

# State of Vermont Treatment Court Projects

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## *What is a Drug /Treatment Court?*

- A coordinated effort of the judiciary, prosecution, defense bar, probation, law enforcement, treatment, mental health, social services and child protection services to actively intervene and the break the cycle of substance abuse, addiction and crime.
- An intervention that is best suited for high needs/high risk individuals and focuses on chronic behaviors for the purpose of reducing recidivism and substance abuse among nonviolent offenders and increasing their likelihood of success.
- A specific court docket within the criminal justice system to expedite the time interval between arrest and entry into treatment, and provide the necessary structure to see that an offender stays in treatment long enough for treatment benefits to be realized. The participant is in the treatment court program for approximately 12 to 18 months.
- A voluntary program that includes early, continuous, and judicially supervised treatment, mandatory periodic drug testing, community supervision and use of incentives and sanctions and other habilitation services to increase a participant's likelihood of success.
- An alternative to jail.

## *How does a Drug / Treatment Court Operate?*

- **Treatment / Community Services:** Treatment courts provide an intense regimen of substance abuse, mental health and related health services, wrap around case management, drug testing, judicial supervision, regularly scheduled status hearings before a judge, job skills training, educational services, housing and other needed support.
- **Supervision / Program Phases:** There are typically 3 to 4 phases, in the early phase the participant comes to court weekly or bi-weekly and as they move through the phases the court contacts decrease to once a month. Among other requirements, participants must have a number of consecutive "clean days" to move to the next phase. Early on the focus is stability which includes detoxification, safe and sober housing, an intensive outpatient program and community support groups (AA/NA). As the participant progresses, there are additional requirements: treatment support groups, education, employment and the development of an aftercare plan. Each phase takes approximately 4 months to complete. Participants earn rewards called "incentives" for progress while non-compliant behavior will result in a sanction. This is not a linear process, participants can and do move backwards at times.

## **In Vermont there are:**

**Adult Drug/Treatment Court Projects in Rutland, Chittenden and Washington Counties.**

**Family Treatment Court Projects** (a special docket in Family Court for parents with substantiated abuse and neglect, who are dependent on drugs and/or alcohol and have admitted that their substance use has interfered with their ability to parent), **in Caledonia County.**

**Juvenile Drug Court** – a docket involving youth who have been charged with a delinquency and are using drugs and/or alcohol, **in Franklin County.**

**Mental Health Court in Chittenden County** – a docket serving individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

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