

DRUG COURTS IN ILLINOIS

Judge Jeffrey B. Ford

January 15, 2019



Problem-Solving Courts

- A drug court is a type of problem-solving court, which also includes Mental Health and Veterans Courts.
- In January 2016, problem-solving court standards were enacted by the Illinois Supreme Court.
- Currently there are approximately 68 drug courts in Illinois.

June 2015 – Nov. 2018 Graduations

Champaign County held 8 Drug Court graduations from 6/15 -11/18.

80 people graduated

Youngest - 21

Oldest - 66

Female - 26 / Male - 54

Caucasian - 43 / African American -
35 / Hispanic - 1 / Asian - 1

Time In Drug Court

Total time in Drug Court until graduation for the 80 graduates from these 8 graduations – 1570.5 months = 131 years for an average of 19.6 months for each person.

Drug Use

- One of the 80 started using alcohol and cannabis at 6 years of age, another started at least one of these substances at 7 years and another at 8.
- Average first use for alcohol or cannabis was 14 years.
- All started using in their teens and most moved on to cocaine, opiates, and other drugs.

Prior Record of Conviction

These 80 graduates came into Drug Court with

- Juvenile adjudications – 23
- Petty traffic tickets – 472
- Misdemeanors – 295
- Felonies – 296

THEIR SENTENCES INCLUDED

- Community-based, such as probation – 437
- Straight time in jail – 98
- Penitentiary - 119

NEW CRIMES WHILE IN DRUG COURT

During the 131 total years in Drug Court
these 80 people were found guilty of

11 petty traffic tickets

2 misdemeanor traffic offenses

Graduation Requirements

Champaign County Requirements:

- One year of confirmed sobriety
- Continuous involvement in a 12-step sobriety-based self-help program
- No pending criminal charges
- Successful completion of all recommended treatment
- Drug Court Team recommendation

Graduation Requirements Cont.

- No outstanding arrest warrants. If participant is charged with a misdemeanor while in drug court, 6 months have to pass after case finished before eligible
- Involvement in a life skills program (education, employment, or volunteer work)
- Application to graduate, which includes a 2-page essay on how drug court has helped participant's recovery and changed his/her life
- Presentation in front of the Drug Court Team

Team

Drug Court Teams, at a minimum, include

Judge

Prosecutor

Defense attorney

Substance abuse/mental health
treatment providers

Probation

Coordinator

All are required to attend the staffings and court.

Staffing

- Prior to court, the team staffs every participant that will be in court.
- Discussion includes
 - Compliance with treatment and counseling
 - Drug test results
 - Employment
 - Whether an incentive or sanction is appropriate
 - Future action required

Different Types

Three types of Drug Court:

1. Post-adjudicatory
2. Pre-adjudicatory
3. Combination

Courts can vary in length of time and graduation requirements.

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY DRUG COURT

Started in March 1999

1. High-risk/high-need participants – many have co-occurring mental illness
2. Voluntary program
3. Not dangerous to public
4. Plead guilty to a felony and sentenced to drug court probation – post-adjudicatory
5. Court every Wednesday

Champaign County

- Staffing every Wednesday morning
- Court every Wednesday afternoon
- Rewards (including praise, gift cards, applause, called up early, and days off from court) are provided for good work and completion of milestones
- Sanctions provided, not to punish, but to keep participant on the path to success: writing essays, public service work, jail
- Treatment interventions such as more classes, AA/NA meetings, increased drug testing
- Punishment comes in the form of termination from the program and resentencing.

298 people have
graduated since
our first
graduation in June
2000.

The Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation: The Impact of Drug Courts

Final Report: Volume 4 November 2011

URBAN INSTITUTE

Justice Policy Center

Information is from Cost-Benefit Analyses starting at p. 228 of the report.

- Researchers identified all of the costs of drug court programming.
- They focused the benefits estimation on outcomes alone and did not count inputs that occur after participation ends.
- Thus the analysis was from an 18-month period during participation in drug court.

“The mean control group participant committed \$16,887 worth of crime during the 18 months following study enrollment. Drug court participants, on average, committed only \$7,111 worth of crime. We estimate that drug court resulted in \$9,776 of victim crime costs prevented during the 18 months following program entry (p-0.001).”

“We estimate that drug court reduced police arrest costs from \$115 per individual to \$44 per individual, for a savings of \$71 per participant ($p=0.001$), and reduced costs of jails and prisons from \$5,441 to \$2,768, for total savings in corrections in the 18 months following program entry of \$2,673 per drug court participant ($p<0.001$). Aggregating across savings from prevented crime, arrests, and incarceration, drug court produces, on average, \$11,408 of benefits.”

“In our sample, the average treatment usage among drug court participants was \$8,979 during the 18 months following program entry, roughly double the \$4,407 for the comparison individuals in the same time frame.”

p. 238

“Using independent samples t-tests, we found that the average comparison individual cost society \$14,575 during the year and a half following their initial arrest. We estimate that the average drug court participant cost society only \$12,362.”

“The difference in the social costs - the net benefits [between those who receive drug court and those who do not] – is considerable, totaling between \$5,680 and \$6,208, but is not significant ($p=0.76$; $p=0.40$). Virtually all of the benefit of drug court appears to be to people not involved in drug court, e.g., private citizens who are not victimized. Drug court appears to prevent about \$11,566 ($p=0.03$) in criminal victimizations compared to not receiving drug court.”

“The other benefits are a substantial average reduction in the use of corrections (\$2,795) that is marginally significant ($p=0.09$) and a modest average reduction in the use of policing resources (\$120) that is statistically significant ($p=0.04$).”

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY DRUG COURT

- As of May 2018, 746 persons had been sentenced to drug court.
- 290 graduates as of May 2018
- Savings of \$11,400 per graduate for duration of participation in drug court
- **Our community saved \$11,400 x 290 = \$3,397,200.**

- Of the remaining 456 persons who had participated as of May 2018, not all remained in the program for 18 months.
- Some participants left after one day in drug court, a few others who did not graduate were there for approximately 2 years. Assuming an average of 9 months, $\$5,700 \times 456 =$

**$\$2,599,200$ saved in our
community.**

Recidivism

5 ½ years after graduation, there are 184 graduates who have not recidivated, no misdemeanor, felony, or petitions to revoke.

- Multi-site evaluation showed that drug court participants committed an average \$7,111 worth of crime in an 18 month period. If we assume, for these non-recidivists, 4 ½ years (three 18-month periods) saving at least \$20,000 and adding to that the \$11,400/year saved over a non-participant: $\$11,400 \times 3 = \$34,200$ + \$20,000 = \$54,200 per graduate (184) = **\$9,972,800 saved after graduation.**

$\$3,397,200 + \$2,599,200 + \$9,972,800 =$
\\$15,989,200 is the minimum saved
by the people of Champaign County in
the past 20 years since Drug Court
started in 1999.

- Graduation rate in early 2000s was @ 30%.
- After employing coordinator and law enforcement, rate rose to 34%
- As of May 2018 graduation is at 41.79%.

So who saves?

- Fewer police calls
- Less incarceration
- Fewer court cases
- Less property damage, fewer thefts, forgeries, etc., resulting in lower insurance costs
- More families staying together
- More employment and taxes paid
- More children staying with families, thereby hopefully keeping children out of the system

