



DEKALB COUNTY  
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**DEKALB COUNTY SOLICITOR ANNOUNCES NEW PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAM**  
***First-ever centralized program in DeKalb County will offer counseling and rehabilitative services to low-level misdemeanor offenders and save taxpayer money***

DeKalb County Solicitor-General Sherry Boston today announced the creation of the Office's first-ever centralized Pre-Trial Diversion program which will offer counseling and rehabilitative services to low-level misdemeanor offenders in order to reduce recidivism and, in turn, save DeKalb County resources and money.

As part of the new Pre-Trial Diversion Program (PTD), low-level, first-time offenders will complete conditions that are tailored to their particular criminal charges and geared towards breaking the cycle of criminal activity. Through counseling, classes and community service, offenders will be guided toward alternative methods of managing and understanding the behavior that led to their criminal activity, thereby reducing the likelihood that they will commit future crimes. Participants will be charged \$300 to participate in the program and the monies will be deposited directly to the County General Fund. Those who complete the program successfully will receive a dismissal of the misdemeanor charge(s) from the DeKalb County Solicitor-General's Office and their case may be eligible for expungement. As a result, the offender can avoid developing a criminal record.

First-time defendants charged with shoplifting, disorderly conduct, affray, or other minor offenses will be eligible for the program. Some offenses, such as driving under the influence, vehicular homicide, and family violence battery are categorically excluded from the program. Approximately 280 new participants are expected to enter the PTD monthly.

At their meeting today, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners approved an increase of \$103,064.00 to the Office of the Solicitor-General appropriation in order to staff the new program. Funding for the program will create four new positions – two attorneys and two administrative assistants -- in the Solicitor-General's Office.

"I am grateful to the Board of Commissioners for approving this new program because it will offer an efficient, centralized method of resolving misdemeanor charges committed by low-level offenders," said Solicitor-General Boston. "Establishing a much-needed diversion program like this was one of my goals for the Office. I believe smart prosecution leads to a better quality of life and this program is part of that approach because it makes DeKalb safer while increasing offender accountability; saves taxpayers money by reducing the number of days low-level offenders spend in jail; and gives people the tools they need to avoid repeating mistakes and, instead, live as productive law-abiding citizens."

The program will be overseen by Kiesha Storey, the Deputy Chief of the Diversion and Community Alternatives Program in the Solicitor-General's Office. She has more than 10 years of legal experience and has an extensive background in working with diversion programs while serving as the Lead Defense Attorney for the Hall County Drug Court Program, assisting with the implementation of the Hall County H.E.L.P. Court, and with the Dawson County Hybrid Treatment Court.

This is the second innovation Solicitor-General Boston implemented in the Office. Earlier this year, she created the Office's first-ever Special Victims Unit, which handles pending High-Risk Domestic Violence, Stalking, Sex Offenses, Child-Victim, Elder, and Disabled Abuse, Vehicular Homicide, and Animal Cruelty cases.



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*The DeKalb County Solicitor-General's Office, under the direction of Sherry Boston, prosecutes misdemeanor crimes filed in the State Court of DeKalb County, Georgia. These crimes include domestic violence, elder abuse, cruelty to children, vehicular homicide, drunk driving, harassment and stalking, trespassing, and animal cruelty. The entire staff works diligently to make DeKalb County even safer by preventing and deterring criminal activity through the professional and impartial prosecution of crimes.*

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