

**AIRise**

# Impaired Driving Solutions

2024 Impaired  
Driving Prevention  
Month

# Toolkit

for Treatment Courts



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# From the Director



Impaired driving is one of the most serious threats to public safety in the United States, and the problem of polysubstance use and increased drug-impaired driving is a growing concern we must address. December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month and a crucial opportunity to raise awareness of these dangers along with proven and promising measures to make our roads and communities safer.

We know that treatment courts are an effective way to address the issues at the root of impaired driving: substance use and mental health disorders. We are immensely proud of the impaired driving treatment court model, but the truth is that many other treatment court types serve individuals with repeat impaired-driving offenses. December is the perfect opportunity to show your community that your treatment court plays an important role in prevention efforts and saving lives.



To truly combat impaired driving, there needs to be a comprehensive approach to this problem. As Impaired Driving Solutions, we understand this, which is why we help communities address and reduce impaired driving by implementing a broad range of evidence-based and promising legal and clinical interventions.

This toolkit contains a wealth of resources for planning December activity and for better serving individuals with impaired driving offenses in your program. In addition, for many people in recovery, the holidays can be an especially difficult time. For these reasons, we have also included resources to help ensure that your participants and staff have the support they need.

We look forward to seeing your program participate in Impaired Driving Prevention Month! Thank you for the work you're doing every single day to make our communities safer.

Sincerely,

**Jim Eberspacher**  
Director, Impaired Driving Solutions

# Introduction: Serving Individuals With Impaired-Driving Offenses



**Many treatment court types serve individuals with impaired-driving offenses.**

And while we know that the impaired driving treatment court model has been revolutionary for addressing the substance use and mental health issues at the root of the problem, the fact remains that many jurisdictions do not yet have an impaired driving treatment court and serve these individuals through an adult drug treatment court or other court type.

For this reason, all treatment courts can and should do their utmost to ensure that they are using evidence-based best practices for serving this population whenever possible. Impaired Driving Solutions is not only the leading training and advocacy division for impaired driving treatment courts, but we

have a wealth of expertise and resources for individuals with impaired-driving offenses for the programs that serve them at numerous intercept points in the system.

Inside this toolkit, you'll find resources to help you:

- Better serve these individuals in your program
- Educate the media
- Engage your community
- Ensure that your participants and staff have the support they need to manage the strong emotions that may be activated by the holiday season



# Chapter 1: Event Ideas



Here are several event ideas for your treatment court to recognize Impaired Driving Prevention Month and build greater community support for your program. Remember to invite the media to these events!

## 1. Graduation Ceremony

Find creative ways to honor your participants and graduates in December. Look to hold your ceremony in a venue other than the courtroom; ask a local musician to perform a song; invite a well-known guest speaker. There are plenty of ways you can honor your graduates and include your elected officials!

## 2. Community Cleanup Project

Invite your community to join your court in cleaning up a local park, street, highway, or school. Invite program alumni and their families to participate, and encourage all court staff, law enforcement, treatment providers, community supervision, etc. to join in.



## 3. Host or Participate In Community Events

Whether it's a 5K walk or run, bike or motorcycle ride, resource fair, or other community-based event, these opportunities can become an annual tradition and can be a great way to raise both awareness and funding for your program. It's also a great way to connect with community partners, other resource providers, and agencies.

## 4. Donation Drive or Fundraiser

December is the perfect time to organize a holiday donation or toy drive for a local food bank or charity. Or, hold a year-end fundraiser specifically for your court program to encourage local businesses and nonprofits to support your efforts through donated funds, services, or time. Consider joining forces with officials and community partners that have a stake in and/or are impacted by impaired driving, such as victim advocates, law enforcement, state highway safety officials, etc.

# Chapter 2: Preparation and Resources



## Preparing Your Team and Participants for the Holidays

It's important to remember that for people in recovery, the holidays can be a particularly challenging time for their sobriety. As treatment court professionals, it's critical to recognize this fact and prepare your team to support participants throughout the holiday season.

### Preparation for Your Court Team

The efforts of your team to understand how most holiday events include and even focus on alcohol consumption, and the challenges this can present to your participants, will go a long way to help your participants feel supported during this season. During your court staffing meetings prior to each holiday, discuss the following with your team:

- Ensure each team member receives, reads and understands this page of the toolkit, especially if they never struggled with a substance use disorder.
- Discuss how the court team can demonstrate understanding, empathy and support for those in recovery during the holiday season.
- Discuss how your team will interact with and prepare treatment court participants during the court sessions immediately before and after each holiday.

### Preparation for Your Court Participants

For your treatment court participants, be aware of the date closest to each holiday when they come before the judge, and address the following:

- Ask, “What are your plans for [Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year’s]?”
- Ask, “How do you plan to maintain your sobriety over the holiday?” You can also give them some specific **tips for staying sober** through the holiday season.
- Instruct them to plan ahead for the busy holiday season and to schedule and keep appointments with their therapist, counselor and/or case manager around each holiday.
- If they have sponsors, remind them to check in and even meet up as necessary.
- If they participate in group therapy or community organizations, encourage them not to miss these group meetings around each holiday.
- Encourage them to choose their activities and company wisely.

# Chapter 2: Preparation and Resources



## Training and Targeted Assistance Resources

Impaired Driving Solutions provides a wide variety of free resources to educate public health and public safety professionals on evidence-based, best, and promising practices for working with justice-involved individuals diagnosed with mental health and substance use disorders. This includes not only impaired driving treatment courts, but all treatment courts that accept and serve individuals with impaired-driving offenses.



### Training

Whether in-person or virtual, by jurisdiction or statewide, Impaired Driving Solutions provides a full suite of training opportunities to meet your needs! Our new and improved website allows you to search for training by treatment court type, role, or topic.

[Browse Training](#)

### Targeted Assistance

Impaired Driving Solutions provides robust targeted assistance (TA) to treatment courts that accept and serve individuals with impaired driving offenses to help these programs develop and implement improved practices for greater effectiveness and increased, long-term participant success.

[Browse TA](#)

### Publications

Access hundreds of free publications at your fingertips. From the 10 Guiding Principles for DWI Courts to Ask the Expert FAQs to the All Rise magazine, these publications cover a wide range of need-to-know topics like target population, incentives and sanctions, drug testing, risk and need assessment, and more.

[Browse Publications](#)

### Sample Documents

We know it can be difficult to write a document from scratch; that's why we've developed samples so you don't have to! Browse our sample documents for policy and procedure manuals, integrated case planning forms, participant handbooks, and other important documentation.

[Browse Sample Documents](#)





## Get Media to Your Graduation/Event

December is a great time to engage media and promote the success of your program. There's no better way to do this than with a graduation or special event. Here's how to get media to cover your program. Note: Even if your program is virtual, media can still be included.

### Designate a media coordinator and 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.

- Determine if any program graduates or participants are willing to speak with the media. Write a short paragraph outlining their story for use in media advisory.

Note: Personal stories are critical. Ask successful graduates or participants nearing program completion if you can share their story. Include a short paragraph on each in your advisory. All Rise's publication "[Sharing Your Story With Dignity and Purpose](#)" is a great resource for helping participants and alumni. Remember that **new participants are in a vulnerable stage and should not be profiled by the media.**



*Jerry Larson/Waco Tribune-Herald: Reprinted with permission.*





## Follow These Easy Steps to Get Media to Your Event

### 1. Write your media advisory.

A media advisory is crucial to ensuring coverage of your event. It lets the press know what the event is, where it is, and why it's important for them to cover it. You can find a sample media advisory [on our website](#).

### 2. Identify media outlets to contact.

Don't limit your list to local media; state and regional media may also be interested. If you've worked with reporters in the past, or know of reporters covering criminal justice or veteran-related issues, reach out to them directly. Otherwise, contact the outlet and ask for the assignment desk.

### 3. Send your media advisory.

Email your advisory to each media outlet one week prior to the event. Include the advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment. The news cycle is constantly evolving, so it doesn't hurt to send it again one or two days before the event.

### 4. Follow up.

Media are unlikely to cover the event unless follow-up calls are made. Often, media won't make decisions about coverage until the last minute.

### 5. Send positive media stories about your treatment court to your members of Congress and other elected officials

Include both your representatives and senators. You can look up contact information for your elected officials, including mayor, governor, and members of Congress, [here](#). For assistance with media outreach and interviews, contact [communications@allrise.org](mailto:communications@allrise.org).



Tony Overman/The Olympian: Reprinted with permission.



## Print Media: Op-ed

One way to enhance media attention for Impaired Driving Prevention Month to ensure your message gets out across your region and the country is to write an opinion editorial (op-ed).

With widespread interest in justice reform in the U.S., news outlets are usually interested in the subject of justice innovations like DWI and other treatment courts. An op-ed is a great way to remind your legislators and the public that your programs save lives, save money, and increase public safety.

We've provided a sample op-ed for you to adapt and use as appropriate [on our website](#). Here are some general tips to help ensure that any op-ed you write gets published:

- **Find a news hook.** Your court's graduation ceremony or other event is newsworthy; give it an extra hook by relating it to the broader discussion of impaired driving, justice reform and finding proven solutions for your community. If your court is in jeopardy of losing funding, say so!
- **Know the word limit.** In general, 700-800 words is sufficient for an op-ed, but check your newspaper's op-ed page to find out their preferred length.
- **Humanize your piece.** Anecdotes and personal stories help illustrate and bring clarity to complicated issues. Think about personal experiences in your treatment court and use them as examples in the op-ed (but only use names with permission).
- **Stick to a single point.** 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, make sure you get to the point quickly.
- **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece: state your opinion on what's needed to ensure your court can continue to operate effectively or on what evidence-based steps can be taken to reduce impaired driving in your community (see our recommendations in the sample op-ed on the next page).
- **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph and include a poignant quote from a key stakeholder or participant, if you have one.
- **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you or publish the piece within 1-2 weeks. If you haven't had a response in that timeframe, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, make a follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.



## Social Media Overview

Impaired Driving Solutions encourages treatment court programs to use social media to their advantage, but also with care. Social media can help engage and educate your participants, graduates, and community, and it's one of the most effective ways to get the attention of elected officials.

Nearly all elected officials have official social media accounts and will often take notice of and like or share positive content. Remember that anything you post on social media (words, photos, videos, etc.) is considered public content.

As with any public content, it is critical that a system be in place to ensure that content posted or shared on behalf of your court program is 1) appropriate, 2) factual, and 3) in accordance with the principles and responsibilities of your court and the U.S. judicial system.

Be sure to like and follow All Rise on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and

share the inspiring stories and news we post about treatment courts serving individuals with impaired-driving offenses. [On our website](#), we've provided sample posts you can use during the month of December. Content that includes photos, images, and/or videos is much more successful, so we encourage you to include them whenever possible.

If you would like to see your court highlighted on our social media accounts, send your stories, photos, links to any news media, and contact information to [communications@allrise.org](mailto:communications@allrise.org).



# Thank You



We at Impaired Driving Solutions would like to express our profound gratitude to you, the individuals doing the most difficult, important, rewarding work we can think of on a day-to-day basis. Without your belief in the effectiveness of treatment courts and your unwavering dedication to ensuring that your program provides real solutions to people in real need in your communities, there would not be more than 23 million Americans leading lives of recovery today. And the impact of your efforts doesn't stop at treatment court alumni: it reaches every participant's family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Because of you, our roads

and communities are safer. Because of you, many millions of lives have seen a level of restoration that would not have been possible otherwise.

**Treatment courts are justice reform in action.** You're transforming the U.S. justice system for the better every day. You're taking a bold stance by declaring that impaired driving can be reduced, substance use and mental health disorders can be treated, and lives can be saved, all while saving money and making communities safer and more productive. We could not be prouder to stand with you.



**Treatment  
Court Institute**  
↑

**Impaired  
Driving Solutions**  
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**Justice  
for Vets**  
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**Center for  
Advancing Justice**  
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Founded As



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