NADCP
National Association of Drug Court Professionals

Quick Facts on Drug Court

- In 1989 the first Drug Court was launched in Miami, Florida.
- There are now over 2,900 Drug Courts nationwide. They are located in every U.S. state and thirteen countries.
- Drug Courts refer more people to treatment than any other system in America, annually serving over 145,000 seriously addicted people.
- Over 1 million people have graduated Drug Court.
- More research has been published on Drug Courts than virtually all other criminal justice programs combined. Drug Courts reduce drug abuse, crime and recidivism while saving money for taxpayers. Studies also show that the more serious an individuals drug addiction and the longer his or her criminal record, the better Drug Courts work. This approach not only diverts individuals from a life of drug abuse and crime, but has been proven to reduce use of jail or prison beds and family conflicts associated with domestic violence and child abuse.

Saving Money

Drug Courts reduce jail/prison use; reduce crime and lower criminal justice system costs**.** In addition, Drug Courts transform individuals who previously drained the system of resources and turn them into productive tax-paying citizens.

Drug Courts return $2.21 for every $1 invested when considering only direct and measurable offsets such as reduced re-arrests, law enforcement contact, court hearings and the use of jail or prison beds. When considering other benefits, including reduced foster care placement and healthcare utilization, **Drug Courts benefit the economy by as much as $27 for every $1 invested.**[1] As a result, Drug Courts save up to $13,000 for every individual they serve.[2]

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[1] Aos, S., Miller, M., & Drake, E. (2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; Carey, S. M., Finigan, M., Crumpton, D., & Waller, M. (2006). California drug courts: Outcomes, costs and promising practices: An overview of phase II in a statewide study. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, SARC Supplement 3,* 345-356; Finigan, M., Carey, S. M., & Cox, A. (2007). *The impact of a mature drug court over 10 years of operation: Recidivism and costs*. Portland, OR: NPC Research. *Available at* www.npcresearch.com; Loman, L. A. (2004). *A cost-benefit analysis of the St. Louis City Adult Felony Drug Court*. St. Louis, MO: Institute of Applied Research; Barnoski, R,. & Aos, S. (2003). *Washington State's drug courts for adult defendants: Outcome evaluation and cost-benefit analysis*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; Logan, T. K., Hoyt, W., McCollister, K. E., French, M. T., Leukefeld, C., & Minton, L. (2004). Economic evaluation of drug court: Methodology, results, and policy implications. *Evaluation & Program Planning,* 27, 381-396.

[2] Ibid.

Cutting Crime

Only 30% of individuals released from prison never reoffend. **Remarkably, 75% of Drug Court graduates remain arrest free and in the longest Drug Court study to date found reductions in crime last as long as 14 years.**[3]

Drug Courts reduce crime by as much as 45% compared to traditional sentences. [4]

The Government Accountability Office

In December, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its fourth report on Drug Courts, concluding once again that Drug Courts reduce recidivism and save money. The report, ADULT DRUG COURTS: Studies Show Courts Reduce Recidivism, but DOJ Could Enhance Future Performance Measure Revision Efforts, validated existing Drug Court research by examining over 30 scientifically rigorous studies involving more than 50 Drug Courts throughout the country.

Of the 32 Drug Court programs reviewed, 31 showed reductions in recidivism. Of those that performed statistical comparisons, the large majority (72%) reported statistically significant reductions in crime for the Drug Court participants. This conclusion is very much in line with those of several scientific meta-analyses, which all found that 75% to 80% of Drug Courts significantly reduced crime. **In the GAO analysis, Drug Court participants were found to have up to a 26 percent lower rate of recidivism than comparison groups. Re-arrest rates for Drug Court graduates were found to be up to 58 percent below comparison groups.**

The GAO reviewed 11 cost-benefit studies published between 2004 through 2011. These studies provided information to determine net-benefit, defined as the monetary benefit of reduced recidivism accrued to society from the Drug Court program through reduced future victimization and justice system expenditures, less the net costs of the Drug Court program. Drug Courts were found to have a cost-benefit as high as $47,852 per participant.

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[3] Finigan, M., Carey, S. M., & Cox, A. (2007). *The impact of a mature drug court over 10 years of operation: Recidivism and costs*. Portland, OR: NPC Research. *Available at* www.npcresearch.com.

[4] Aos et al. (2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; Lattimer (2006). *A meta-analytic examination of drug treatment courts: Do they reduce recidivism?* Canada Dept. of Justice; Lowenkamp et al. (2005). Are drug courts effective: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Community Corrections, Fall,* 5-28; Shaffer (2006). *Reconsidering drug court effectiveness: A meta-analytic review*. Las Vegas, NV: Dept. of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada; Wilson,et al. (2006). A systematic review of drug court effects on recidivism. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 2*, 459-487.

Drug Court Growth

1989 - 1
1990 - 1
1991 - 5
1992 - 10
1993 - 19
1994 - 44
1995 - 75
1996 - 139
1997 - 230
1998 - 347
1999 - 472
2000 - 665
2001 - 847
2002 – 1,048
2003 – 1,183
2004 – 1,621
2005 - 1,756
2006 – 1,926
2007 – 2,147
2008 – 2,326
2009 – 2,459
2010 – 2,593
2011 - 2,672
2012 - 2,825
2013 - 2,833
2014 – 2,966