

## **NEW ORLEANS HOMELESS COURT PROGRAM**

The New Orleans Homeless Court (NOHC) started in May of 2010. The NOHC convenes once a month on the third Wednesday of every month in Orleans Parish Municipal Court, Courtroom A. Judge Paul Sens, Chief Judge of Municipal Court, presides.

A significant percentage of the Orleans Parish Municipal Court docket consists of homeless men and women, many of whom find themselves on the Municipal Court docket on a regular basis. NOHC offers assistance to these defendants in two ways. The Court recognizes that these defendants are best served by treatment, not punishment. NOHC is designed to assist the homeless receive much needed treatment and services. When the docket convenes on the third Wednesday of every month, present in Court are a number of homeless service providers, including UNITY of New Orleans, an umbrella group of providers that works to find suitable housing; Veterans Justice Outreach; Metropolitan Human Services District, and local homeless shelters. Many of these providers are already case workers for the defendants in Court. For those without a case worker, an assessment can be done and services identified. NOHC also aims to help those individuals ready to move on with their lives to clear their record of legal offenses related to their homeless condition and which pose an impediment to placement in housing and/or employment.

Success stories of the NOHC are like the story of one man referred by the Salvation Army. Working with the Salvation Army, he was housed through its rapid housing project and temporarily employed as a construction worker. This gentleman then worked to clear his record of several municipal offenses. He has now been able to successfully secure gainful full time employment. He even has plans to marry his girlfriend in the near future.

### NOHC Contact Information:

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You can also get information about NOHC through the HELP clinics at Ozanam Inn, Harry Tompson Center, The New Orleans Mission, and The Salvation Army.