

17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF
FLORIDA
BROWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Hollywood Community Court Celebrates 1-Year Anniversary

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. – Hollywood Community Court – a problem-solving court created to provide alternatives to jail for low-level misdemeanor crimes while connecting the homeless with services – celebrated its one-year anniversary this week.

The court, funded by a \$532,305 federal grant, was established in January 2024. To date, the fledgling court has served more than 330 individuals, including more than 30 families and held over 600 hearings and nine graduations representing 37 years of combined homelessness for individuals who are now off the street.

“Community Court represents an opportunity to address the challenges and issues surrounding homelessness,” said Judge Corey Amanda Cawthon, who presides in Hollywood Community Court. “It enables and empowers those experiencing homelessness to take back control of their lives, to get off the street, and to give back through service to the community.”

The City of Hollywood on Feb. 19th issued a proclamation honoring the court’s one-year anniversary which stated, “By focusing on compassion and tailored solutions, the court has strengthened community cohesion and reaffirmed the City’s commitment to public safety, social justice and resilience.”

Hollywood Community Court meets every other Tuesday at The Caring Place, 2056 Scott Street.

“It’s important to recognize all of our service providers who have been working in partnership with us over the past year to provide services for the defendants and the community at large,” Judge Cawthon added.

The 17th Judicial Circuit Court also conducts community court at 18 NW First Ave. in Fort Lauderdale and at the Annie L. Weaver Health Center, 2011 NW Third Ave., Pompano Beach.

Judge Florence Taylor Barner presides weekly on Wednesdays in Fort Lauderdale and co-presides with Judge Betsy Benson in Pompano Beach every other Thursday.

Fort Lauderdale Community Court was established in 2019 with funding from a \$200,000 federal grant. Pompano Community Court was established in 2022 and was awarded a \$716,876 federal grant last year.

Under the Community Court program, local community-based organizations partner with the court to provide housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and other social support at no cost to the grant. Additionally, the Broward Sheriff's Office facilitates community service opportunities for participants as ordered by the court. Participants who complete the requirements of their court-ordered program have their eligible misdemeanor cases dismissed while gaining the benefit of the services obtained through the program.

Hollywood Community Court is a collaborative effort involving the 17th Judicial Circuit and the City of Hollywood.

ABOUT THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida is the court for Broward County, headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, FL. It is the second largest circuit court in the state. Broward County has 90 judges. Of those, 32 are county court judges and 58 are circuit judges. Four courthouses comprise the 17th circuit and include the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, and three satellite courthouses: the North Regional Courthouse in Deerfield Beach, the West Regional Courthouse in Plantation and the South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood.

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