

FLORIDA ADULT FELONY DRUG COURTS OUTCOME/IMPACT EVALUATION FINDINGS IN BRIEF

What are drug courts?

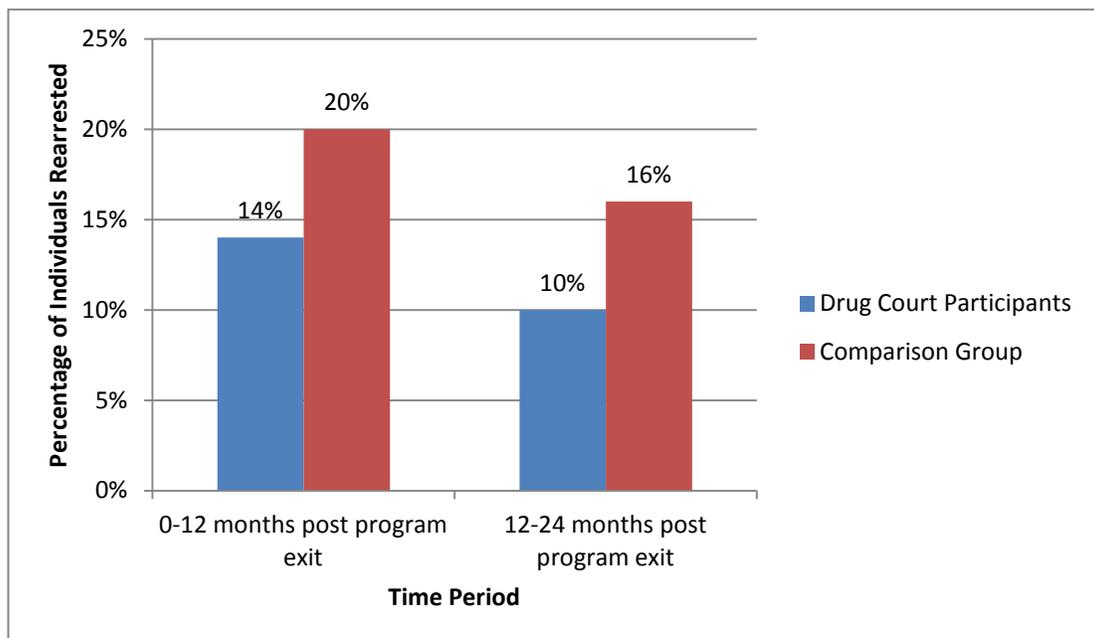
Drug courts are designed to guide offenders identified as drug-addicted into treatment that will reduce drug dependence and improve the quality of life for offenders and their families. Benefits to society take the form of reductions in crime committed by drug court participants, resulting in reduced costs to taxpayers and increased public safety. The average reduction in recidivism for drug courts nationally, compared to traditional court processing, is about 18%, with some programs seeing over 60% reductions.¹ Recidivism is also decreased up to 14 years after program participation. In addition, drug court programs save \$3 to \$27 for every \$1 invested in the program.

Do drug courts in Florida reduce recidivism?

Yes. Fewer drug court participants were re-arrested after program exit than comparison group members ($p > .05$).² Program participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested for a felony within the 2 years after program exit than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate. In addition, fewer drug court participants had drug-related arrests in the 12-24 months after program exit than comparable offenders who did not participate in drug court.

Figure 1 shows that drug court participants were arrested 30% less often as the comparison group (offenders who were eligible for drug court but did not attend) in the first 12 months after program exit, and 38% less often in the second 12 months after program exit.

Figure 1. The Recidivism Rate Is Significantly Lower for Drug Court Participants (total felonies)



¹ Presentation by Dr. Doug Marlowe, NADCP conference 2011, “Back to the Future.”

² The study sample included participants from five counties (Duval, Escambia, Lee, Monroe, and Volusia) and a matched comparison group. For additional details about the study, please contact Juliette Mackin at Mackin@npcresearch.com.