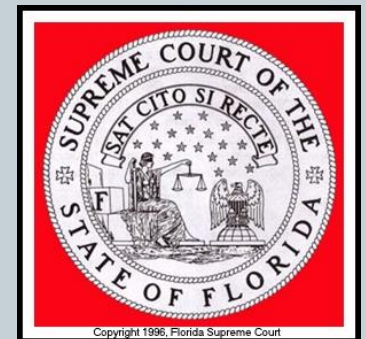


# Florida Adult Felony Drug Courts Evaluation Results



PREPARED BY NPC RESEARCH  
PORTLAND, OR

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# What are drug courts?



- Designed to guide drug-addicted offenders into treatment
- Reduce drug dependence
- Increase quality of life
- Reduce crime
- Reduce taxpayer cost
- Increase public safety

# Statewide evaluation



- NPC contracted with Office of Court Improvement in 2011
- Conducted statewide assessment of program practices, aligned with known best practices
  - 33 programs assessed
  - 29 practices assessed
- Five counties selected to represent state in further process, outcome/impact, and cost evaluation
  - Selection was based on use of best practices, diversity (geographic location, racial/ ethnic composition of participants, size of area, type of program)

# Summary of key results: Best practices



- Over half of practices were used by over 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of programs
- Prescription drugs most common drug of choice in 41% of programs
- All programs:
  - Treatment provider regularly attends drug court sessions
  - Treatment provider communicates with court via email
  - Require participants to pay court fees
- Few programs:
  - Law enforcement attends drug court team meetings (staffings)

# Summary of key results: Common practices



- **21 practices common among programs nationally**  
Examples:
  - Included prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, treatment provider, and judge on drug court team
  - Allowed participants with co-occurring disorders
  - Had written eligibility requirements
- **Florida programs had high rates of implementing common practices**

# Summary of key results: Process evaluation



- Five sites received more in-depth evaluation, including site visit
- Site-specific reports detailing alignment with best practices, commendations, and recommendations

## Examples of common recommendations

- Work to decrease the time from arrest to program entry
- Ensure training of all team members
- Work on achieving non-adversarial relationships between team members
- Decrease reliance on use of jail as a sanction
- Reach out to community partners

# Summary of key results: Outcome evaluation



- Same five sites were part of site-level outcome evaluation
- Graduation rates
  - Ranged from 43-85%; average of 57% (above national average)
- Length of stay
  - Programs ranged in intended length from 12-15 months
  - Participants remained in programs average of 12 months, graduates 14.5 months (non-grads shorter LOS)

# Summary of key results: Outcome evaluation



- **Participant characteristics that predicted success**
  - Older (4 of 5 sites)
  - Spending longer in the program (4 of 5 sites)
  - Fewer overall prior number of arrests (2 of 5 sites)
  - Fewer prior felonies (2 of 5 sites)
  - Fewer prior property offenses (2 of 5 sites)
  - Fewer prior drug-related arrests (2 sites)
  - Fewer prior person crimes (1 site)
  - Male (1 site)



# Summary of key results: Outcome evaluation



- **Reduced re-arrest rates from before to after program entry**
  - Program participants generally had lower re-arrest rates and numbers of arrests in the period 24 months after program entry compared to the 24 months before program entry
  - From 18-24 months after program entry, average of 21% re-arrested
  - From program entry to 24 months after entry, participants on average had 1.7 new arrests
- **Reduced drug arrests (24 months pre-post entry)**
  - Program participants generally were re-arrested on drug charges less often after program entry than before

# Summary of key results: Impact evaluation



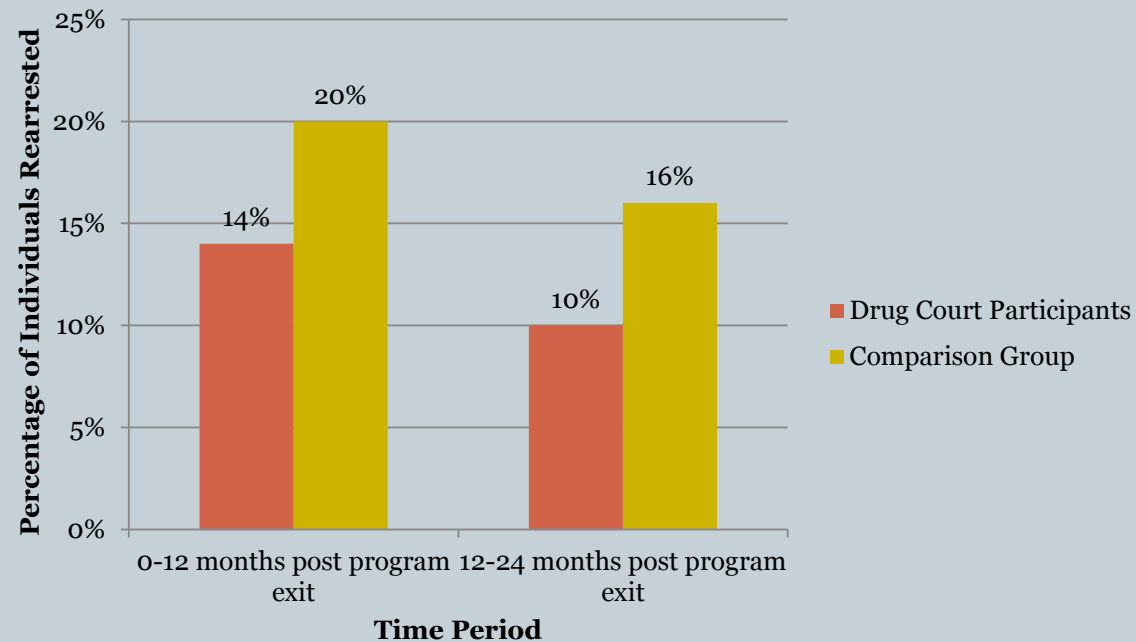
- Participants from 5 sites combined, matched with comparison group of offenders who did not participate in drug court
- Key question: Does participation in drug court reduce the number of re-arrests for those individuals compared to traditional court processing?

# Summary of key results: Impact evaluation



- **YES**

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

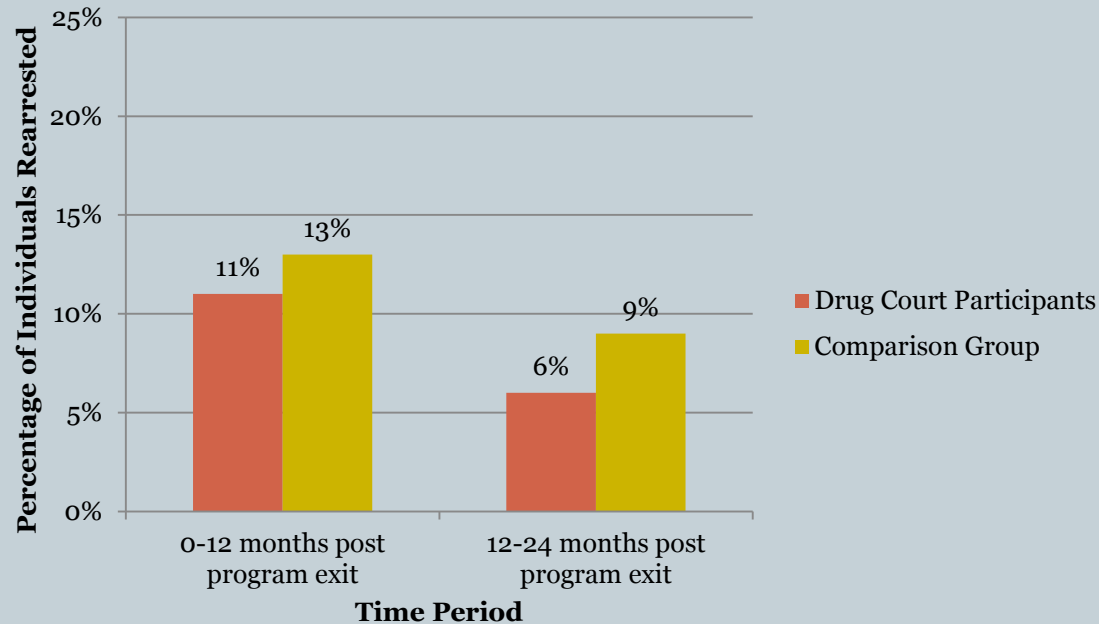


# Summary of key results: Impact evaluation



- **YES**

- Figure B. The Recidivism Rate Is Significantly Lower for Drug Court Participants (total drug arrests)



# Summary of key results: Cost evaluation



- Key question: How much do drug courts cost?
- Table 1. Program Costs per Participant

Transaction	Range	Average
Drug Court Sessions	\$1,018 - \$4,500	\$2,084
Case Management	\$665 - \$2,404	\$1,768
Individual Treatment	\$267 - \$2,164	\$1,099
Group Treatment	\$177 - \$10,352	\$3,640
UA Drug Testing	\$233 - \$1,141	\$651
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,385 - \$17,156</b>	<b>\$9,242</b>

# Recommendations: Statewide



- Increase connections with law enforcement
- Extend length of program from 12 to 18 months, especially for programs serving high risk/high need offenders
- Use evaluation and assessment data to make program modifications
- Consider accepting individuals with mental health issues (unless served by a mental health court and if adequate services are available)

# Recommendations: Statewide



- Ensure that responses to participant behavior are happening immediately
- Require that participants (before graduating):
  - Have a job,
  - Be in school, or
  - Have some other legal/sustainable way to support themselves

# Recommendations: Study sites



- **Work on improving data quality**
  - At the local program level
  - Through collaboration with other state agencies
  - Maintain core set of data elements
  - Use electronic data systems
  - Use consistent definitions for variables
  - Maintain a record of the arrest that brought the participant to drug court
  - Separate program sanctions from new arrests, unless they are truly new arrests



# Recommendations: Future studies



- Establish system-level data sharing agreements between agencies, to facilitate access to arrest, jail, prison, and court data
- Establish a procedure for allowing access to National Crime Information Center data
- Work to identify comparison groups that had specific alternatives to drug court
  - Drug diversion programs
  - Other alternatives to incarceration

# Conclusion



- Florida drug court programs have been successful in their main goals of **reducing drug use and recidivism** among its participants and **increasing public safety**

# Contact information



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