

Community Drug Courts in Iowa's Second Judicial District

Four Years of Operations –
September 2000 through August 2004

The Second Judicial District Department of Correctional Services received funding in July of 2000 to establish two Drug Courts. Drug Courts were opened in Marshalltown in September 2000 and in Mason City in April 2001.

What is a Drug Court? A Drug Court is a unique, specialized effort to attempt to reduce recidivism of offenders whose substance abuse problems have led them to crime.

How do costs compare to incarceration?

- ❑ Drug Court participation costs \$13.18/day per offender, versus \$62.04/day in prison.
- ❑ Supervising an offender in Drug Court for 14.8 months (average stay for successful client), followed by one year of regular supervision at \$1.88 per day, costs \$6,616.
- ❑ Incarcerating a Class C felon for 20 months and providing one year of parole supervision costs \$38,382. Incarcerating a Class D felon for 13 months, and providing one year of parole supervision, costs \$25,188.

How are Second District's Drug Courts funded?

- ❑ Originally funded by the Legislature; state funding lost in 2001 budget cuts
- ❑ Obtained alternate funding from the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy.
- ❑ **Current funding is \$202,103; grant eligibility ends June 30, 2005.**

What are the specific goals of Second District's Community Drug Courts?

- ❑ To reduce the harm that offenders who abuse substances cause to themselves, their families and the community
- ❑ To reduce admissions to prison caused by continued drug use
- ❑ To increase the number of offenders living more positive, productive lives
- ❑ To make more efficient and effective use of criminal justice and treatment resources

What makes up a Community Drug Court?

- ❑ Intensive Correctional Supervision with regular testing for drug or alcohol use
- ❑ Substance Abuse Treatment
- ❑ Regular Accountability Reviews by a panel of volunteer community members (model originated in Sioux City; three other Iowa Drug Courts use the Judge-based model)

At what stages of the criminal justice process can offenders go to Drug Court?

- ❑ At any time after arrest, and throughout probation or parole supervision
- ❑ Participation prior to sentencing may provide additional motivation

What types of offenders do the Drug Courts serve?

- ❑ Substance abuse problems led to or contributed to involvement in the criminal justice system, with methamphetamine being the primary drug of choice of 95%.
- ❑ Those convicted of selling drugs primarily for profit are not considered for Drug Court, unless they sold drugs solely to support their addiction.
- ❑ Over half convicted of drug crimes; about one-third for property crimes.
- ❑ Over 80% at high or very high risk to recidivate (based on current rather than intake assessment)

What type of treatment do Drug Court participants receive?

- ❑ Specialized cognitive-behavioral substance abuse treatment program for offenders
- ❑ Referred to other services to address identified needs: mental health treatment, family counseling, employment, education, skill building, anger management, etc.

How is the program staffed?

A full-time Probation/Parole Officer in each location supervises the clients and regularly updates panels about the offenders' behavior and progress.

Who are these Community Panel members, and what do they do?

- ❑ People from all walks of life: business owner, school principal, day care provider, teacher, blue-collar worker. Some have specific experience working with substance abusers, training is provided to all.
- ❑ Panels of four volunteers each meet with offenders weekly to monitor their progress and offer direction and support.
- ❑ In Mason City, volunteer mentors also provide pro-social influence and support to offenders. (May soon be available in Marshalltown)

What are the results so far?

For Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004):

- ❑ 91 offenders served
- ❑ Over 90 % of participants consistently test negative for drug use
- ❑ 10 successful completions, 8 unsuccessful

Long Range Outcomes: Of the 28 offenders who have successfully completed Drug Court since we began operations in September of 2000,

- Fourteen have completed correctional supervision and are not back in the system
- Nine are still on regular probation or parole supervision
- Two have been placed back in Drug Court
- One is currently in the Violator Program
- Two were sent to prison, one on a new charge

Other risk reduction indicators for successful closures:

- ✓ 36% were unemployed when entered the program, had full-time employment upon completion. Overall, 41% improved their employment situation, others maintained
- ✓ LSI-R risk scores decreased for 82% of the successful clients
- ✓ 50% showed reduction in alcohol problem; 86% showed reduction in drug problem

Given the high probability of recidivism (shown by the risk statistics quoted earlier) of the offenders accepted into Drug Court, we believe these statistics show we are making progress with a very difficult population.

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