

# Kentucky Specialty Courts

The Department of Specialty Courts oversees the Drug Court, DUI Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Treatment Court programs. Collectively referred to as Specialty Courts, these programs are similarly structured and supervised and have the same goal – to give eligible participants the opportunity to make positive changes in their lives. The programs all provide oversight by a judge, case management, treatment and drug testing.

Specialty Court programs are provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts, which is the administrative arm of the state court system. The AOC pays for treatment, drug testing and case management, and no fees are charged to defendants to participate in the program.

The cornerstone of a successful Specialty Court is its multidisciplinary team. Each team is led by a judge and is comprised of Specialty Court staff, local criminal justice officials, treatment providers and community representatives who develop a program tailored to each jurisdiction.

Specialty Court programs offer many financial and societal benefits, including lower recidivism rates, reduced incarceration costs, more babies born drug free, decreased medical costs, and improved child support and tax payments as participants obtain and maintain employment. In addition, the devastating cycle of generational criminal behavior and addiction is broken as participants become healthy, productive members of their communities.

**Drug Court** serves nonviolent offenders whose main problems stem from substance use disorder. This court-managed treatment program provides a cost-effective alternative to traditional criminal case processing. Drug Court accepts those charged with nonviolent offenses related to substance use disorder and combines intensive supervision with treatment. It takes participants an average of 22 to 25 months to complete the program's three phases and aftercare.

**DUI Court** is for repeat DUI offenders. However, the program also accepts defendants who may have a first conviction for DUI and a significant history of alcohol intoxication convictions.

**Mental Health Court** serves individuals with an Axis I diagnosis of major mental illness. To be eligible, participants must have a diagnosed mental illness with or without histories of psychiatric hospitalizations. Participants may or may not have a substance use disorder.

**Veterans Treatment Court** is for those who have served in the military. Participants may or may not have had an honorable discharge and do not have to qualify for services through the Veteran's Administration to be eligible for VTC. Participants may or may not have a substance use disorder. VTC teams include a veterans justice outreach specialist from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, agencies from the community, state and federal levels work together to provide high-quality services and bridge gaps in resources to meet the needs of our veterans.

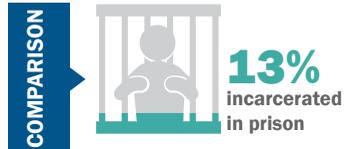
# Kentucky Drug Court: 2015 Statewide Outcome Evaluation

Comparing the Program Graduates and the Comparison Group for a Two-Year Period

## Post-Drug Court Prison Incarceration



Two years post-program, 0% of graduates were incarcerated in prison compared to 13% of the comparison group.



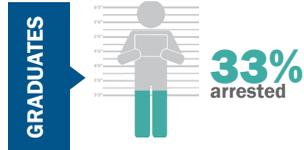
## Post-Drug Court Jail Incarceration



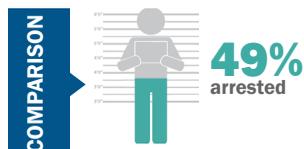
Two years post-program, only 28% of graduates were incarcerated in jail compared to 81% of the comparison group.



## Post-Drug Court Arrests



Two years post-Drug Court, 33% of graduates were arrested versus 49% of the comparison group.

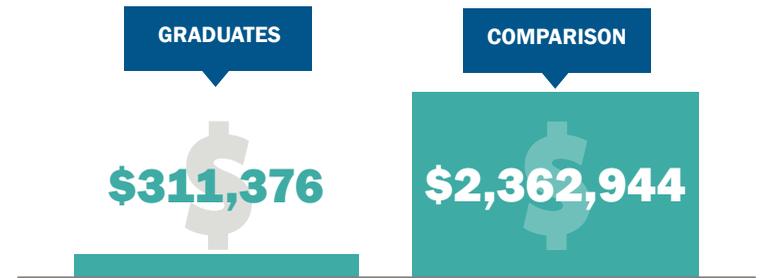


## Post-Drug Court Convictions



## Cost savings for a two-year period

### Total Cost of Incarceration



### Costs Saved

TWO YEARS POST-DRUG COURT, THE TOTAL INCARCERATION EXPENSES WERE

**\$2,051,568**

LESS FOR GRADUATES  
COMPARED TO THE COMPARISON GROUP

About this Study: Lisa Shannon, Ph.D., MSW, prepared the 2015 Kentucky Drug Court Statewide Outcome Evaluation. Dr. Shannon is an associate professor of social work at Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky. The comparison group was comprised of individuals who were assessed and eligible but did not enter Drug Court.

## Specialty Court Statistics & Savings

ACTIVITY	7/1/2017 - 6/30/2018	From inception - 6/30/2018
Amount of child support paid	\$516,976	\$6,756,254
Amount of other court obligations paid	\$542,571	\$7,293,723
Number of active participants as of 6/30/18	2,506	
Number of aftercare participants as of 6/30/18	464	
Number of participants entered program	2,296	27,700
Number of graduates	620	9,289 <sup>3</sup>
Number of drug free babies <sup>1</sup>	75	1,243
Number terminated	1,256	13,224
Number administratively discharged <sup>2</sup>	88	1,200
Number of community service hours	160,928	2,010,859
Number on probation	1,765	24,158
Percent on probation	72%	
Percent from probation violation as of 6/30/18	35%	
Percent from shock probation as of 6/30/18	9%	
Number on deferred prosecution	40	128
Number on diversion	677	9,082

### About These Numbers

The chart above includes statistics from the four Specialty Court programs, Drug Court, DUI Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Treatment Court. Statistics are from the Kentucky Drug Court Management Information System.

<sup>1</sup> It costs up to \$250,000 to provide neonatal care for a drug-exposed baby for the first year and \$750,000 to treat a developmentally delayed child for 18 years, according to the Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>2</sup> Administrative discharge is when participants exit the program through no fault of their own, such as death or being transferred to another jurisdiction due to employment.

<sup>3</sup> Specialty Drug Court graduates have saved more than \$128 million in prison costs since the program's inception. Participants receive treatment, drug testing and case management for \$6,069 per year versus \$20,047 to house an inmate per year.

## Specialty Courts a success in Kentucky

Kentucky Specialty Courts have a solid track record of helping graduates return to productive lives and stay gainfully employed, pay child support and meet other obligations. Instead of spending time in jail, eligible participants complete a substance abuse program supervised by a judge.

The program's success has convinced leaders in state government, along with local judges, prosecutors and treatment providers, that Specialty Courts are an essential part of the Kentucky court system.

The Specialty Courts program serves 113 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

As of July 1, 2018, 54 Drug Courts, one DUI Court, one Mental Health Court and five Veterans Treatment Courts were supervising 2,506 participants who were in the active phase of the program or completing aftercare.

Specialty Courts operate under the Supreme Court of Kentucky Administrative Procedures. The Administrative Procedures provide basic legal guidelines that incorporate the 10 Key Components of a Drug Court, the industry standard adopted by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. In addition, each site has the ability to use local resources to customize the services available in its jurisdiction.

An executive officer and two managers oversee the Department of Specialty Courts at the Administrative Office of the Courts. They supervise a statewide staff comprised of regional supervisors, regional specialists, program supervisors, recovery coordinators, case managers, a drug testing liaison and administrative staff.



Kentucky Specialty Courts  
 Administrative Office of the Courts  
 1001 Vandalay Drive  
 Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
 502-573-2350 • 800-928-2350  
[www.courts.ky.gov](http://www.courts.ky.gov)

# Kentucky Specialty Courts

*Saving Costs, Saving Lives*

**Drug Court • DUI Court  
 Mental Health Court  
 Veterans Treatment Court**

