

# HARFORD COUNTY (MARYLAND) DISTRICT COURT ADULT DRUG COURT FACT SHEET

## What are drug courts?

Drug courts are designed to guide offenders identified as drug-addicted into treatment that will reduce drug dependence and improve the quality of life for offenders and their families. Benefits to society take the form of reductions in crime committed by drug court participants, resulting in reduced costs to taxpayers and increased public safety.

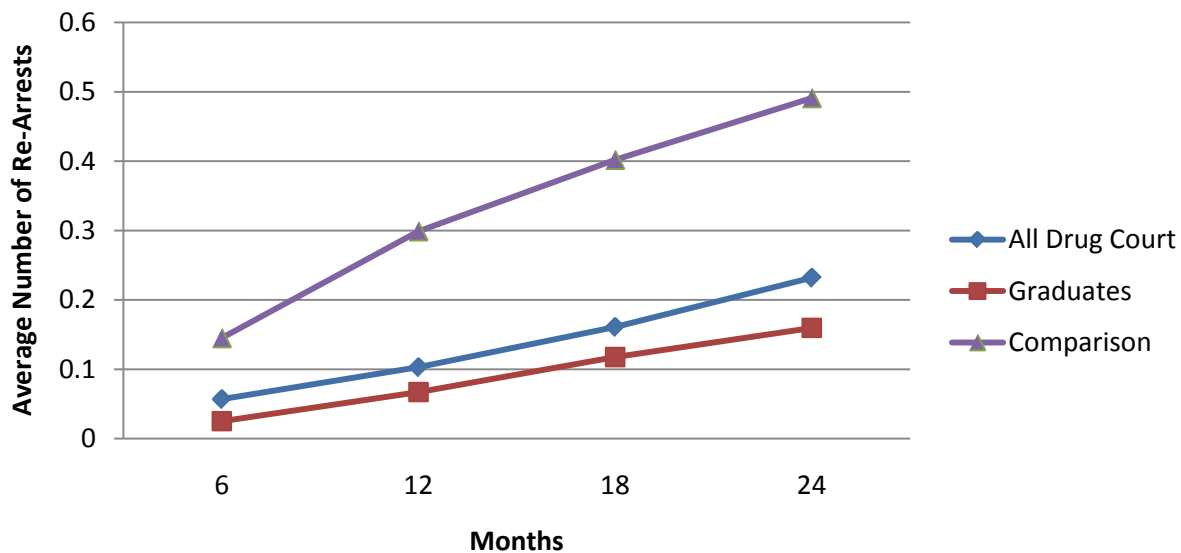
NPC Research, under contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts of the State of Maryland, conducted a cost and outcome study of the Harford County District Court Adult Drug Court (HCADC) program. Three key policy questions of interest to program practitioners, researchers, and policymakers about drug treatment courts were addressed

### 1. Do drug treatment courts reduce recidivism?

**Yes.** HCADC program participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate.

Figure 1 shows that HCADC participants were arrested half as often as the comparison group (offenders who were eligible for drug court but did not attend). In the 24 months following entry to the program 13% of graduates and 18% of all drug court participants were re-arrested while 31% of the comparison group was re-arrested.

**Figure 1. Average Number of Re-Arrests for All Drug Court, Graduates, and Comparison Group Over 24 Months**

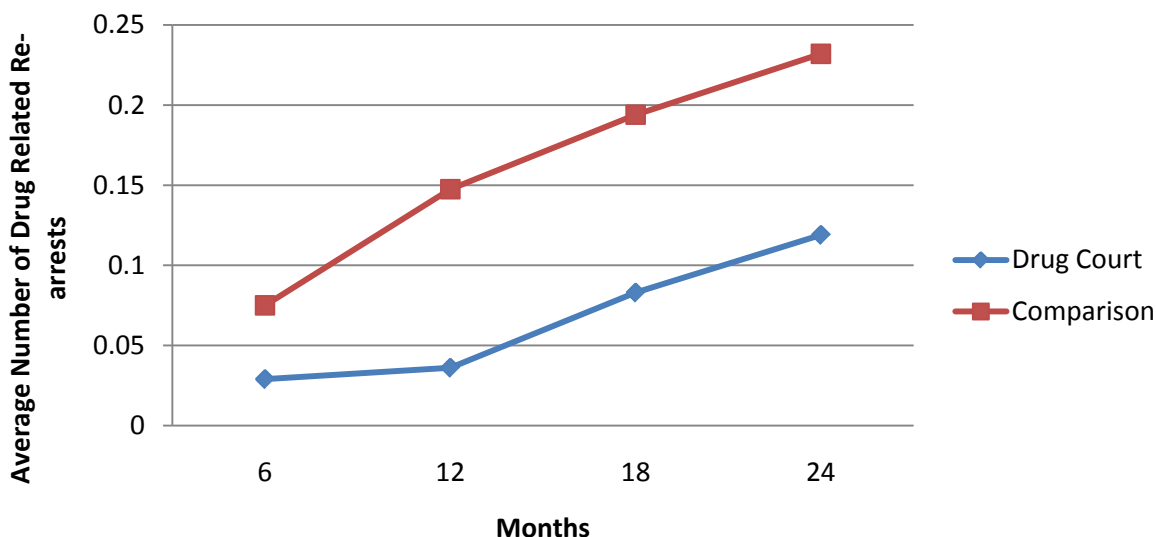


## 2. Do drug courts reduce drug-related re-arrests?

**Yes.** HCADC participants had consistently fewer drug-related re-arrests following entrance into drug court.

Figure 2 shows the average number of drug-related re-arrests for the drug court group for 24 months during the outcome period. At 6 months there is only a slight difference between groups; however, drug court participants are re-arrested for drug related crimes significantly less often at the 12, 18, and 24 month time points.

**Figure 2. Average Number of Drug-Related Re-Arrests Over 24 Months for HCADC Program Participants and the Comparison Group**



## 3. Do drug treatment courts result in savings of taxpayer dollars?

**Yes.** The total criminal justice system cost savings per participant after 2 years was **\$2,767** per drug court participant, regardless of whether or not they graduated.

When this number is multiplied by the 400<sup>1</sup> participants who have entered the HCADC drug court program since its inception, the resulting total savings is **\$1,106,800**. If savings continue for each participant at the same rate (which has been shown to occur in other studies, e.g., Finigan, Carey, & Cox, 2007), after 10 years, the savings for these 400 participants will total over **\$5.5 million**.

As the program continues, the savings generated by drug court participants due to decreased substance use and decreased criminal activity can be expected to continue to accrue, repaying investment in the program and beyond. Taken together, these findings indicate that the HCADC is both beneficial to drug court participants and beneficial to Maryland taxpayers.

<sup>1</sup> Complete records of the total number of participants since drug court implementation were not available, so 400 is a conservative estimate.