



Franklin County has a serious substance abuse problem that will continue to get worse if we neglect to address it.

FACT SHEET

Adult Drug Court

What is a Drug Court?

Drug court is a **specialty court docket** given the responsibility to handle cases involving non-violent, substance abusing offenders. In contrast to the traditional “revolving door” approach, drug courts provide an effective solution to substance abuse and drug-related crime through the innovative use of judiciary, defense bar, probation, law enforcement, mental health, social service, and treatment communities. This provides close and comprehensive court monitoring and community supervision, frequent drug testing, coupled with effective, long-term treatment services. The mission of drug courts is to stop the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and related criminal activity.

Why Do We Need a Drug Court in Franklin County?

- Franklin County has a serious substance abuse problem
- Drug-related crimes, including vandalism, home invasions, and domestic violence are a serious problem in Franklin County
- Drugs courts have proven effective in addressing the needs of those committing crimes to fuel addiction to illegal substances
- Drug court can save tax-payer dollars

Drugs courts substantially reduce crime through lower re-arrest and conviction rates compared to other efforts. (General Accountability Office GAO-05-219)

- Only 16.4 % of 17,000 drug court graduates had been rearrested and charged with a felony offense within one year of their graduation.
- New York State: 13% recidivism rate in 2003 study compared to 47% for similar offenders without drug court participation

This translates not only into decreased crime in our neighborhoods. It translates into increased dollars saved by the taxpaying community through:

- Savings of victims recovery costs and foster care services costs;
- Savings in court costs, county jails and state prisons through reduction of jail time and elimination of prison time;
- Reduced costs to the police and court system from re-arrest and associated hearings.
- At a program cost of \$206,500 for every 59 drug court graduates, taxpayers can save more than \$1 million annually in complete care costs. Compare this to \$1.5 million annually needed to incarcerate the same 59 persons (Avg./ person \$900 to 3,500 through drug court (source: NDCI) vs. \$25,958 through prison (source: ODRC).
- Increased payment of fees and fines by drug court participants for initial crime;
- Studies reveal that for every \$1 spent on drug courts, approximately \$9 - \$10 was saved in Multnomah County, Oregon (1998) and Dallas, TX (2003).

What BREAD is Seeking for the May 5th Nehemiah Action Assembly

- Implementation and full utilization of an institutionally funded and locally supported drug court that meets national standards

Did You Know?

The General Accountability Office (GAO) reported in February 2005 that adult drug courts substantially reduce crime through lower re-arrest and conviction rates compared to other efforts. (GAO-05-219)

From the National Drug Court Initiative's website, the following data are relevant:

- Nationally, in 2003, it was estimated that only 16.4 % of 17,000 drug court graduates had been rearrested and charged with a felony offense within one year of their graduation.
- In New York State, 13% was the recidivism rate in a 2003 study compared to 47% for similar offenders without drug court participation;
- In the same state, there was a 15.6% rate for drug court graduates compared to 47.8% in a control group in a 2001 study (http://www.ndci.org/courtfacts_benefits.html).

National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) CEO, Judge Karen Freeman-Wilson quotes a similar finding: "...recidivism rates for those who participate in the nearly 1,200 drug courts throughout the United States are between 4 and 25%, as compared to 60-80 % of the general prison population." (<http://www.adaweb.net/departments/prosecutor/DrugCourt.asp>)

According to a Thurston County study, participants in drug court programs can expect to develop a better self-image, improve decision-making skills, become more accountable, become a meaningful contributor to society, and reduce the chances for revisiting the court system (<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/superior/drugcourt.htm>).

For every dollar spent on drug court in Dallas, Texas, \$9.43 in tax dollar savings was realized over a forty-month period (Depart. of Economics, Southern Methodist Univ, Fomby & Rangaprasad, 2003).

A host of agencies, including the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, the Drug Court Institute, the Office of Justice Programs, and the U.S. Department of Justice, cite that successful drug courts incorporate ten key components in adherence with best practices.

These **Ten Key Components** include:

1. Drug courts integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing
2. Using a nonadversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights
3. Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program
4. Drug courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services
5. Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing
6. A coordinated strategy governs drug court responses to participants' compliance
7. Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential
8. Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness
9. Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation, and operations
10. Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support