



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SOLANO**

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD COURT PANELIST**

A. Introduction

1. Neighborhood Court is a restorative justice pre-charging diversion program designed to address lower level crimes. Residents are trained to serve as Panelists and develop community-based solutions to redress the harm caused by these offenses. Pursuant to Penal Code §14150 – 14156, the District Attorney’s Office empowers Panelists with the authority and responsibility to adjudicate certain infraction/misdemeanor offenses. Typically, the offenses are petty theft, disorderly conduct, vandalism, assault/battery, alcohol control violations, and other quality of life crimes. Neighborhood Court is a partnership with the Solano County District Attorney’s Office, volunteers from the community, the Benicia Police Department, the Center for Intervention (CFI), and community groups.
2. Serving as a Neighborhood Court Panelist is an important responsibility. Panelists uphold the integrity of the program and ensure fairness in resolving each case. A Panelist shall personally adhere to the high standards as specified in the Code of Conduct Agreement for Neighborhood Court Panelist (Code) so that the integrity of the hearing process is preserved. This Code of Conduct Agreement describes the roles and responsibilities required for each participant to serve as a Panelist.

B. A Panelist Shall Adhere To Appropriate Standards In Performing His Or Her Duties.

In performing the duties prescribed by the Solano County District Attorney’s Office, the following standards apply:

1. A Panelist shall respect and comply with the law pursuant to the Penal Code of California. A Panelist shall report any violation or attempt to violate this standard of this Code to the CFI and the District Attorney Representative.
2. A Panelist shall be patient, dignified, respectful, and courteous to all persons with whom the Panelist deals in an official capacity, including the Victim, Offender, Victim Advocates, the general public, Facilitators, and other Panelists.
3. A Panelist shall diligently discharge the responsibilities of the position in a prompt, efficient, and professional manner.
4. A Panelist shall not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.

5. A Panelist shall not allow his or her personal opinion or beliefs to detract from the dignity of Neighborhood Court, interfere with the performance of official duties, or adversely reflect on the operation and dignity of Neighborhood Court.
6. A Panelist shall, to the best of his or her ability, utilize the principles of restorative justice in deciding the best course of action in cases.
7. A Panelist shall engage in face-to-face dialogue with Offenders, Victims, and other Panelists in the conference and seek to reach an agreement about how to restore the Offender, the Victim, and the community and ensure the agreement is specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, respectful, timely, and restorative (SMARRT-R).
8. A Panelist shall promote, support, and maintain a safe, respectful, and confidential process.
9. CONFIDENTIALITY: Except when deliberating with the Victim, Offender and other Panelists, a Panelist shall not make comments on the merits of a pending matter or the Panelist's private opinion about a case.
10. CONFIDENTIALITY: A Panelist shall not disclose any confidential information received in the course of his or her service to Neighborhood Court about any case or any participant to any person or entity, except to District Attorney Representatives, CFI, Facilitators, Panelists, and trainers for purposes related to this program.
11. CONFIDENTIALITY: A Panelist shall not use any information obtained in the course of case deliberations for any personal or professional purposes.
12. CONFIDENTIALITY: A Panelist may disclose confidential information for the educational and training purposes of this program; however, Offender and Victim names, or information which would reveal their identity, shall not be disclosed.

C. A Panelist Shall Avoid Conflicts Of Interest In The Performance Of His Or Her Duties.

1. A conflict of interest arises when a Panelist knows that he or she might be personally or financially affected by a matter such that a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would question the Panelist's ability to properly perform duties in an impartial manner.
2. When a Panelist believes a conflict of interest may be present, the Panelist shall promptly inform his or her co-Panelists and the CFI and the District Attorney Representative at the conference. After determining that a conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest exists, appropriate steps shall be taken to restrict the Panelist's involvement in such matter so as to avoid a conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

D. A Panelist May Be Removed From Neighborhood Court For Violation Of Standards As Set Forth In This Code Of Conduct.

1. A Panelist shall respect and comply with the standards of this Code. Failure to do so may result in removal of the Panelist from his or her responsibilities.

2. Should a Panelist believe that there has been an ethical breach of this Code by another Panelist, he or she should attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that Panelist and to the CFI and the District Attorney Representative.
3. The affected Panelist shall have the opportunity to meet with the District Attorney Representative.
4. The District Attorney's Office shall be the final arbiter on the removal of the Panelist.

The Code of Conduct shall be in effect for two years commencing on January 1, 2018 and, at the discretion of the District Attorney's Office, is renewable at the end of the current term for a successive two year term.