1-2x/week	1x/week
<b>Alcohol/ Drug Screening</b>	3x/week	1-2x/week	2x/month	2x/month
<b>Status Hearings</b>	1x/week	2x/month	1x/month	1x/month
<b>Community Give-Back</b>	15 hrs./month	10 hrs./month	5 hrs./month	5 hrs./month

The number of weeks listed for each phase is only an estimate as well as the total program length of 12-18 months. Participants are in control of how quickly they move through each phase based on their progress in reaching their program goals.

# Program Rules & Expectations

Participants are required to abide by the following program rules:

- Appear in court on time for scheduled hearings and are not excused from attending weekly court hearings or treatment sessions.
- Remain in court until all cases are heard. The only exception to this rule is when a participant is given a reward from the Peacemaker/Judge and granted approval to leave early.
- Provide the Wellness Court Caseworker a current and active phone number and update immediately if contact information changes.
- Submit written requests in advance to for permission to attend overnight activities or events outside of the community if they will conflict with programming.
- All information (i.e., drug test results, new arrests, etc.) discussed in court during hearings is confidential and may not be discussed with any person outside of the Wellness Court.
- Attend all weekly scheduled treatment counseling sessions and additional activities required.
- Submit to substance screening upon request or as directed by the Wellness Court. The participant's refusal to provide a sample will be considered a positive result.
- Perform monthly community give-back hours during their time in the program. Community give-back hours must be performed at an approved site and a stamp or signature must be obtained at the time of service for validity.
- Abstain from using profanity, vulgar or rude language during program activities; this includes all court hearings, treatment sessions, community work service and recreational activities.
- Violence, harassment, or other inappropriate behavior among participants or other individuals will not be tolerated. Such behavior may result in dismissal from the program.
- Understand program rules, policies and procedures are subject to modification as deemed necessary by the Wellness Court team, Advisory Committee and Peacemaker/ Judge.

# Program Rules & Expectations (Cont.)

## Dress Code

Wellness Court participants are expected to dress appropriately for court. Clothing must be of appropriate length and fit; shirt, bottoms and shoes are required.

The following accessories and items of clothing are not permitted in the Tlingit & Haida Wellness Court:

- Shorts (all types)
- Hats (all types, excluding religious headwear)
- Muscle Shirts and Tank Tops
- Any item of clothing that displays offensive, drug/alcohol related, vulgar, racist, sexist, gang-related, obscene language and/or graphics.

## Cell Phones & Refreshments

While in the courtroom, participants and team members are required to turn off or silence their cell phones. No food or drink will be permitted in the courtroom other than water.

## Participant Behavior

- While in the court, individuals are expected to remain seated and quiet until called upon.
- Respectful behavior is the expectation while in the courtroom.
- Unless approval to leave is given, participants will remain for the entire proceeding.
- No children shall be allowed in the Wellness Court without receiving prior permission.
- Congratulations, support, and cheering are encouraged in the courtroom in recognition of everyone's success.

## Program Rules & Expectations (Cont.)

### Court Observer Policy

Wellness Court cases are closed to the public, but the nature of the Wellness Court requires that information of a sensitive and confidential nature be often shared both in team meetings and in court sessions.

As a result, members, adjunct members, and court observers are required to sign confidentiality agreements outlining the kind of information being shared, who can have this information and legal ramifications should confidentiality be broken. In addition, defense attorneys and service providers outside the team will be allowed to sit-in for their case but will be excluded from staffing for any additional cases.



# Consent & Confidentiality

Participation in the Wellness Court program is voluntary and confidential. All participants will be required to sign a consent form that will permit disclosure to and exchanges of information between the Wellness Court team, and other relevant parties (such as referring agency).

Participants are given both written and verbal notification about their right to confidentiality and privacy practices as follows:

- The right to revoke the consent and how to do so
- That it is a crime to violate their confidentiality and that the participant can report violations to the appropriate authorities
- Failure to sign the consent form is grounds for exclusion from participation in Wellness Court
- Notified of exceptions to disclosure such as in a medical emergency, mandated reporting of abuse or neglect, to report a crime committed on premises or against personnel or valid court order

## Maintenance of Written Files

Files and other written documents containing confidential information regarding substance use treatment are protected from access by unauthorized users. These materials are stored in locked cabinets when not in use and are not left in plain view when a work area is unattended.

Upon the participant's discharge from the program, the court file will be maintained as designated by Tlingit & Haida's Tribal Court.

## Data Collection

The Wellness Court is a grant funded program and must prove its efficacy. The Wellness Court staff collects data on each participant referred to the program. When data is gathered, evaluated, and disseminated, names are not included.



## Dismissal Criteria

Dismissal from the Wellness Court program occurs if a participant no longer meets the program requirements as determined by the team. Factors for dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Failure to participate in wellness plan
- Continuous failure to complete program requirements
- Tampering with substance screening
- Wellness Court cannot meet the level of care necessary and will make referral to appropriate treatment facility
- Acts of violence against law enforcement
- Any additional criminal behavior that the Wellness Court determines to be grounds to dismiss a participant
- Disclosing confidential information to any outside party

# Grievance Procedures

Wellness Court is committed to providing services that are fair and consistent to all participants. If a participant has a grievance or complaint, they may file a formal grievance by following the steps below:

- Participants are encouraged to attempt to resolve conflicts or concerns in an “informal” manner prior to filing a grievance. This means discussing any concerns with the individual(s) with whom the concern has arisen prior to filing.
- Complaints may be initiated by requesting to meet with a member of the Wellness Court team for the purpose of submitting a signed statement specifying the details of the complaint and the relief requested.
- Members of the Wellness Court team will work on a resolution and respond to the participant in a timely manner.
- If the participant does not accept the initial resolution, additional staff will be involved for submitting an appeal.
- At this point the participant will be asked to submit, in writing, reasons the proposed resolution does not resolve the situation and the relief requested. The appeal must be filed no later than two business days after the participant has received a response from the Wellness Court team.
- The Wellness Court team will call a meeting to address and respond to the participant’s complaint. If the participant does not accept the findings of this meeting, they may voluntarily withdraw from the program.

# Pandemic/Natural Disaster Protocol

During a pandemic or natural disaster that affects Juneau and Southeast Alaska communities, the Wellness Court will follow all applicable federal, state, tribal and community guidelines.

The safety and well-being of program participants, employees and partners is a top priority for the Wellness Court. There may be instances when treatment, status hearings and other court services need to be provided to participants remotely and/or virtually for safety reasons.

Wellness Court policies regarding drug testing, treatment services, required meetings, court hearings and other phase requirements may need to be temporarily modified for the safety of participants and staff. All needed policy modifications will be discussed either in-person, via e-mail or phone by the Wellness Court and will require team approval before implementation.

The Wellness Court may suspend applications and/or new participant entries if the Wellness team determines that a new participant's needs cannot be met during this time.



## WELLNESS COURT

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