

# Tips on How to Succeed on Probation with Medina County Court

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When you are granted probation by a judge, you are being given a chance to remain in society, under the supervision of the court, rather than be incarcerated. Make the best of this opportunity.

The tips below will help you succeed in your goal of successfully completing probation supervision:

- **Have a good attitude toward others.** Your attitude towards your probation officer (PO) and others will make the difference between successfully completing probation and finding more trouble with the law.
- **Read your probation conditions or have them read to you if you cannot read well.** Your PO will provide you with a written summary of your probation conditions, which you will need to read and sign. If you have questions, now is the time to ask. Don't sign the conditions if there is something that you are unsure about or don't understand. Be clear about your responsibilities under these conditions.
- **Know what to do to comply with your probation.** Your probation conditions typically require you to meet with your probation officer fairly quickly following your sentencing for the crime that you have committed. Appear promptly for that appointment and make sure that ***you take the initiative to contact the PO.*** If you are in jail you should call immediately upon your release to schedule an appointment.
- **Always ask questions.** Make sure that you are absolutely clear on what is expected of you. This is one of the best ways to make sure that you are meeting all of the court's expectations.
- **Always be honest and communicate.**
  - It is better to be up front about your problems so your probation officer can try to help you. If not, there is a chance that you will be sanctioned for both your action, or in some cases your lack of action, and for not disclosing it since you are required to report significant changes to your PO.
  - If you need help meeting the conditions of probation and the court's orders, work with your PO they are there to help you succeed and may be able to offer you resources you didn't know they had.
  - If you are encountering financial challenges, work with your probation officer because there may be a way they can assist:
    - They may offer you a free drug test or allow you to skip a month of your probation supervision programming fee IF you are complying with your conditions and staying on track with the court's expectations.
- **Be on time for your office visits and all other appointments.** The PO's are extremely busy and depending how late you arrive your probation officer will move on to the next appointment and may not need to reschedule you for a different day, causing you to double your efforts.
- **Be prepared for your office visits.** Make sure you bring the vital information your PO needs to every visit (completed homework, pay stubs/employment verification, proof of community service completions, etc.).
- **Understand the consequences of failing to comply with your probation conditions.** If you violate the terms and conditions of your probation, your PO:
  - Has the authority to file a request for probation revocation/withdrawal. This type of report to the judge details how you have violated the conditions of your probation and it may ask the court to issue a warrant for your arrest and place you in jail.
  - When you are placed on probation, you are given a jail sentence that is suspended, meaning that you do not have to serve it. The jail sentence is suspended on the condition that you comply with your probation conditions. If you violate your probation conditions, you likely will have to serve some or the entire suspended portion of your sentence. This means that you will be incarcerated, most likely with no bond, and may even be sent to prison.
  - Your probation officer and the prosecutor handling your case will be asked to make a recommendation to the court about how what type of sanction should be imposed and possibly how much of your suspended jail sentence you should serve as a result of having violated your probation.
  - Ultimately, the judge will decide how much time in jail you will have to serve due to a probation revocation. The judge is not required to order what the probation officer or prosecutor recommends, but only what he or she believes is reasonable and fair under the law.