



Community Service Program

Overview



MIKE HAMMOND

CLERK OF THE CRIMINAL, GENERAL SESSIONS-
CRIMINAL & FOURTH CIRCUIT COURT

Knox County Criminal Court Clerk Community Service Program

Recognizing the financial constraints for our citizens, the Knox County Court Clerk, Mike Hammond, envisioned a Community Service program. And in 2016, it came to fruition. The Community Service program was created to give indigent offenders an opportunity to pay their court costs through completing community service at local non-profits. This initiative allows participants to be held accountable for the debts accrued without having any monetary hardships or loss of dignity. In return, these individuals are contributing positively to their communities while building their work capabilities, character, and confidence. This approach empowers participants, enhances community cohesion, and promotes rehabilitation and social justice.



Benefits to Participating in the Community Service Program

Program Participants

- Complete community service as a way of reducing your court costs.
- Demonstrating and engaging your community while bringing fulfillment to your life.
- Maximize your strengths and/or have an opportunity to enhance your talents.
- Develop new job skills and/or gain experience.

Program Partners

- Contribute to participants getting their lives back on track.
- Allow participants to minimize their debts while promoting empowerment.
- Provide participants with a sense of purpose.
- Strengthen our community and the Greater Knoxville - Knox County Area.

Compensation Structure

Community service involves working at a program-approved organization to satisfy court costs. The below table shows how many hours of community service participants will need to complete in order to fulfill their court costs.

Total Court Costs	Hours of Service Required	Total Court Costs	Hours of Service Required
\$1 - \$100	4 Hours	\$1,001 - \$1,250	50 Hours
\$101 - \$200	8 Hours	\$1,251 - \$1,500	60 Hours
\$201 - \$300	12 Hours	\$1,501 - \$1,750	70 Hours
\$301 - \$400	16 Hours	\$1,751 - \$2,000	80 Hours
\$401 - \$500	20 Hours	\$2,001 - \$2,250	90 Hours
\$501 - \$750	30 Hours	\$2,251 - \$2,500	100 Hours
\$751- \$1,000	40 Hours	Over \$2,500	TBD by Director

Program Duration

To have court costs discharged through community service, the program will need to be completed within a certain amount of time. The table below describes the program completion timeline based on amount of court costs owed.

Total Court Costs Owed	Number of Days to Complete Program
\$1 - \$1,000	Up to 180 Days (6 Months Total)
Over \$1,000	Up to 365 Days (One Year Total)

Program Eligibility & Application Process

Eligible Participants

The Community Service Program is only available to applicants who are determined to be indigent. Participants cannot have any disqualifying offenses. Please see list of disqualifying offenses below.

Program Disqualifiers

The following represent, but are not limited to, circumstances where an applicant may be found ineligible to participate in the program.

- Providing false information on a Knox County Criminal Court Community Service Affidavit of Indigency will automatically disqualify an applicant;
- A Conviction for a "violent felony," including:

A. First or second degree murder;

B. Aggravated kidnapping or especially aggravated kidnapping;

C. Aggravated assault;

D. Aggravated child abuse;

E. Robbery, aggravated robbery, or especially aggravated robbery;

F. Aggravated burglary or especially aggravated burglary;

G. Carjacking;

H. Sexual battery, sexual battery by an authority figure, or aggravated sexual battery;

I. Statutory rape by an authority figure, or aggravated statutory rape;

J. Rape, aggravated rape, rape of a child, or aggravated rape of a child;

K. Aggravated arson;

L. Attempt, under § 39-12-101, to commit any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

M. Solicitation, under § 39-12-102, to commit any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

N. Conspiracy, under § 39-12-103, to commit any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

O. Criminal responsibility, under § 39-11-402(2), for any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

P. Facilitating the commission, under § 39-11-403, of any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

Q. Being an accessory after the fact, under § 39-11-411, to any of the offenses enumerated in subdivision (e)(3);

R. Aggravated vehicular homicide;

S. Criminally negligent homicide;

T. Reckless homicide;

U. Vehicular homicide; or

V. Voluntary manslaughter;

Applying to the Program

Participants may apply for the program by completing the Program Interest Inquiry and details on proof of indigency. A criminal background search will be conducted and information reviewed to determine eligibility. Upon confirmed eligibility, the participant will be notified of acceptance into the program and scheduled a program orientation date. During orientation, program guidelines (requirements, rights & responsibilities as program participant) and assignment placement will be discussed.

Program Rules and Requirements

While participating in the program, participants will agree to:

- Contact the provider of choice to arrange community service as soon as possible.
- Arrive on time.
- Follow the site supervisor's instructions.
- Not leave the work site without permission.
- Not carry any sort of weapon.
- Not use abusive language.
- Not deliberately destroy or deface any tool or property.
- Never accept any tips or cash from anyone in association with my community service.
- Wear appropriate clothing to work.
- Apply for authorization for extension of time if needed.
- Contact the Community Service Program Director with any questions.
- Not pick up any new criminal charges in any jurisdiction.

Important Program Requirements

Approved program participants must:

1. Begin community service hours within (30) days from approval date, as noted in the Signed Acknowledgment Statement.
2. Serve a minimum of (8) hours per month to maintain program eligibility. Failure to work at least (8) hours in a 30-day period from the last service date will result in an immediate dismissal from the program.
3. Participants must complete a minimum of (4) hours per shift, when applicable.
4. Provide verification of community service hours completed to the Program Director in monthly increments.
5. Have all pending cases concluded and resolved.

NOTE: Failure to follow any of these rules or requirements will result in a dismissal from the program.

Alcohol and Drugs - Drug Free Workplace Policy

The Knox County Community Service Program is committed to a safe working environment and to making adequate provisions for the safety and health of its program participants.

Substance abuse can be reasonably expected to produce impaired job performance, lost productivity, absenteeism, accidents, wasted materials, lowered morale, and diminished interpersonal relationship skills. The Knox County Community Service Program is committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace.

Program participants **MUST NOT** manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, nor may anyone be under the influence of such drugs while performing community service. Furthermore, you must not be under any degree of intoxication or odor from alcohol, or possess open alcoholic beverage containers while on duty, or on the program partner's property.

Use of Prescription Drugs: You must not use or take prescription drugs above the level recommended by your prescribing physician and must not use prescribed drugs for purposes other than those for which they are intended.

Completing the Program

Successful Program Completion

Once the program participant has completed the total number of hours, participants must submit one of the following:

1. Letter of Completion on Nonprofit Letterhead detailing the number of hours that the defendant has completed.
2. A completed timesheet signed by the program participant's supervisor at the approved program partner agency.

Extension Requests

If participants need to extend their program deadline, participants must submit a formal written request to the Program Director within (30) days of the previously agreed upon program completion date. The participant's program deadline date will be noted in the signed Program Acknowledgement Letter reviewed during Orientation meetings.

Resigning from the Program

If a participant wants to resign from the program, they should notify their immediate supervisor if actively scheduled for service at the time of resignation. Failure to provide such a notice will be recorded in their program personnel file and may constitute grounds for permanent program expulsion.

After the participant gives notice to their active service supervisor, the participant will need to notify the Community Service Program Director of their assignment resignation.

NOTE: Resigning from the program may disqualify individuals if they decide to reapply for the program.

Dismissals

Immediate dismissal may be made for cause including, but not limited to, any action or behavior that constitutes

- Insubordination (refusal to follow supervisor's instructions).
- Endangering participant's own health or safety and/or the health or safety of other employees or citizens.
- Excessive absence from scheduled service without authorization or notification.
- Theft, vandalism, or willful destruction of Partner Organization's property.
- Any violation of the Alcohol and Drug Policy.
- Any other infraction when dismissal is determined to be in the best interest of the Community Service Program and/or Partner Organization.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I volunteer?

Participating in the Community Service Program will give you the opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to a cause and positively impact your community, while repaying your court costs. Your participation can also provide satisfaction for strengthening your community in a meaningful way.

What is the time commitment required to participate in the program?

Time commitments vary according to the total amount of court costs you owe. A Community Service Compensation Structure is provided for you to assess the number of committed hours needed to satisfy the total amount due.

How do I start the process for becoming a program participant?

Contact the Community Service Program Director (during hours of operation) to complete the Interest Form and to answer any questions you may have. A criminal background search will be conducted, and information will be reviewed to determine if indigency and eligibility is declared. If appropriate, an acceptance letter with an orientation date and Partners List (for participant to review and choose) will be mailed to your mailing address. Participants will attend scheduled orientation date, receive placement assignment, and start date.

What are the age and physical limitation requirements for program participants?

Program participants must be at least 18 years old. Upon approval and assignment to appropriate program partner, the program participants will be given information on job descriptions and any physical requirements for that assignment. You will be carefully matched with the most appropriate program partner based on your specific circumstances, physical abilities, and limitations as well as any trade or specialized skills you may have.

What are the Community Service Program's Rules and Requirements?

The standard policies and principles by which program participants are required to abide are listed in the Program Rules and Requirements in the Program Guide. The Program Rules and Requirements are used to maintain the highest standard of conduct expected and deserved by our Program Partners. This enables these organizations to continue to offer services required by those in need.

Why do I have to complete a background check and information verification to participate?

Background checks are conducted to help us achieve a more efficient and safer work environment for our Program Partners and all community service participants. The current design for the Knox County Criminal Court Community Service Program is based on accurate and documented evidence that indigence has been verified.

Contact Us

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