

ADULT DRUG COURT DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) currently provides financial support to over 220 drug treatment courts in the United States through its Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program. The program is designed to equip courts and community supervision systems with the necessary tools and resources using the most current evidence-based practices and principles to intervene with substance abusing participants while preparing them for success in the community.

Most Researched Criminal Justice Initiative

Drug courts are the most researched criminal justice intervention in use today. They have proven to be a solid investment of federal dollars with a 25-year track record of success in diverting drug-addicted individuals from incarceration, reducing their risk of recidivism, and improving public safety and health.

Researched Evidence-Based Practices

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)'s 10 Best Practice Standards¹ serve as the blueprint for improving outcomes for individuals involved in the criminal justice system due to substance abuse and mental health issues and represent the most current evidence-based principles and practices for adult drug courts. The standards are based on the expansive body of research spanning nearly 20 years that represents best

practices in substance abuse, pharmacology, behavioral health treatment, and criminal justice that, if integrated into practice, will optimize drug court operations.

Research Indicates the Effectiveness of Drug Courts

Drug Courts by the Numbers

- 16% rate of recidivism among participants
- 48% rate of recidivism among nonparticipants
- \$7-9 million saved in the U.S. annually

Drug courts have been demonstrated (where implemented in an evidence-based manner) to reduce recidivism and substance abuse among high risk participants diagnosed with substance abuse and increase their likelihood of successful rehabilitation through:

- Referral based on validated risk and need assessment
- Early, continuous, and intense treatment
- Close judicial supervision and involvement
- (including judicial interaction with participants and frequent status hearings)
- Mandatory and random drug testing
- Community supervision
- Equitable, consistent, and appropriate incentives and sanctions
- Community reintegration and recovery support services/ continuing care



In January 2008, Judge Robert Russell created and began residing over the nation's first Veterans Treatment Court in Buffalo, NY.



City Court Judge Craig Hannah presides at Opiate Crisis Intervention Court in Buffalo, NY.

Impact Of Drug Courts on the Opioid Crisis

In 2017, more than 72,000 Americans lost their lives to drug overdoses, an increase from the 64,000 overdose deaths in 2016. The majority of these deaths can be attributed to opioids, including illicit fentanyl and its analogues. The opioid epidemic, a public health crisis, is also a growing public safety crisis. Addressing this crisis requires new resources like the drug court program that will bring more criminals to justice and ultimately save lives.² Research indicates that:

- **90%** of patients in need of addiction treatment services do not have access to treatment.
- **40%** of patients with private health insurance are forced to go through burdensome prior authorization before being able to receive medication-assisted treatment (MAT).
- **Only 23%** of publicly funded treatment programs report offering any Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved medications to treat substance abuse disorders, and less than half of private-sector treatment programs reported that their physicians prescribed FDA-approved medications.³

Drug courts are an effective resource for delivering structured treatment to offenders with opioid addictions. BJA supports a client's right to access MAT, and this right is extended to participation as a client in a BJA-funded drug court.

All grantees receiving BJA funding will be expected to be able to provide MAT-related treatment to any participant with an opioid addiction to the extent MAT is clinically indicated.

BJA's Drug Court Resources

BJA, through the Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program, provides financial and technical assistance to

drug court programs to build capacity and maximize criminal justice and treatment resources. Through the **National Drug Court Resource Center**,⁴ BJA provides drug court practitioners with access to a wide range of drug court resources, including recent evidence-based findings, training and technical assistance, publications, webinars, and a searchable online drug court map. These resources include:

National Association of Drug Court Professional (NADCP) Annals of Research and Knowledge (ARK)

The Annals of Research and Knowledge (ARK) brings together decades of research into justice programs and outcomes in a dynamic online tool. With the ARK, you can indicate an individual's risk and need profile and his or her stage in the justice system and view detailed information on evidence-based and promising programs matched to that individual. To access the ARK Tool, visit: www.ndci.org/resources/the-ark/.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for Opioid Use Disorders in Drug Courts

This fact sheet reports on the effectiveness of FDA-approved MAT for opioid use disorders, best practice standards for MAT in drug courts, and the legal standards for MAT in drug courts. For more information, visit: www.ndci.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/mat_fact_sheet-1.pdf

Notes

1. NADCP Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards, www.nadcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Best-Practice-Standards-Flyer_Final2.pdf
2. www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates
3. www.end-opioid-epidemic.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/180221-AMA-MAT-One-Page-National-FINAL3.pdf
4. <https://ndcrc.org/>

About BJA

BJA helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system: Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization.

To learn more about BJA, visit www.bja.gov, or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DOJBJA) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is part of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.