

**ADULT ALTERNATIVE**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The Community Service Program (CSP) is offered through the Office of the State's attorney for Worcester County to allow individuals who have no criminal record to avoid prosecution and conviction for minor offenses by performing unpaid volunteer work.

Your participation in this program is entirely voluntary, but your acceptance into the program is at the sole discretion of the Office of the State's Attorney.

The CSP is not available for certain charges, such as Driving Under the Influence (DUI), Driving While Impaired (DWI), Disorderly Conduct, Fake Identification, Drug Offenses (other than simple possession of marijuana) or minor traffic offenses.

This program is for adults over the age of eighteen. Individuals under the age of eighteen should contact the Department of Juvenile Services at 410-632-0206.

This program is not part of the District Court of Maryland.

Please read this information carefully. You must follow all instructions to successfully complete your community service obligation.

**Mallory F. Eckman**  
**Community Service Program Coordinator**

**(410) 632-4412**

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## **What is the Community Service Program?**

The Community Service Program is a voluntary diversion program created by the Office of the State's Attorney for individuals charged with minor offenses in the District Court of Maryland. Eligible individuals benefit by avoiding prosecution for these minor offenses, while courts and local police agencies benefit from increased efficiency and reduced backlogs.

## **How does the Community Service Program work?**

Individuals must apply and be accepted into the Community Service Program before they can participate. Once accepted, individuals will receive a confirmatory letter along with guidelines for qualifying community service.

Verification/Instruction documentation is also provided to each applicant.

Applicants should discuss requirements with the organization prior to completing any community service with the organization. The Community Service Program Coordinator will not accept any completed documentation unless it is in the format that was provided.

If you are not accepted into the program, you will be sent a denial letter. If you are not accepted, you must appear in court on your scheduled trial date.

## **Who is eligible for the Community Service Program?**

Adult individuals eighteen years and older who have been charged with the following offenses is eligible to participate in the Community Service Program:

Minor in Possession of alcohol; Noise violations; Open Container Violations  
Marijuana/Paraphernalia possession; Public Consumption

Participating in the Community Service Program should be requested in advance.

## **What if I do not fall into a category listed above?**

You must appear in court on your scheduled trial date. If you believe you qualify, you may request community service from the prosecutor at that time.

## **How old do I have to be to enter the Community Service Program?**

This is a program for adults only. You must be at least eighteen years old at the time of the offense. If you are younger than the age of eighteen, you must contact the Department of Juvenile Services at (410) 632-0206.

## **When do I apply for the Community Service Program?**

You should apply immediately if you received a citation for an eligible offense listed above.

## **What if I haven't received a trial date yet?**

If you received a citation but do not know your trial date, you must submit either a photocopy of your citation or the original along with your application. Do not wait for your trial date to arrive in the mail.

## **How do I find an application for the Community Service program?**

Applications to participate in the Community Service Program are located at the Office of the State's Attorney's website, [www.worcestersao.com](http://www.worcestersao.com), and in the lobby of the Ocean City District Court.

## **How do I sign up for the Community Service Program?**

Applications should be completed and mailed to the address at the bottom of the application, along with the application fee. If you receive an application in court on your trial date, you must complete and mail that original application, with application fee, within five days of that trial date.

## **Is there a fee to participate in the Community Service Program?**

There is a \$100.00 application fee to participate in the Community Service Program. The application fee should be included with the application and mailed to the address at the bottom of the application.

## **What is a Money Order or Cashier's Check?**

A money order or cashier's check looks like a personal check, but is purchased at a bank or U.S. Post Office. Money Orders are also available at grocery stores, convenience stores, and other retail outlets. There is usually a nominal fee to purchase a money order or cashier's check.

## **What if I found out about the Community Service Program right before my trial date?**

You will have to attend court on your trial date. You may ask the prosecutor at that time if you are eligible for participation in the Community Service Program.

## **How long does it take to be considered for the Community Service Program?**

Generally, it takes ten business days to receive a letter of acceptance into the Community Service Program. A letter denying your participation also takes about ten days.

## **Who decides if I will be accepted into the Community Service Program?**

Your acceptance into the Community Service Program is decided by the Office of the State's Attorney. That decision is at the sole discretion of the State's Attorney. If your offense meets the criteria listed above, you are likely to be accepted into the program. However, individuals with prior offenses or pending charges may be ineligible to apply.

## **How many hours do I have to complete?**

The number of hours required for community service varies and is determined on a case-by-case basis. You will receive the number of hours after your request for community service has been processed and approved.

## **When is the verification of the Community Service Due?**

All community service is due ten business days before your court date. If your case has been placed on the *stet* docket (an inactive court docket), you will be given a date for verification of your community service in your acceptance letter.

## **What happens if I live in another state?**

This program allows you to perform your community service in any state or territory of the United States. International requests must be specially approved.

## **Is there a list of organizations where I can perform my Community Service?**

A list of qualifying organizations appears on the guidelines and on the website of the Office of the State's Attorney, [www.worcestersao.com](http://www.worcestersao.com).

## **Are there organizations not eligible for Community Service?**

Yes, please refer to the CSP guidelines for a complete list of eligible and ineligible organizations.

## **What is a verification or confirmation letter?**

The verification letter is proof that you have completed your community service. The organization you chose must provide you with a letter written on their official business letterhead or stationary. Please refer to the verification instructions located at the bottom of your guidelines and the verification/Instructions form. The letter must conform to the format as follows:

**Date**

**Mallory F. Eckman  
Community Service Coordinator  
Office of the State's Attorney for Worcester County  
106 Franklin Street  
Snow Hill, MD 21863**

**Re: Case No. (List Case Number)**

**Dear Mrs. Eckman,**

**This letter is to inform you that (person completing community services name) has completed (number of community service hours) of community service with your (your organization).**

**The organization should include a brief description detailing what the individual accomplished while completing community service at the community service location.**

**Sincerely,**

**Supervisor's hand signature (wet signature)  
Supervisor's printed name and title and contact number**

All verification letters must include the organizations corporate logo, an ink stamp or a raised seal before the letter can be accepted.

Make sure an organization is able to provide the proper documentation before you start your community service. If the organization is unable to provide, you cannot perform qualifying community service at that organization. Acceptance of your community service verification is at the sole discretion of the Office of the State's Attorney.

If the letter is in any variation other than the above format, it will be rejected.

### **What is business stationary or letterhead with a logo?**

Most organizations have professional stationary. Or letterhead, that is used for business correspondence. Stationary is often color-embossed, and usually includes the names of members of Boards of Directors of officers of the company, along with a business address and telephone number and logos or other identifying graphic designs.

### **What if the organization is unable to provide business stationary or letterhead?**

The community service coordinator may accept an ink stamp with the organization's name or a raised seal of the organization if it does not have a business stationary. If an organization is not able to provide adequate verification of community service, you cannot perform community service at that organization. You must instead find a different organization to complete your community service.

### **What is an ink stamp or raised seal?**

It is not uncommon for an agency not to have official business letterhead. However, most if not all organization have an ink stamp or raised seal. An ink stamp is a rubber stamp with the organizations name as well as other pertinent information. The organization applies the rubber stamp onto an ink pad and then places it on the document. A raised seal identifies the organization by making a permanent indenture in the document itself with the organizations name, address and possible logo.

### **What if the organization has a worksheet?**

A worksheet may be attached to the completed community service verification letter; however, it will not be accepted as verification of community service. You must provide a qualifying verification letter.

### **Should I make copies of all my documents?**

Documentation of your participation in the Community Service Program is essential. In the event that a document is lost in the mail, you will need proof that you completed your community service and paid your application fee. Make sure to photocopy and keep any documents, including money orders or cashier's checks that you send to the Office of the State's Attorney.



**Will I receive confirmation that community service verification was received by the Community Service Program Coordinator?**

No, is your responsibility to contact the community service coordinator to make sure that the proper paperwork was received and accepted.

**Is it acceptable to email or fax in my information?**

You are required to take a digital copy (picture) of your completed community service and submit for review, as an attachment, to [meckman@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:meckman@co.worcester.md.us), before you mail the hard copy. If the letter meets to approval of the community service program coordinator, you will receive written confirmation in a return email advising your letter was accepted and to send the original letter to be attached to your file.

**What if I'm unable to complete the community service by the due date?**

Contact the Community Service Program Coordinator immediately.

If you have an active court date, you will have to appear in court to request an extension.

If you are on the STET docket, you run the risk of being removed from the STET docket and your case being re-opened.

**When is my community service due if I get my court date postponed?**

Community service is due ten business days before the new court date.

**What happens if I miss my court date?**

The District court will issue a bench warrant for your arrest, and your enrollment in the Community Service Program will be terminated.

**What does FTA mean?**

FTA is an acronym for "Failure to Appear" for a court date. Failing to appear will result in the presiding judge issuing a bench warrant for your arrest. The warrant information is entered in a national data base, subjecting you to service of the warrant in any state or country.

### **What does the “You must appear in court” box on the citation mean?**

When you are issued a citation by a police agency, the officer will mark the citation either a payable or a “must appear” citation. If a citation is marked “must appear”, you must appear in court when notified to do so. Failure to appear may result in the issuance of a warrant for your arrest. In the event that you do not receive a court date from the District Court of Maryland, you are still responsible to contact the court after a reasonable time to get our court date.

### **May I contact the Community Service Coordinator if I have additional questions?**

Yes. The number for the community service coordinator is (410) 632-4412. You may also communicate with the community service coordinator by e-mail at [meckman@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:meckman@co.worcester.md.us). Please have your case number handy, along with a pen and paper.

If you have contacted the community service office and reached the answering machine, please leave your name, case/citation number and a phone number where you can be reached. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. Please make sure your voice mailbox is set up and empty so that the coordinator can leave a message for you. Repeated calls may delay a timely response.

### **Are you allowed to speak to my parents?**

This office will only speak to the person that was issued a citation or charging document, or to an attorney representing that person. If you require your parents’ assistance, you will have to relay any information to them.

### **What if I have retained an attorney?**

If you have retained a defense attorney, including the Public Defender, our office may only communicate with that attorney. The Office may no longer communicate with you directly.

### **When should I mail in the application I received in court?**

You have five days from your trial date to mail in your application fee and contact the Community Service Program Coordinator for further instructions.

**What is the difference between community service offered in court and court-ordered community service?**

The CSP is a diversion program that may be offered to you or your attorney by the prosecutor. The prosecutor will provide an application for your participation in the CSP if it's offered in court.

On the other hand, a judge may order community service as a part of the sentence in a criminal case. You must verify the completion of court-ordered community service directly to the Court and not the Office of the State's Attorney.

**I received a Marijuana citation and I'm over 21. Can I enter this program?**

Yes, Citations for the possession of small amount of marijuana or possession of paraphernalia are civil-rather than criminal-citations. However, you may still be eligible to participate in the Community Service Program.

**I received a Marijuana citation and I am between 18 and 20 year of age. Can I enter into your program?**

Yes, Citations for possession of marijuana by individuals between 18 and 20 are "must appear" citations. However, you may still be eligible to participate in the Community Service Program.

**Do you have a list of phone numbers for other related agencies?**

Here is a listing or related phone numbers that may be helpful:

Office of the Public Defender	(410) 632-1933
District court of Maryland (Ocean City)	(410) 723-6935
District Court of Maryland (Snow Hill)	(410) 219/7830
Department of Juvenile Services	(410) 632-0206
Division of Parole and Probation	(410) 632-4200
Office of the State's Attorney (District Court Division)	(410) 632-2177
Office of the State's Attorney (Circuit Court Division)	(410) 632-2166
Ocean City Police Department (Front Desk)	(410) 723-6610
Worcester County Sheriff's Office	(410) 632-1111

Verification/Instructions and Letter

\*\*\*\*\* Please Read carefully \*\*\*\*\*

**Instructions:**

**Any organization you choose must be able to provide a letter on their on corporate letterhead with a logo in the format listed below. An ink stamp or raised seal will be accepted.**

**If the organization is unable to provide a letter to our specifications, even if it's a listed organization, you will need to locate another organization that can provide the proper documentation. Make sure you verify that the organization can provide the proper documentation before you start your community service hours.**

**Letter Format:**

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*Date*

*Mallory F. Eckman*

*Community Service Coordinator*

*Office of the State's Attorney for Worcester County*

*106 Franklin Street*

*Snow Hill, MD 21863*

**Re: Case No. (List case number)**

*Dear Mrs. Eckman,*

***This letter is to inform you that (person's name) has completed (Number of Community Service Hours) of community service with the (Your Organization).***

***Please include a brief description detailing what the individual did while competing community service at your location.***

*Sincerely,*

Supervisor's (wet) hand signature  
Supervisor's printed name  
Supervisor's printed title  
Supervisor's contact phone number

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If the letter is in any variation other than the above format, it will be rejected.

All proof of community service must be in formal letter form; a work sheet may be attached, but will not be accepted by itself.

Acceptance of your verification letter is within the sole discretion of the State's Attorney's Office.

This office does not send confirmation of received community service; you may contact this office to confirm.

