

NATIONAL TREATMENT COURT MONTH

TOOLKIT

May 2023

All Rise



NADCP

National Association of
Drug Court Professionals

FROM THE CEO

Dear treatment court family,

For over two decades, each May, we have come together to observe National Drug Court Month. Just as you all continue to evolve and innovate, so too does this annual celebration. May is inclusive of all treatment court types, from adult, family, and juvenile drug courts, to tribal healing to wellness courts, DWI courts, and veterans treatment courts. Therefore, I am pleased to present to you the 2023 **National Treatment Court Month** Toolkit, your guide to sharing our success, educating the public, and engaging elected officials. We've made this name change to better reflect what has been the case for many years: May is the time for all treatment courts to shine.



Inside this kit, you'll find a wealth of information on ways you can bring attention to your programs. Through social media, proclamations, op-eds, and more, you can share your treatment court success with your local community, statewide, and across the country. Our samples will help ensure that elected officials, community, and the media are aware of your lifesaving work.

This year, we will once again solicit submissions for **The Art of Recovery**, a special art contest for treatment court participants and alumni. Encourage your participants and alumni to **submit artwork** to be displayed in a gallery at RISE23 and on our website!

We're here to serve you. If you need assistance beyond what's in the toolkit, just ask. We want to amplify your work to the nation, so be sure to tag us on social media, as well as **send us** the photos and media stories you collect. Let us help your community tell its treatment court story!

By the end of May, we want the world to know your programs are successfully leading people out of the justice system and into long-term recovery. This National Treatment Court Month and all year round, thank you for proving that when one community rises to address the most pressing issues of our time, we all rise.

Sincerely,

Carson Fox
Chief Executive Officer

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BE SEEN, BE HEARD

National Treatment Court Month is our chance to celebrate the work of recovery happening in treatment courts nationwide, engage our stakeholders, and inspire our communities. Now is the time to start planning! The earlier you plan, the greater your impact will be.

WAYS YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT

1. HOLD A GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduations are the most effective way to build support in the community and among elected officials. Following local, state, and federal guidelines, consider holding a graduation event in May. Invite local, state, and federal officials and the media to come see the positive effects of your program on the community. Elected officials' schedules fill up months in advance, so you need to send event invitations soon! [Click here for tips.](#)

2. WRITE AN OP-ED

Submit an opinion piece to your local, state, and regional newspapers to share your success. National Treatment Court Month is a great hook for op-eds, and outlets are likely to publish what you send them. [Click here to get started.](#)

3. ISSUE A PROCLAMATION

A Treatment Court Month proclamation is a great way to garner support at the city, county, or state level. Proclamations can also help generate media coverage. [Click here for a sample.](#)

4. TELL US ABOUT YOUR EVENTS

We want to amplify your success at the national level! Tell us how your program is celebrating National Treatment Court Month: Submit your media coverage, event photos, proclamations, videos, and more [here.](#)



Adult drug treatment court graduates in Michigan. Max Ortiz, *The Detroit News*: Reprinted with permission.

BE AN ADVOCATE

HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

There's no better way to build lasting support for your program than by holding a graduation ceremony and inviting elected officials – such as your members of Congress, governor, and mayor – to attend. Program graduates' deeply moving stories of recovery will leave an indelible impression, and National Treatment Court Month events are an opportunity to express gratitude to elected officials for the support they provide. Congress has been unwavering in its support of treatment courts, and the most recent appropriations process allotted a historic amount of funding for these lifesaving programs. Your members of Congress are rarely thanked for their public service, and they deserve gratitude for their commitment to seeing families and communities restored through our programs.

HOW TO GET YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL TO ATTEND

Let them know the media is invited.

Treatment court graduations are a perfect opportunity to engage your members of Congress and other elected officials and thank them for their support. Graduations are also great events to invite the media to show the positive impact on your community. Let elected officials know you are inviting the media and willing to work with their communications directors to provide quotes and interviews.

Virtual appearance options make it easier for elected officials to participate!

Give them an award. If your members of Congress or other elected officials have been particularly vocal and public in their support of treatment courts, present them with an award acknowledging their leadership on issues of public health and public safety. This is a great way to entice them to attend your graduation ceremony or other event!



Veterans treatment court graduation in Cobb County, Georgia. Alyssa Pointer/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP: Reprinted with permission.

BE AN ADVOCATE

FOLLOW THESE THREE EASY STEPS TO CONNECT WITH EACH OF YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (OR ANY ELECTED OFFICIAL)

1. CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL'S OFFICE

- > [Click here](#) to get contact information for your elected officials.
- > [Click here](#) to view the Congressional Calendar to know when your members will be in their districts.
- > Ask to speak to the person handling judiciary issues.
- > When speaking to the staff person:
 - > Introduce yourself. Tell them a little about your treatment court.
 - > Invite your official to attend and deliver the keynote address for your program's graduation ceremony or other event.
 - > Provide the date, time, and location information.
- > Follow up with an email to the staff person (and scheduler, if applicable):
 - > Adapt the [sample invitation email](#) and attach the [official event invitation](#).
 - > Send background information on your treatment court (a brochure, local news story, or video of a graduate or graduation).
 - > Follow up after a few days to confirm receipt.

2. WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If your elected official agrees to attend the event, contact communications@allrise.org. We can help promote your event with the press and on social media, assist with local and national talking points, and more.

3. AFTER THE EVENT, SEND A PERSONAL THANK-YOU LETTER

Consider asking your graduates and participants to send letters of appreciation as well.



Arkansas Senator John Boozman congratulates adult drug and veterans treatment court graduates in Benton County, AR.

SAMPLE EMAIL: EVENT INVITATION

Dear [staff member]:

May is National Treatment Court Month, a celebration of one of the most successful strategies for cutting crime, reducing substance use, and saving lives and valuable tax dollars. As [Senator/Representative/Governor/Mayor etc.] [last name] represents our community, we need their continued support for treatment courts and the 150,000 lives they restore each year.

It is my honor to invite [Senator/Representative/Governor/Mayor] [last name] to provide the keynote address at the [graduation ceremony or event] of the [treatment court] on [time and date]. Media will be invited to cover the event. Attached please find the event invitation and [recent news stories, brochure, etc].

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, or to confirm the event details, please contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]



A family treatment graduate and her family in Texas.

SAMPLE EVENT INVITATION

To: [Senator/Representative/Governor/Mayor]

Attn: [Staff member]

CC: [Scheduler]

From: [Judge name, city, state]

Subject: Visit with constituents

Date: [Current date]

Dear [Senator/Representative/Governor/Mayor] [last name]:

As the presiding judge of the [treatment court], it is my honor to invite you to deliver the keynote address during a special ceremony celebrating National Treatment Court Month [and honoring our most recent program graduates] on [date] at [time] at [location].

Your support for treatment courts is critical to giving our participants an opportunity to address their substance use disorder and become productive citizens. [We would like to honor your support and show our gratitude for your commitment to treatment courts by presenting you with the {title} award during the event.] The media will be invited, and we would be happy to coordinate with your communications staff to prepare for media coverage.

Our court is one of more than 4,000 treatment courts nationwide, annually serving more than 150,000 people. Treatment courts are now the most successful justice program for reducing addiction, crime, and recidivism while saving taxpayer dollars. Our graduates entered the program addicted to drugs and often facing long-term incarceration, but because of the combination of accountability and treatment they received in treatment court, they are now going back to school, reuniting with their families, finding employment, and paying taxes. They want to thank you for your continued support of treatment courts, support that will help future graduates receive the same opportunity.

[Add basic information/statistics on your program.]

As our [Senator/Representative/Governor/Mayor etc.] for [location], it would be an honor to have you deliver remarks. Thank you for your service to our community and for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, or to confirm the event details, please contact [me or other staff member] at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely,

[Judge name]

[Judge title]

BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

HOW TO GRAB THE MEDIA'S ATTENTION

Your court's graduation ceremony or community event is newsworthy, even if virtual! If members of Congress or other elected officials attend, it's the perfect opportunity to highlight your success in the media. Start planning now so you have an event the media can't wait to cover.

To make sure your court is prepared to manage the media and the message, designate a media coordinator and a spokesperson for your court. The **media coordinator** is responsible for identifying and contacting media for your court. The **media spokesperson** is the individual providing quotes and interviews to the media. The spokesperson must be knowledgeable about your court and able to speak from a position of authority. This is often the judge but could be another key member of the team.



THREE WAYS TO GET NOTICED

1. SEND A MEDIA ADVISORY

- > Adapt our [sample media advisory](#) and identify which media outlets to contact, including local, state, and regional. If you've worked with reporters in the past, or know of reporters covering criminal justice issues, reach out to them directly. Otherwise, contact the outlet and ask for the assignment desk.
- > If one or more of your elected officials has agreed to attend, let them know you plan to send a media advisory, as their offices may need to review it before sending.
- > Email your advisory to each media outlet 5 to 10 days prior to the event. Include the advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment.
- > Make repeated follow-up calls. This is often what it takes to get noticed.

Your graduations and other events are newsworthy, even if they're virtual!

BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

2. WRITE AN OP-ED

- > Start by adapting our [sample op-ed](#). Give your graduation ceremony or community event an extra news hook by including a unique graduate story or anecdote.
- > Know the word limit. Check the specific outlet's op-ed guidelines, usually 500 to 700 words.
- > Humanize your piece. Anecdotes and personal stories help illustrate and bring clarity to complicated issues. Use names only with permission.
- > Make a single strong point clearly and persuasively. Your first paragraph should draw the reader in, but if you choose to open with an anecdote, get to the point quickly.
- > Make a specific recommendation about what's needed to ensure your court can operate effectively.
- > End with a bang. Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph and should summarize your argument.
- > Follow up. If you haven't had a response from the opinion editor in one week, or if your piece is time-sensitive, follow up with a phone call to be sure it was received, and ask about its status.

3. ISSUE A PROCLAMATION

- > Ask your governor, county commissioners, city council, mayor, or even judge to [make a proclamation](#) declaring May as Treatment Court Month.

We're here to help! If you need assistance with media outreach or drafting an op-ed or media advisory, contact communications@allrise.org.



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

For virtual events, include a contact for media to RSVP with to receive access!

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your phone number and email address]



COURT
LOGO

[Your treatment court] to Celebrate National Treatment Court Month with special graduation ceremony

[Name] Will Deliver Keynote Address

[[CITY, STATE, DATE]—In celebration of National Treatment Court Month, the [treatment court] will hold a [graduation ceremony/event] on [date] at [location]. [Name (judge, member of Congress, etc.)] will deliver the keynote address. The event will recognize [#] individuals whose lives have been transformed by the treatment and support provided by the program. Media is invited to attend. To RSVP, please contact [contact information].

What: National Treatment Court Month Celebration

When: [Date, time]

Where: [Location]

Why: Treatment courts across the nation are holding special events to celebrate National Treatment Court Month. Treatment courts are considered the most effective strategy for reducing addiction, crime, and recidivism while saving taxpayer dollars.

With their friends and families in attendance, this graduation will honor individuals who have completed an intensive program of comprehensive substance use disorder treatment, close supervision, and accountability.

[If you have information on a few graduates willing to share their story, include 3-5 sentences on each here.]

National Treatment Court Month is coordinated by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). Treatment courts across the nation are advocating to ensure continued federal and state funding for these effective, evidence-based programs. Our uplifting graduation is evidence of the tremendous impact the [your treatment court] has had on our community and will send a powerful message that these programs are vital to the health and well-being of our state.

There are more than 4,000 treatment courts in the United States, annually serving more than 150,000 people. Since 1989, treatment courts have served more than 1.5 million people and saved billions of tax dollars. Learn more at AllRise.org.

####

SAMPLE OP-ED

All rise: Treatment courts save lives and strengthen communities

For three decades, there has been a growing movement to transform the way the justice system responds to substance use and mental health disorders. Rather than continuing the revolving door of addiction and related crime, treatment courts break the cycle by holding individuals accountable while connecting them with the treatment and support needed to change their lives. This approach is no longer an experiment; more than 4,000 treatment courts across the nation have proven to be the most successful justice intervention in our nation's history.

May is National Treatment Court Month and the perfect opportunity to shed light on how this approach is saving lives and making our community safer.

Here in [location], we offer [name treatment court types]. Treatment courts like ours differ from traditional court because we invite treatment providers and other public health professionals to be a part of the team. They ensure each person in our program receives an individualized, evidence-based treatment plan, and work together with the judge, defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation, and law enforcement to provide ongoing support and accountability. This approach allows our treatment court to identify and meet individual needs beyond clinical treatment, such as education, employment, housing assistance, family reunification, restitution, and healthcare.

[Insert a brief graduate success story. Example: Several years ago, a young woman entered our treatment court. After years of struggling with a substance use disorder, and being arrested numerous times for crimes related to her addiction, she was facing years in prison. But in our program, she received rigorous treatment, counseling, and support. With the help of the court team, she began to put her life back together. We helped her enroll in college and find a job. She completed the treatment court program, went on to obtain her bachelor's degree, and reconnected with her family. Today, she has no criminal record holding her back.]

This story is just one powerful reminder that when one person rises out of addiction and finds recovery, we all rise. And it is just one of the thousands of individual stories that demonstrate why treatment courts are so critical in the effort to address addiction and related crime. The research agrees: Numerous studies have found that treatment courts reduce crime and drug use and save money. These programs also improve education, employment, housing, financial stability, and family reunification, which reduces foster care placements. Treatment courts represent a compassionate approach to the devastation of addiction. This year's National Treatment Court Month celebration should signal that the time has come to reap the economic and societal benefits of expanding this proven solution to all in need.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS treatment courts have been restoring lives and families for more than three decades; and

WHEREAS there are now more than 4,000 treatment courts nationwide; and

WHEREAS treatment courts are the cornerstone of justice reform sweeping the nation; and

WHEREAS treatment courts have served more than 1.5 million individuals; and

WHEREAS they are now recognized as the most successful justice system intervention in our nation's history; and

WHEREAS they save an average of \$6,000 for every individual they serve; and

WHEREAS treatment courts significantly improve substance use disorder treatment outcomes, substantially reduce addiction and related crime, and do so at less expense than any other criminal justice strategy; and

WHEREAS treatment courts improve education, employment, housing, and financial stability, promote family reunification, reduce foster care placements, and increase the rate of addicted mothers delivering babies who are fully drug free; and

WHEREAS treatment courts facilitate community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health; and

WHEREAS treatment courts demonstrate that when one person rises out of substance use and crime, we all rise.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that _____ declares that Treatment Court Month be established during the month of May.



BE CONNECTED

HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Social media is one of the best ways to make your court program visible to the community it serves. Done right, social media is an indispensable tool to promote your impact, engage elected officials, broaden support, strategically connect with partner agencies, and make your voices heard.

FOUR WAYS TO MAKE SOCIAL MEDIA WORK FOR YOU

1. USE WHAT'S ALREADY IN PLACE

If your state supreme court, judicial district, or circuit have social media accounts, reach out to the individuals responsible for them and ask them to help you promote National Treatment Court Month by sharing your program's positive news, events, and success stories.

2. GET THE ATTENTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Most elected officials and all members of Congress have social media accounts. You can find their social media information [here](#). Don't forget to thank them publicly for their support, especially if they attend your event!

3. TAP INTO NADCP'S VAST RESOURCES

Use the [samples provided](#) to generate content, and follow our [All Rise](#) and [Justice For Vets](#) Facebook pages and [All Rise](#) and [Justice For Vets](#) Twitter accounts for content you can easily share and retweet. Our [YouTube channel](#) also has our powerful Voices of Reform video series, celebrity PSAs, RISE clips, media compilation videos, and much more.

4. LET US HELP YOU

Tag us on Facebook or Twitter so that we can like, share, or retweet your content. And [send us your photos, videos, and media coverage](#) so that we can promote what you're doing.

Remember that posts on social media (including text, photos, and videos) are public content. Put a system in place to ensure that content posted or shared is factual, appropriate, and in accordance with the principles and responsibilities of your court and the U.S. judicial system.

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS



TuuCai Wellness Court graduation. Fabian Martinez /The Southern Ute Drum. Reprinted with permission.

This National #TreatmentCourtMonth, [court] joins 4,000+ treatment courts across the country to celebrate leading people out of the justice system and into long-term recovery! Because when one person rises out of addiction, we all rise.

It's National #TreatmentCourtMonth! The [court] is saving lives and reducing crime by offering evidence-based treatment and accountability to people struggling with substance use and mental health disorders.

We know that [jurisdiction] has been hit hard by the opioid epidemic. We can't incarcerate our way out of this problem. That's why the [court] is so critical. We provide treatment and accountability to lead people out of the justice system and into long-term recovery. #TreatmentCourtMonth

We're celebrating the lifesaving work of veterans treatment courts across the U.S. the entire month of May. Most veterans return home strengthened by their service. But for those who struggle with the transition, the [veterans treatment court] provides accountability, treatment, and peer mentoring to help get their lives back on track. #TreatmentCourtMonth

We're celebrating the lifesaving work of DWI courts across the country the entire month of May. Every day, these programs make our roads and communities safer while providing accountability and treatment to help repeat impaired drivers get back on track. Because when one person rises out of addiction, we all rise. #TreatmentCourtMonth



An adult drug treatment court graduate celebrates with his family in Cleveland County, Oklahoma

SAMPLE TWEETS



Treatment court graduation in Hawaii.

This Nat'l #TreatmentCourtMonth, [court] joins 4,000+ treatment courts across the U.S. to celebrate leading people out of the justice system and into long-term #recovery!

It's Nat'l #TreatmentCourtMonth! Thank you @[member of Congress] for supporting treatment courts that save lives, reduce crime, and save taxpayer dollars.

May is Nat'l #TreatmentCourtMonth: All month long, we're celebrating #recovery through effective treatment courts. Because when one person rises out of addiction, we all rise!

May is Nat'l #TreatmentCourtMonth! 4,000+ treatment courts across the country are breaking the cycle of addiction and crime, providing hope and healing through #recovery to people with substance use disorders.

Treatment courts provide evidence-based treatment to lead people out of the justice system and provide hope and healing through #recovery. When one person rises, we all rise! #TreatmentCourtMonth

Veterans treatment courts save lives. As part of Nat'l #TreatmentCourtMonth, we're celebrating serving those who've served us. Because when one veteran rises, we all rise. #Justice4Vets

DWI courts make our streets safer and are working to end impaired driving by addressing the root of the problem: addiction. May is #TreatmentCourtMonth, and we're celebrating that when one person rises out of addiction and crime, we all rise!



National Treatment Court Month basketball tournament in Puerto Rico.

BE CREATIVE

ART CONTEST: THE ART OF RECOVERY

Once again as part of National Treatment Court Month, we are hosting an art contest for treatment court participants and alumni! Art is a powerful tool for conveying the emotions and ideas related to recovery that may be difficult to verbalize. Entries will be displayed in a special gallery at **RISE23** in Houston, Texas, as well as online at AllRise.org. [Click here](#) to learn more and enter!

CONTEST RULES

1. Entries may **only be submitted by using the online submission form**. The submission deadline is May 31, 2023.
2. Entries must fall into one of the following categories: photography, poetry, or painting/drawing.
3. Limit one entry per artist per category (up to three total per artist).
4. RISE23 attendees will vote on the entries, and first, second, and third prizes will be awarded for each category.

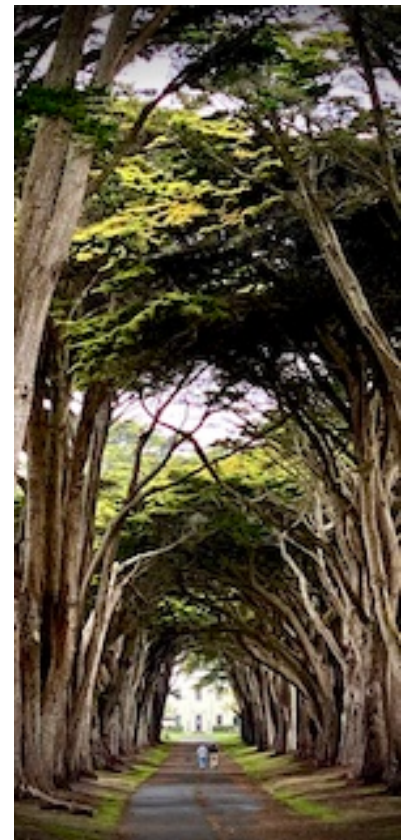
1st prize: \$150
2nd prize: \$100
3rd prize: \$50



2022 Art of Recovery 1st Place Adult Winner: Painting/ Drawing. Ronnie W, "Ride It Out"



2022 Art of Recovery 1st Place Juvenile Winner. Athena S, "Everything will be okay"



2022 Art of Recovery 1st Place Adult Winner: Photography. Alyssa B, "Stronger Together"

BE CREATIVE

OTHER WAYS TO CELEBRATE

Want your program to get noticed? You can promote National Treatment Court Month and your treatment court in numerous ways that don't include a graduation ceremony. Here are a few ideas to get you started.



Donation drive: Choose a local food bank, community shelter, or charity and hold a donation drive throughout the month of May. Use this opportunity to connect with local business owners and garner support for your court program. Get your court participants involved in collecting and dropping off donations!



Recovery walk, run, or bike ride: This is a fun community event that can easily become an annual tradition and fundraising opportunity.



Outdoor community cleanup project: Invite your community to join treatment court staff, participants, program alumni, and family members cleaning up a local park, roadway, or school grounds. This is a great opportunity for community service hours.

Sports competition: Host a softball game, golf tournament, or other sporting event. Pit participants and alumni against court staff or law enforcement. Consider making it an annual tradition; make team shirts and award trophies!

Please plan your event in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, any liability insurance, permit, licensing or law enforcement/traffic control requirements. As you select, plan, and implement your events, be sure to comply with local, state, and federal guidelines and protocols, ensuring the safety and health of all event planners, participants, and attendees.

BE ORGANIZED

HOW TO CHECK ALL THE BOXES

Want to make sure you've got everything covered in preparation for May? Use this checklist to help with planning, advertising, and engaging your community during the month's events.

- Schedule your court's next graduation ceremony during the month of May.
- Schedule other National Treatment Court Month events to engage your community stakeholders. [Click here for ideas.](#)
- Invite your elected officials** to attend your graduation ceremony or other event(s) virtually or in person.
- If your member of Congress or governor plans to attend, notify communications@allrise.org.
- Send a media advisory** to your list of targeted media outlets 5-10 days before each event you hold.
- Prepare and submit an op-ed** to your list of targeted print media outlets.
- Prepare a proclamation** for your state and local leaders.
- Send the latest national treatment court **facts** and/or statistics about your court program to hand to elected officials and media that attend your graduation ceremony or other event(s).
- Send us your stories, news media clips, and event photos and/or videos** so that we can share your accomplishments with others!
- Send news media clips to your elected officials, and include a thank-you letter if they attended your graduation ceremony or other event(s).

BE INFORMED

THE NATIONAL FACTS

TALKING POINTS

Below are some treatment court messaging points for consideration when working with elected officials, the media, and your community. These points are easily adapted and enhanced by adding your specific program's statistics to demonstrate success.

- > There are now more than 4,000 treatment courts in the United States. ([Click here](#) for more details and interactive maps.)
- > Treatment courts are a sentencing alternative that provide lifesaving treatment to justice-involved individuals with substance use and mental health disorders.
- > Treatment courts are the single most successful intervention in our nation's history for leading people struggling with addiction out of the justice system and into lives of recovery, stability, and health.
- > Treatment courts have transformed the way the justice system responds to substance use and mental health disorders by combining accountability with evidence-based treatment.
- > By delivering individualized, evidence-based treatment, supervision, drug testing, and social services, treatment courts save lives and reduce crime.
- > Treatment courts annually refer more than 150,000 people to lifesaving treatment and recovery support services.
- > Not only is the treatment court approach effective and humane, but it also saves considerable money for taxpayers. Research shows that treatment courts produce benefits of \$6,208 per participant and return up to \$27 for every \$1 invested.
- > In addition to positive treatment outcomes for substance use and mental health disorders, research confirms that treatment courts improve education, employment, housing stability, family reunification, and healthcare.
- > Treatment courts are the foundation of the U.S. justice reform movement, giving rise to other incarceration alternatives, diversion programs, sentencing and juvenile justice reforms, harm reduction strategies, and more. These programs prove it is possible to repair lives, reunite families, and reduce drug use and crime, and to do so at far less cost than jail or prison.

Cover image: 36th District Adult Drug Court Graduation. Max Ortiz, The Detroit News: Reprinted with permission.



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