

Drug Education School (DES)

Purpose: In 1981, the General Assembly mandated a statewide system of Drug Education Schools (DES) to target social/recreational possessors of marijuana. The purpose of DES is early intervention in the pattern of drug use by first offenders charged with certain drug possession offenses.

Eligible Population: Drug Education School is a community punishment. Participation in DES is authorized by statute for offenders convicted of misdemeanor possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, or inhaling or possessing toxic vapors. To be eligible, the offender also must not have a previous conviction for any offense under any state or federal law involving controlled substances, drug paraphernalia or toxic vapors. Offenders must complete the course within 150 days of plea or verdict of guilt.

Organizational Structure and Budget: Drug Education Schools are administered by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, in the Department of Health and Human Services. Each area authority for mental health services in the state must ensure the availability of DES. Staff who deliver the DES curriculum have other primary job responsibilities and teaching this course is ancillary. Drug Education Schools are self-supporting through a \$150 per case fee.

Statutory Authority: N.C.G.S. SS90-96 and 90-96.01