



**Therapeutic Court Association of Washington  
Washington Association of Drug Courts**

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### **Maintain the Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA)**

- Washington invests in Drug Courts through this dedicated account (RCW 71.24.580), created in 2002 with bipartisan support. CJTA pays for itself through savings from avoided prison days and crime reductions.
- Funds treatment and support services for Drug Court and other therapeutic court participants.
- Counties rely on CJTA for services beyond Drug Courts -- treatment and medications for opioid use disorder in jails, community-based treatment, and other support for individuals with substance use disorder and charges filed by a prosecuting attorney.

### **Breaking the Cycle**

#### **Helps individuals with the most significant challenges.**

Drug Courts provide structured court supervision, case management, treatment and access to services as a voluntary alternative to transitional case processing. Most Drug Courts operate at the Superior Court level, serving individuals charged with felony crimes influenced by their substance use (e.g. vehicle theft, burglary, identity theft, drug delivery, low level assault).

When participants enter Drug Court, they are often unhoused, unemployed, using fentanyl and/or methamphetamine daily, experiencing co-occurring mental health disorders, and heavily engaged in crime to support their use.

#### **Support and services.**

Drug Court helps remove barriers that make treatment difficult. Services may include outpatient and inpatient treatment and medications, case management, peer support, assistance with housing, employment, education, life skills, transportation, and resources to meet basic needs.

#### **Provides structure and accountability.**

The Drug Court model is based on 30 years of national research. Participants must attend treatment, take frequent drug tests, and engage in productive, recovery-supportive activities. The court and case managers provide monitoring, encouragement, and accountability. Sanctions and incentives are based on national best practices that encourage ownership and responsibility.

### **Improves public safety and prevents future crime.**

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) classifies Drug Court as an evidence-based intervention for reducing crime. Drug Courts reduce recidivism and increase employment.

- WA Drug Courts break a well-established cycle of crime/incarceration: participants often have long criminal histories - on average, 5 prior felonies, 9 prior misdemeanors.
- Three years after starting treatment, 88% of Washington drug court participants have no new felonies and 77% have no new crimes of any kind, per DSHS analysis.
- DSHS found a 231% increase in employment 18-months after Drug Court began.

### **Positive impact on families and communities.**

Drug Court participants and graduates give back to our communities. Some become treatment counselors, peer specialists, or other service-oriented professionals. Others volunteer in their children's schools, help elderly parents/neighbors, become valued employees, and serve as role models and mentors in the recovery community.

Many are parents of minor children. Drug Court breaks what is often a generational cycle of substance use and criminal involvement. When parents participate, the results are life-changing for both them and their children. Drug Court helps prevent adverse childhood experiences associated with parental substance use, parental incarceration, and foster care.

### **A good investment for taxpayers.**

Drug Court serves a "high risk / high needs" population - people with high criminogenic and behavioral health needs whose untreated substance use leads to costly impacts on the community. National research supports the drug court model as the necessary level of intervention to interrupt the cycle of substance use, crime, and incarceration for this population. Drug Courts provide an effective off-ramp, diverting participants from jail/prison, addressing underlying causes, and benefitting the whole community.

- A DSHS analysis of drug court participants in Washington State found reductions in crime create a net benefit for taxpayers of \$22,000 per participant, or a \$4 return on every \$1 invested.
- WSIPP reports Drug Courts produce a return on investment for taxpayers.

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