



Best Practices in Adult Drug Courts: Reduce Recidivism and Costs

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The Research

- **In the past 10 years NPC has completed over 100 drug court evaluations and research studies**
- **Adult, Juvenile, DWI/DUI and Family Treatment (Dependency) Drug Courts**
- **In California, Guam, Indiana, Michigan, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Nevada Oregon and Vermont**

What We Already Know

Recidivism

- **Drug Courts reduce recidivism**
- **Recidivism is decreased up to 14 years after participation**



Recidivism

- In the 18-site study, 16 of the 18 sites had reduced recidivism for drug court participants
- Of all the DC's NPC has evaluated (~100), 8 have not resulted in lower recidivism for participants

25 California Adult Drug Courts

Drug Court Participants had lower
recidivism rates

After 2 years:

17% Graduates

41% All Participants

64% Comparison Group

How Does Drug Court Work?

What practices lead to lower recidivism and lower costs?

- *Does it matter if the treatment provider attends court sessions?*
- *Is it important for the attorneys to attend team meetings (“staffings”)?*
- *How long should the judge spend with each participant in court sessions?*
- *How important is relapse prevention?*

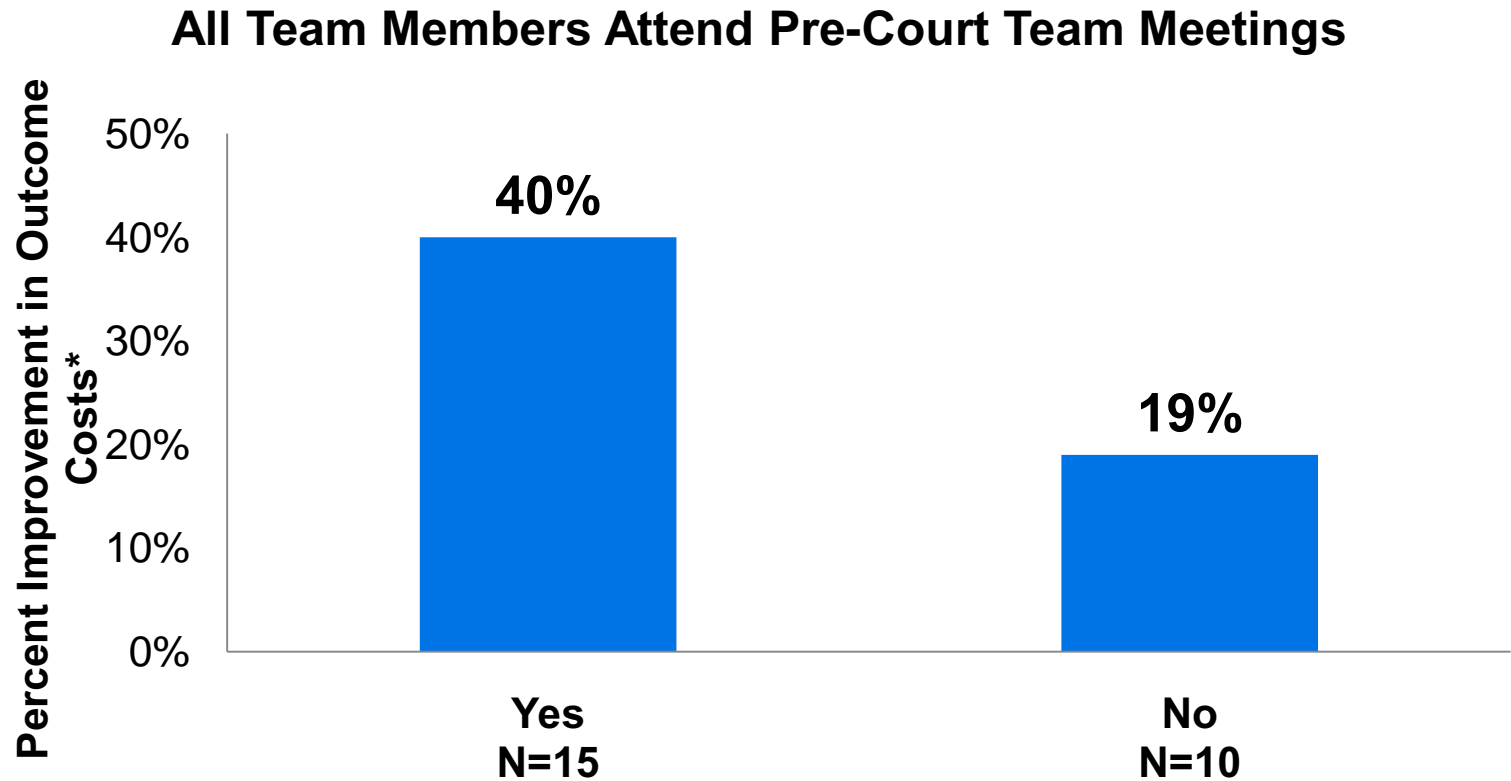
Key Component #1

Drug Courts integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing. (Team Involvement)

- **What team members should attend team meetings?**



Drug Courts where All Team Members Attend “Staffing” Meetings had Double the Savings

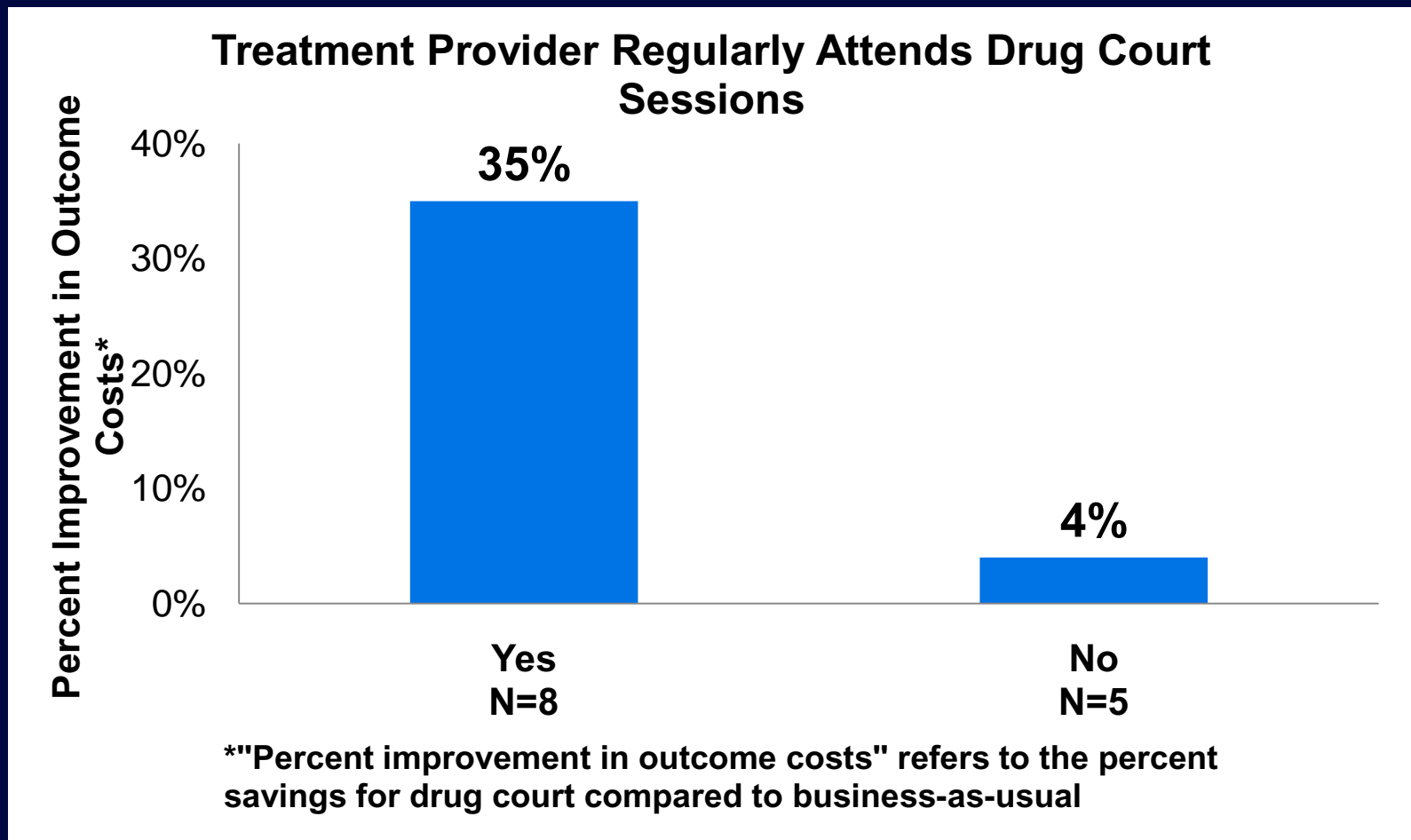


***"Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Note 2: "Team Members" = Judge, Both Attorneys, Treatment Provider, Coordinator

Drug Courts where Treatment Providers Attend Court Sessions Had 9 Times Greater Savings



Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

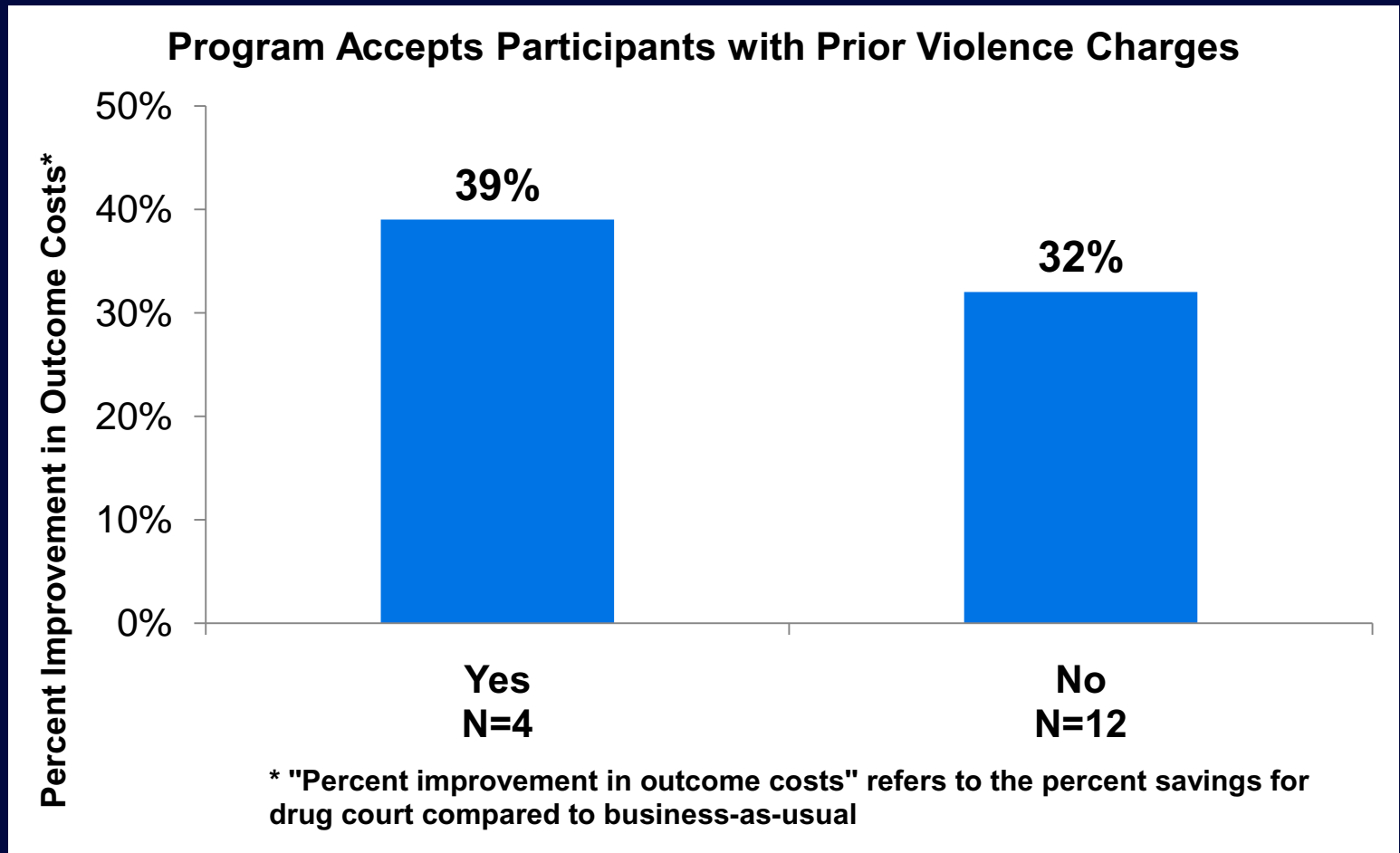
Key Component #2

Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.

Does allowing non-drug charges (e.g., violence) threaten public safety?

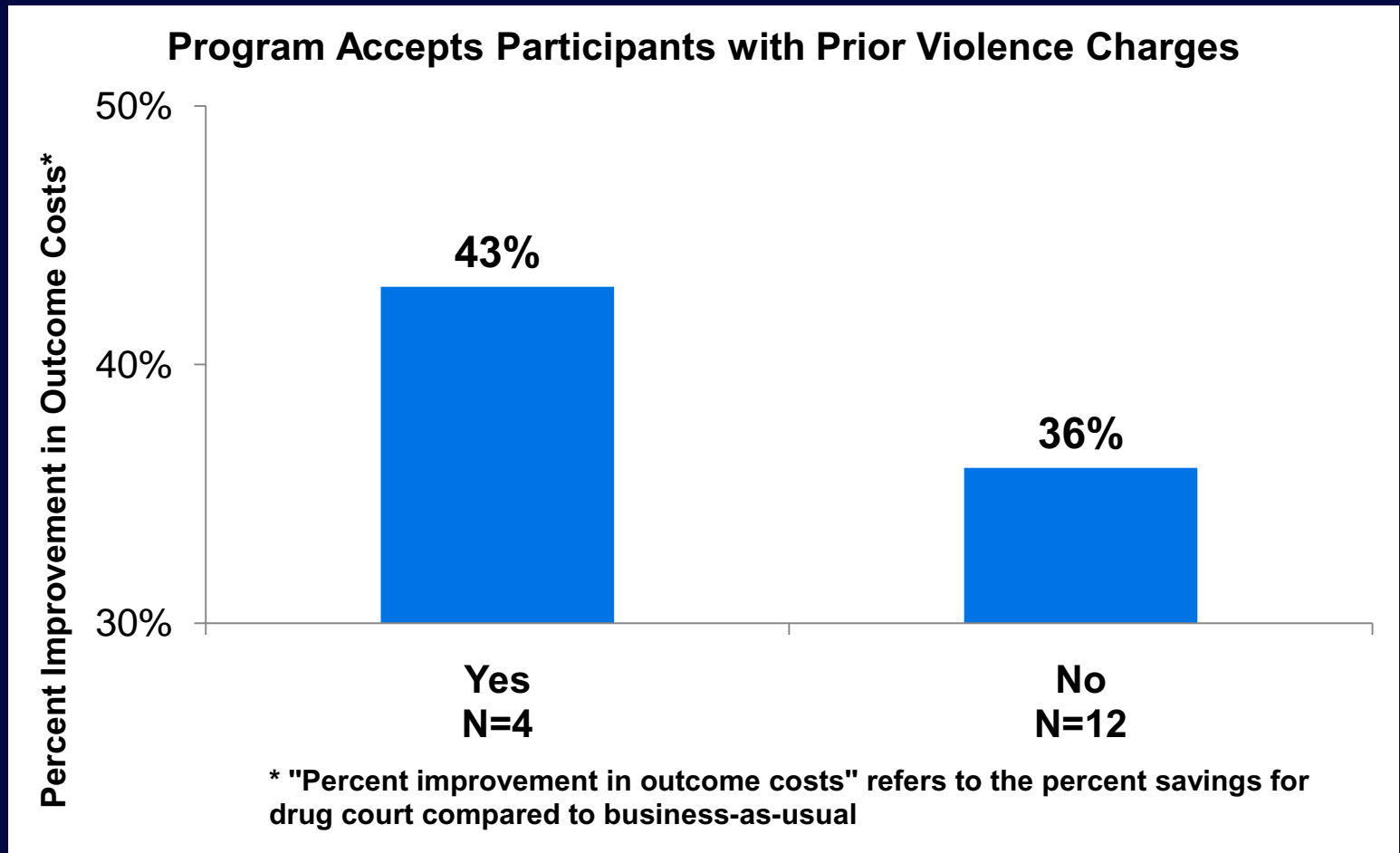


Drug Courts That Accepted Participants with Prior Violence had No Difference in Outcomes (Cost Savings)



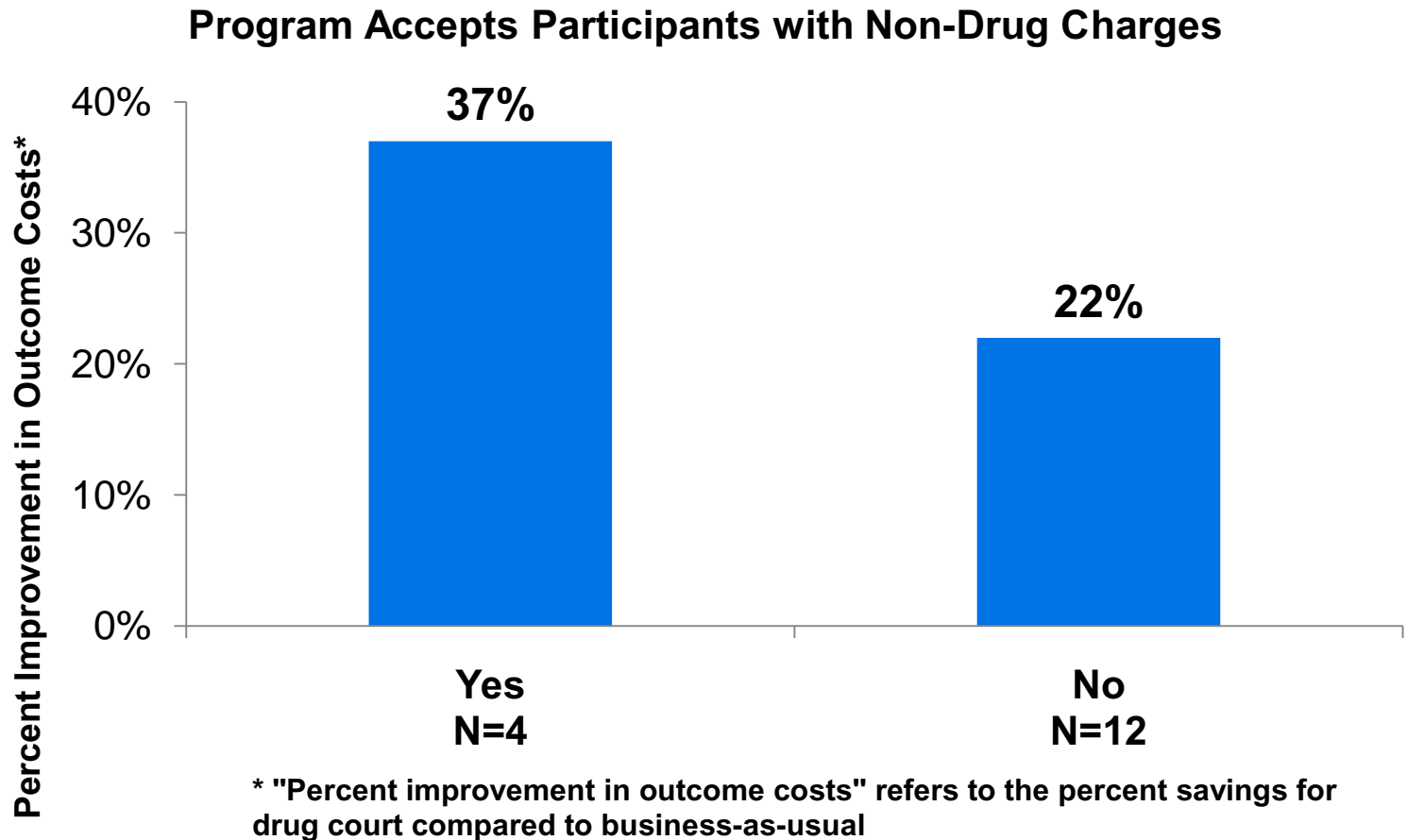
Note: Difference is NOT significant

Drug Courts That Accepted Participants with Prior Violence had No Difference in Outcomes (Graduation Rates)



Note: Difference is NOT significant

Drug Courts That Accepted Participants with Non-Drug Charges had Nearly Double the Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Note 2: Non-drug charges include property, prostitution, violence, etc.

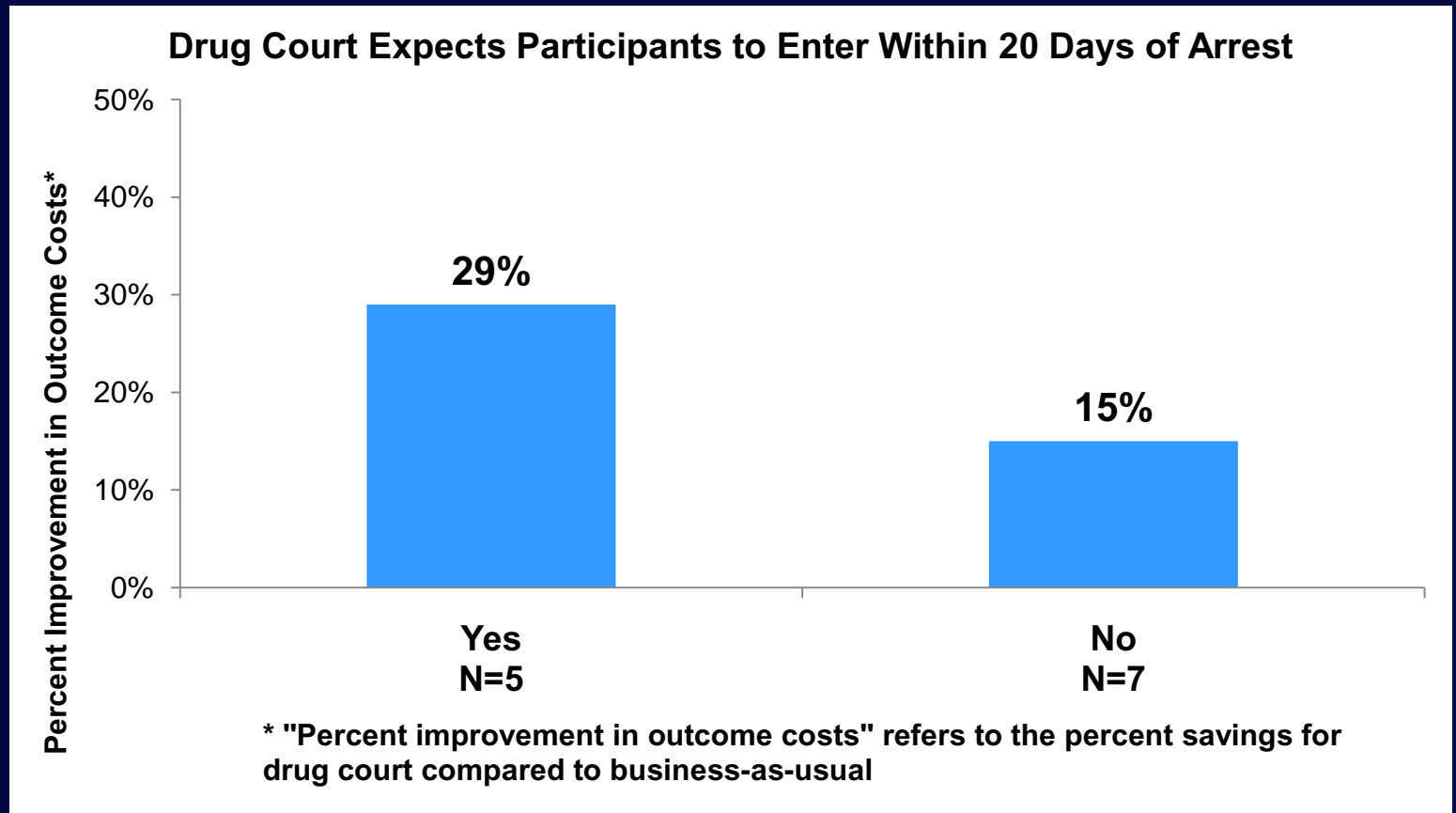
Key Component #3

Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program.

- **Is it really important to get participants into the program quickly? (And what is quickly?)**



Drug Courts Where Participants Entered the Program Within 20 Days of Arrest had Twice the Savings

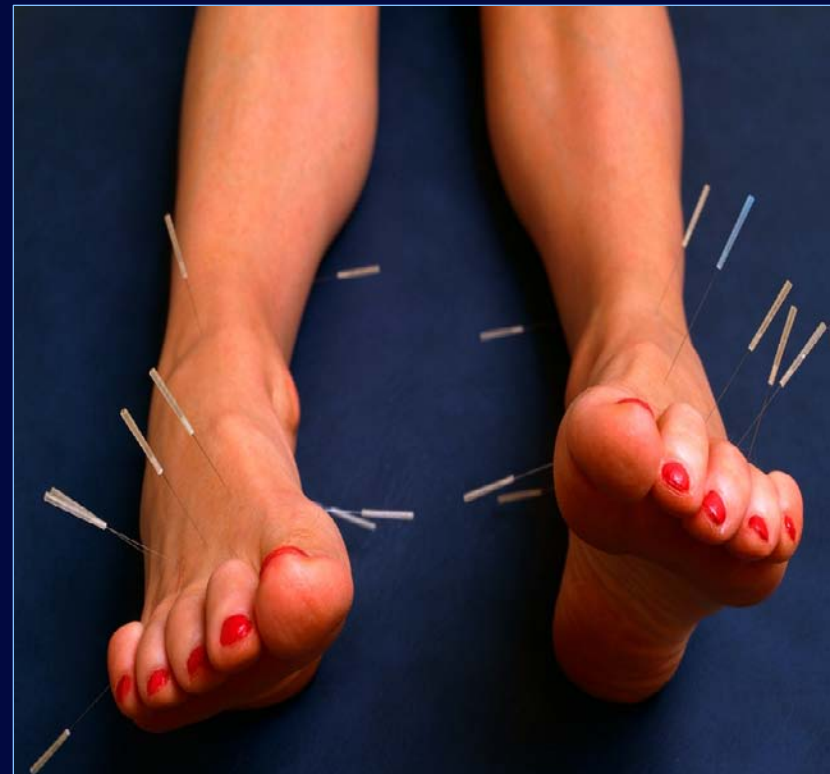


Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

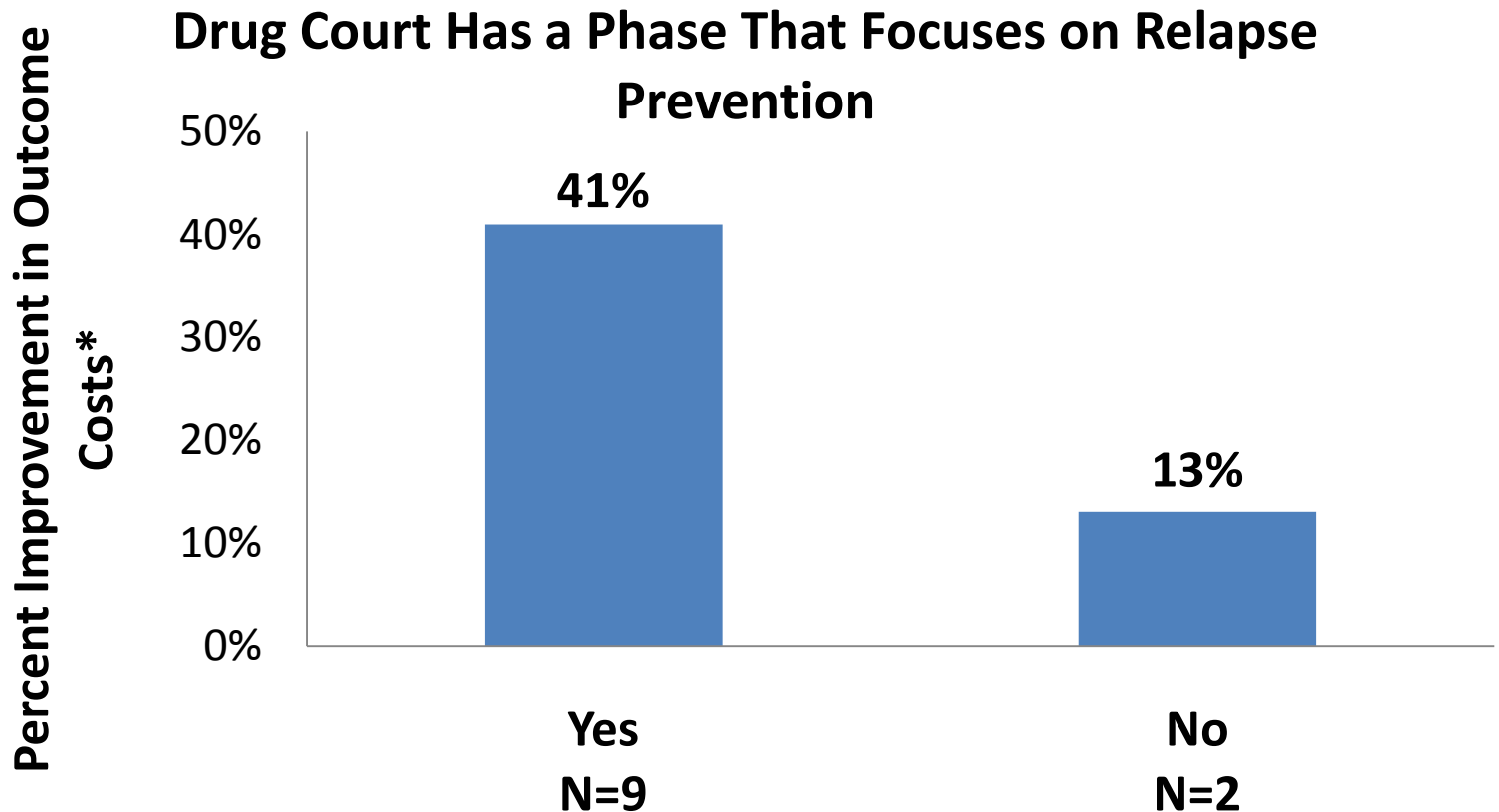
Key Component #4

Drug courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.

- **How important is relapse prevention?**
- **Is it better to have a single treatment agency or to have multiple treatment options?**



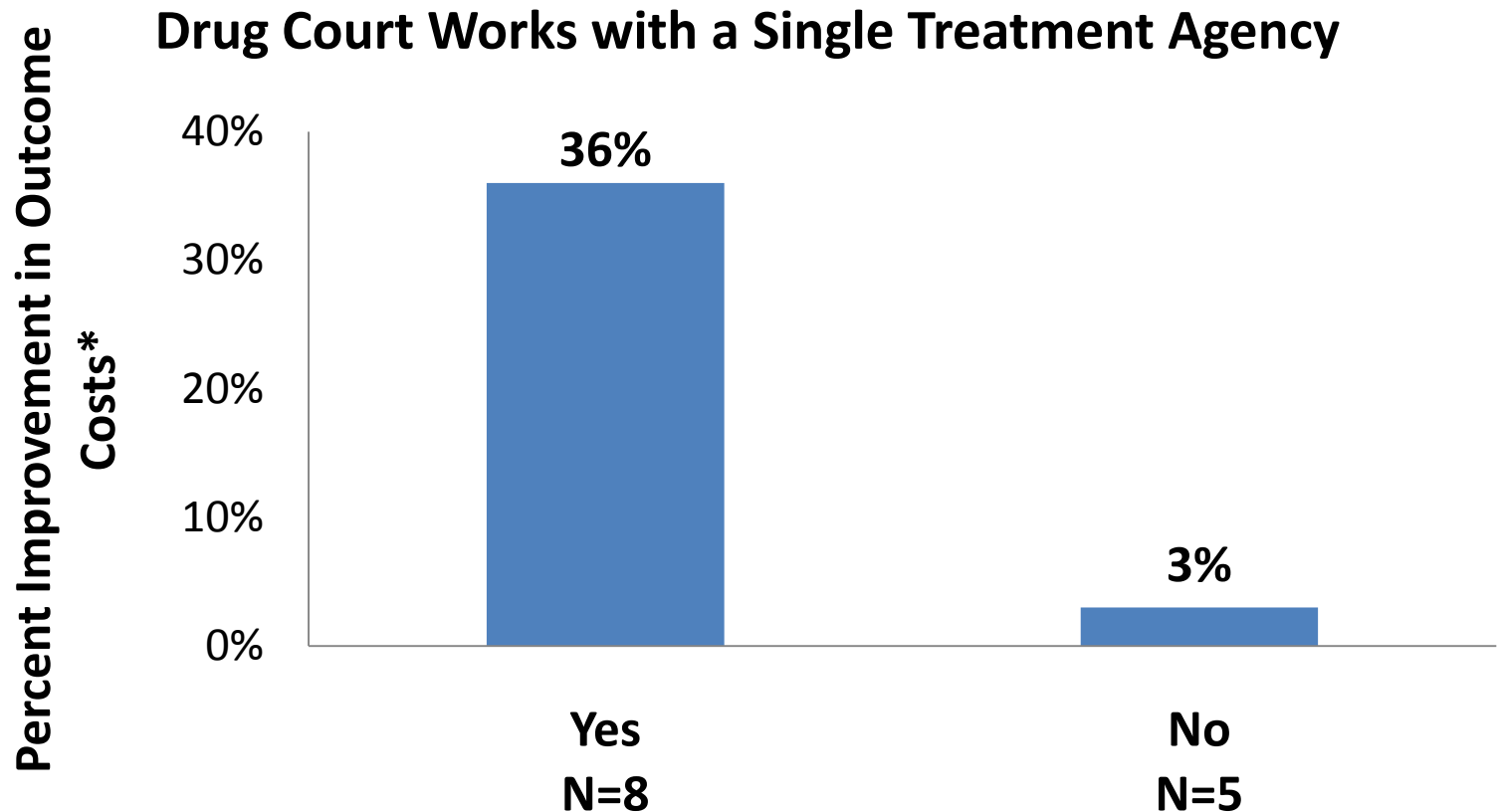
Courts That Had a Phase That Focused on Relapse Prevention had Over 3 Times Greater Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Courts That Used a Single Treatment Agency had 10 Times Greater Savings



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Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

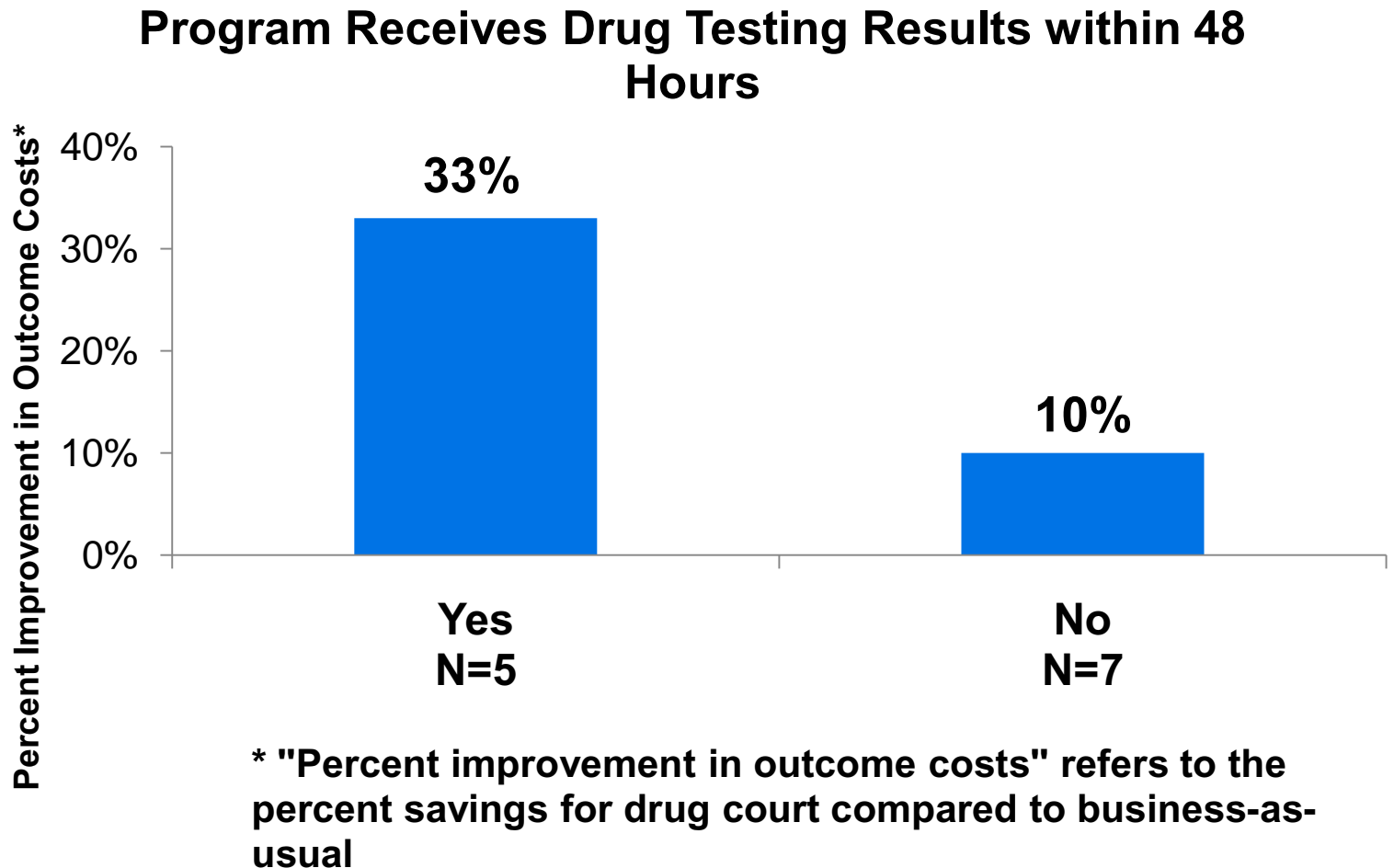
Key Component #5

Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.

- **How important is it for drug test results to be available quickly? (What is quickly?)**
- **Should there be a required length of time participants must remain clean before graduation? If so, how long should it be?**

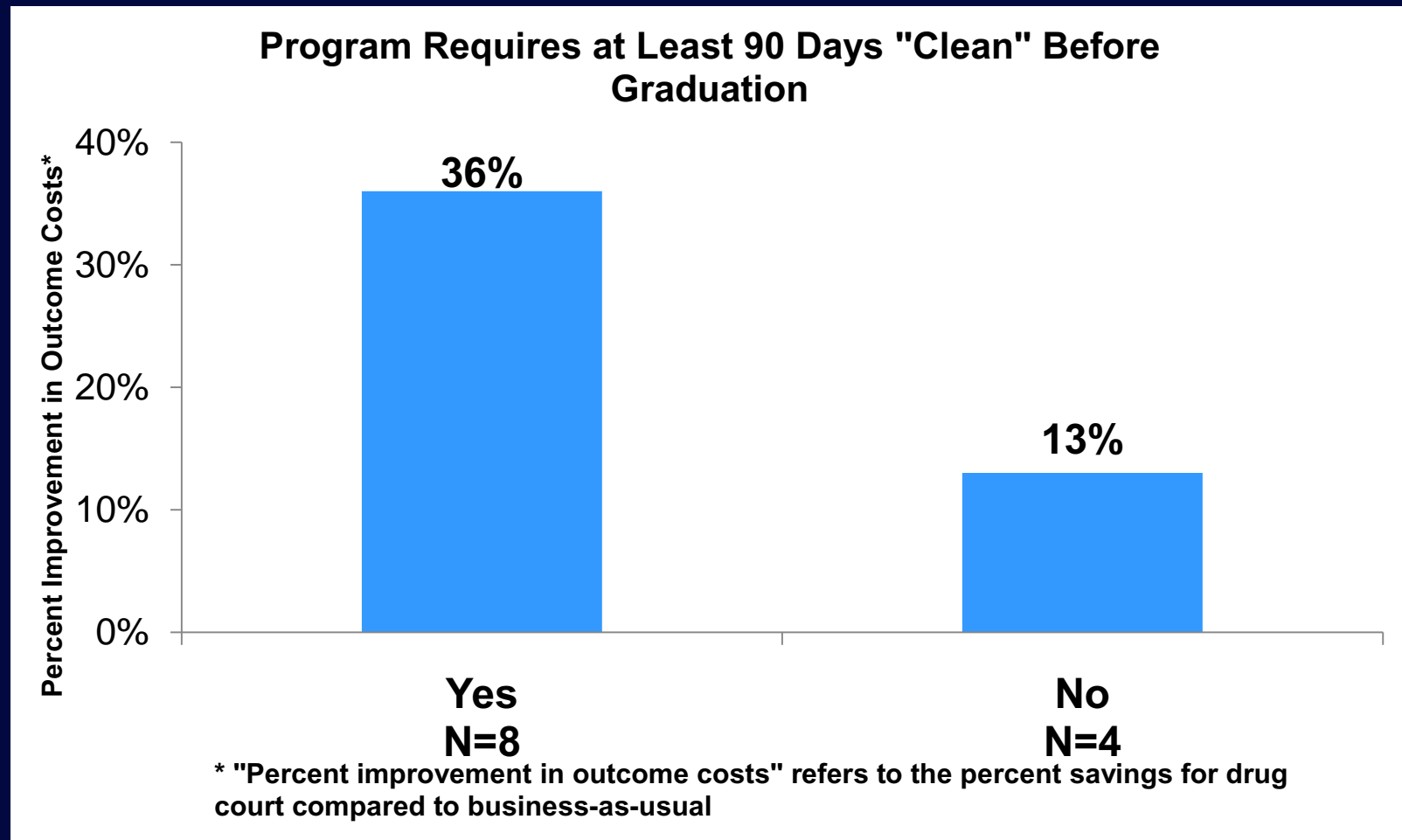


Courts that Received Drug Test Results Within 48 Hours of Sample Collection Had 3 Times Greater Savings



Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

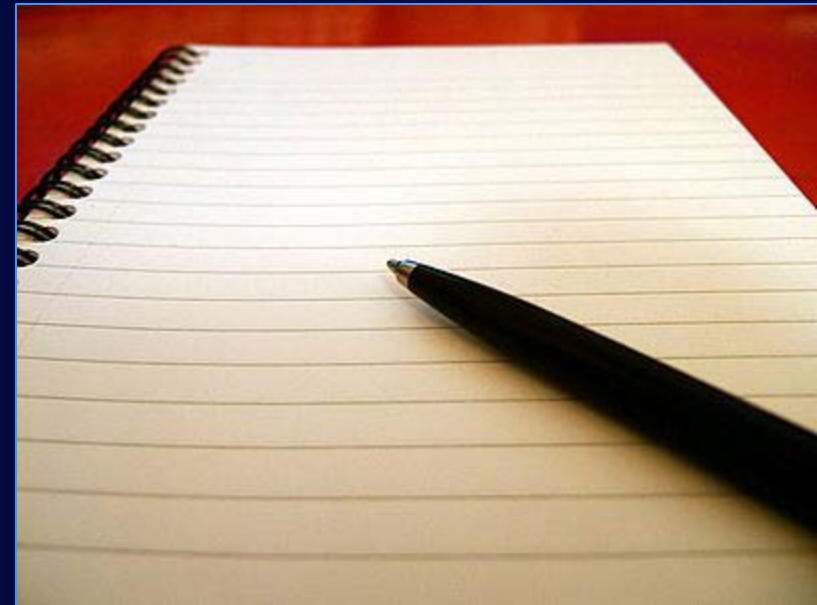
Drug Courts That Required Greater Than 90 Days Clean Had Nearly 3 Times the Cost Savings



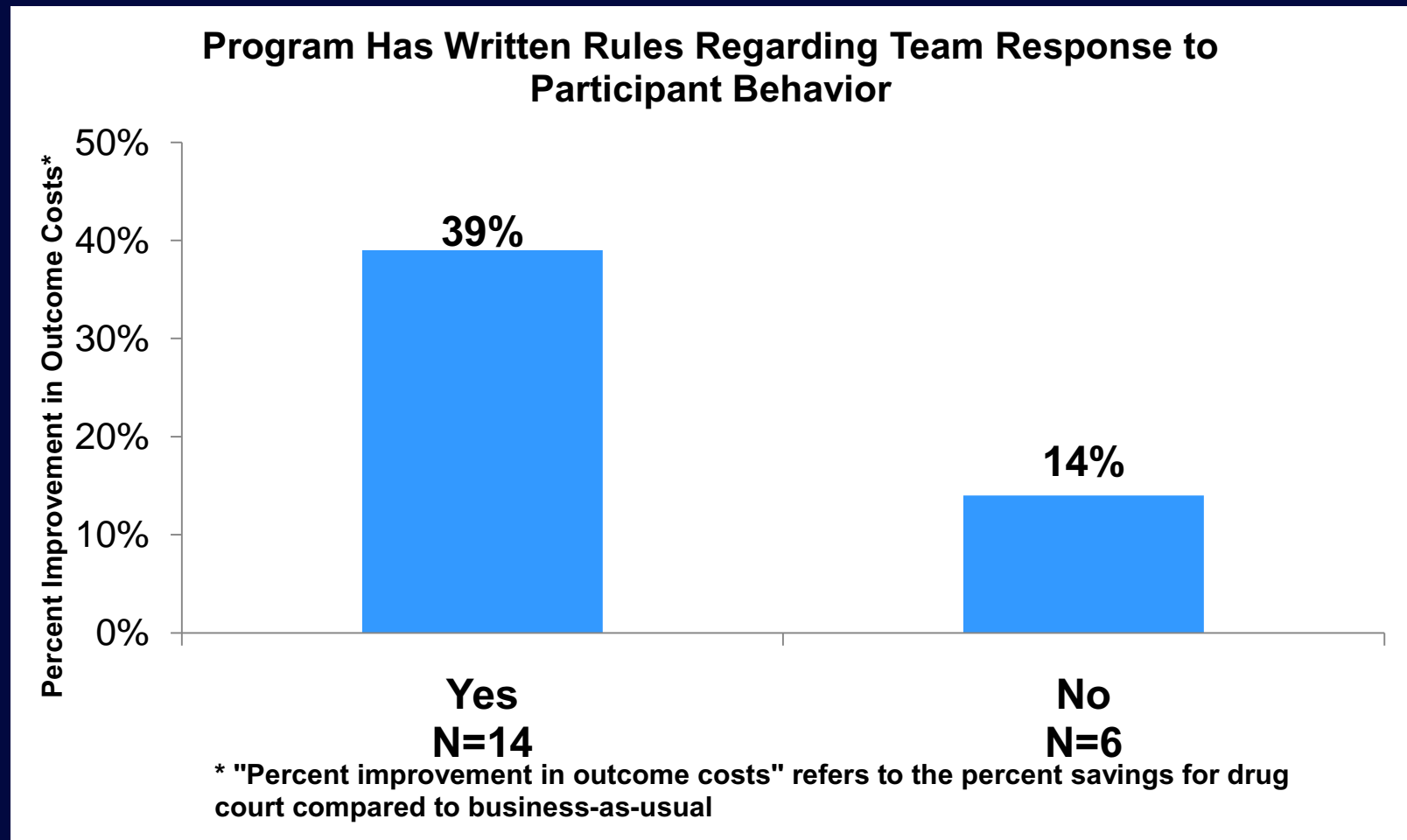
Key Component #6

A coordinated strategy governs drug court responses to participants' compliance.

- **Do your guidelines on team response to client behavior really need to be in writing?**



Drug Courts That Had Written Rules for Team Response Had Nearly 3 Times the Cost Savings



Key Component #7

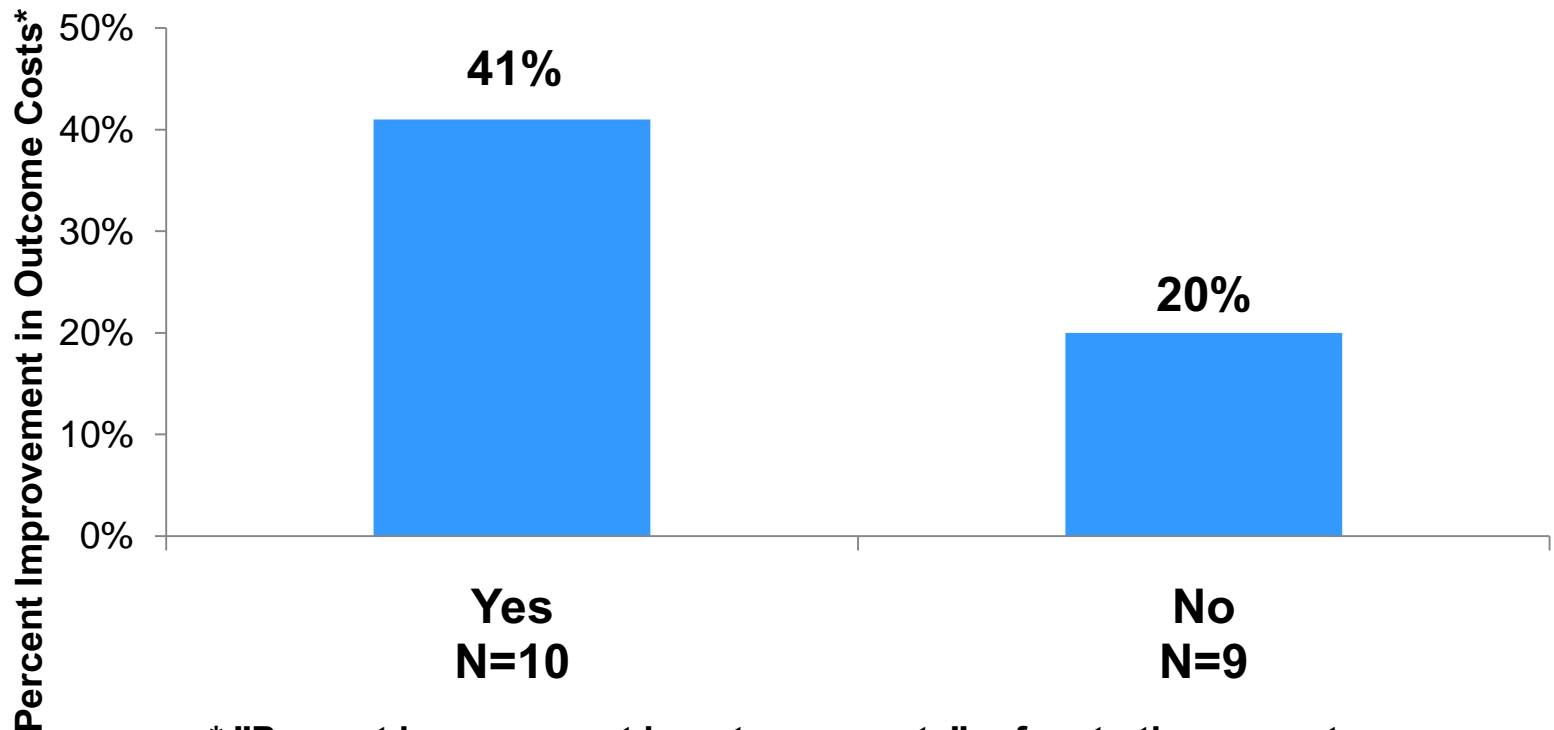
Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential

- **Does it matter how long the judge spends interacting with each participant in court?**
- **How long should the judge stay on the drug court bench? Is longevity better or is it better to rotate regularly?**



Programs With a Judge That Spends at Least 3 Minutes Talking to Each Participant in Court Had More Than Double the Savings

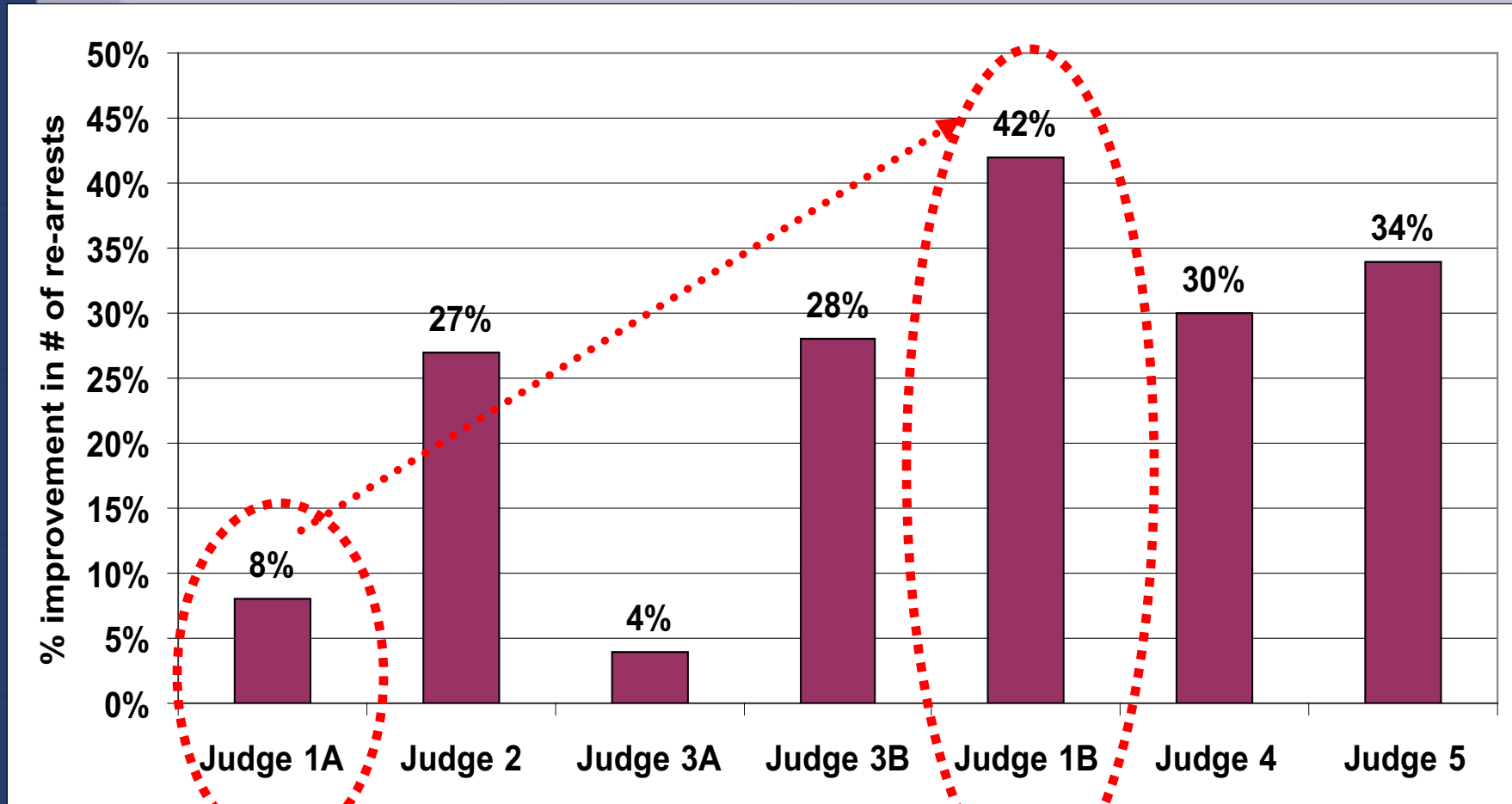
Judge Spends at Least Three Minutes with Each Participant



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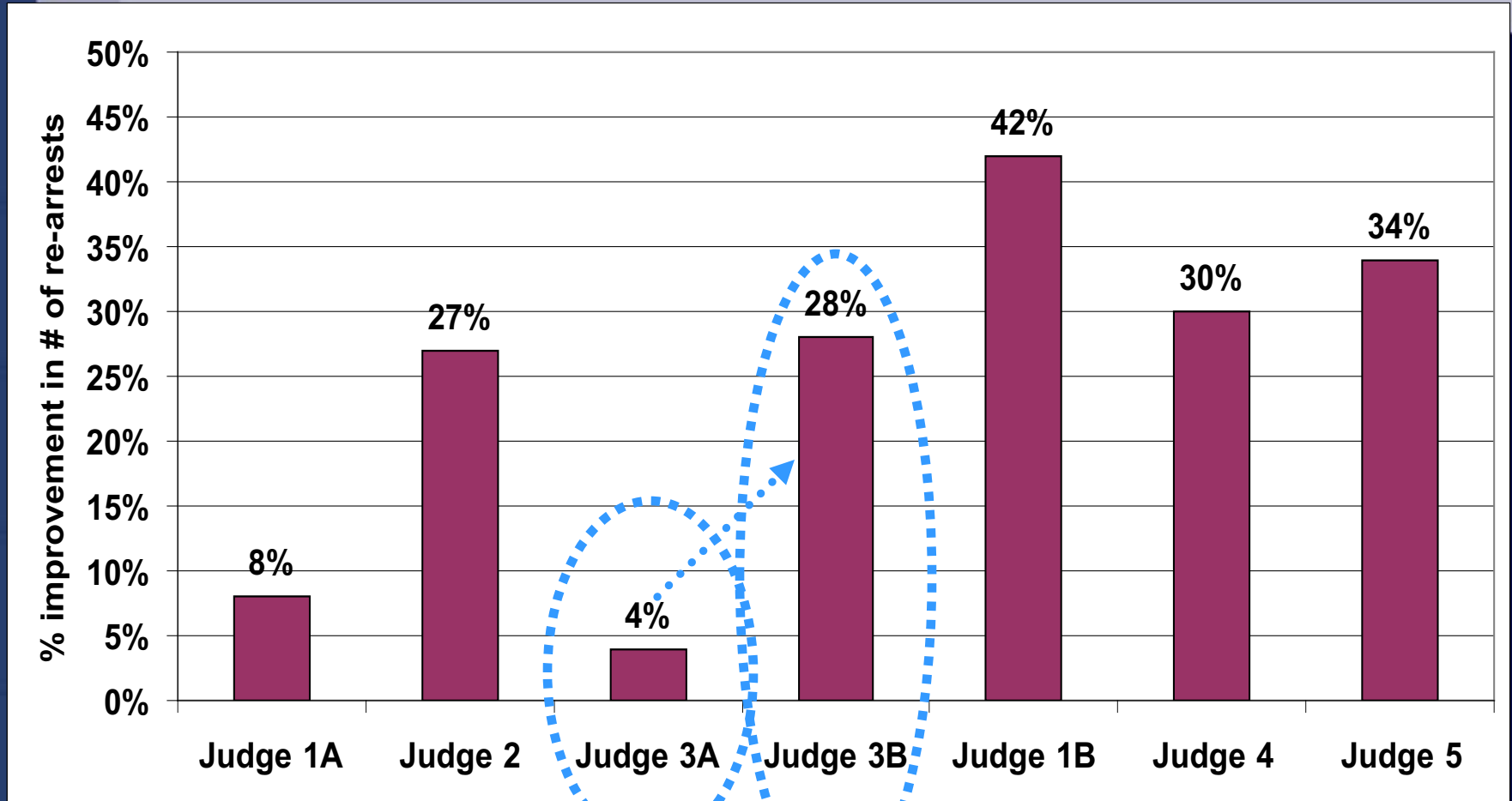
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .1$

The Longer the Judge Spends on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes



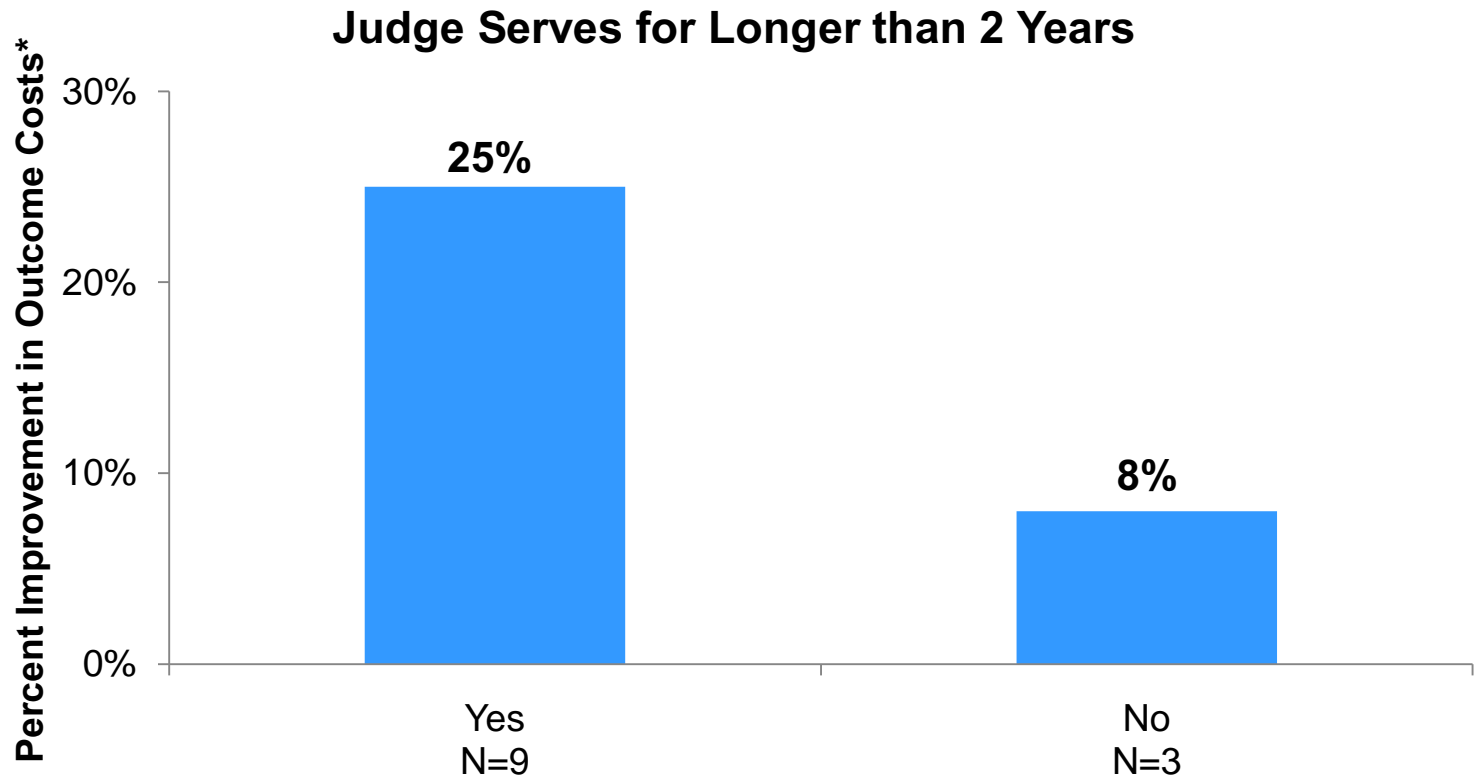
- Different judges had different impacts on recidivism
- **Judges did better their second time**

The Longer the Judge Spends on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes



- Different judges had different impacts on recidivism
- **Judges did better their second time**

Drug Courts Where Judges Stay Longer than Two Years had 3 Times Greater Cost Savings



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Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

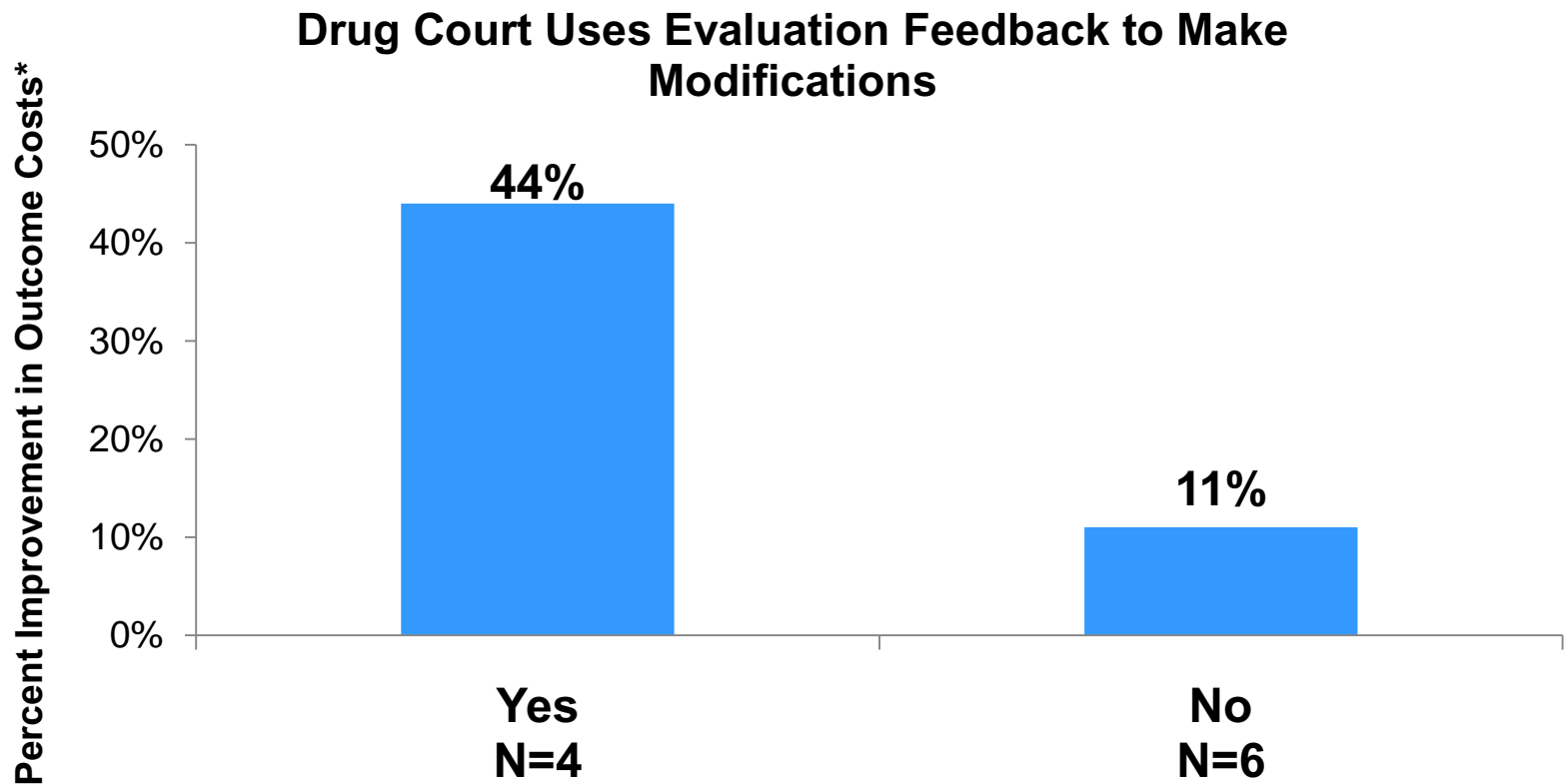
Key Component #8

Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

- **Good evaluations are expensive. Are they really worth the \$\$?**



Drug Courts That Used Evaluation Feedback and Program Statistics to Modify Their Program Had 4 Times Greater Cost Savings



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Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

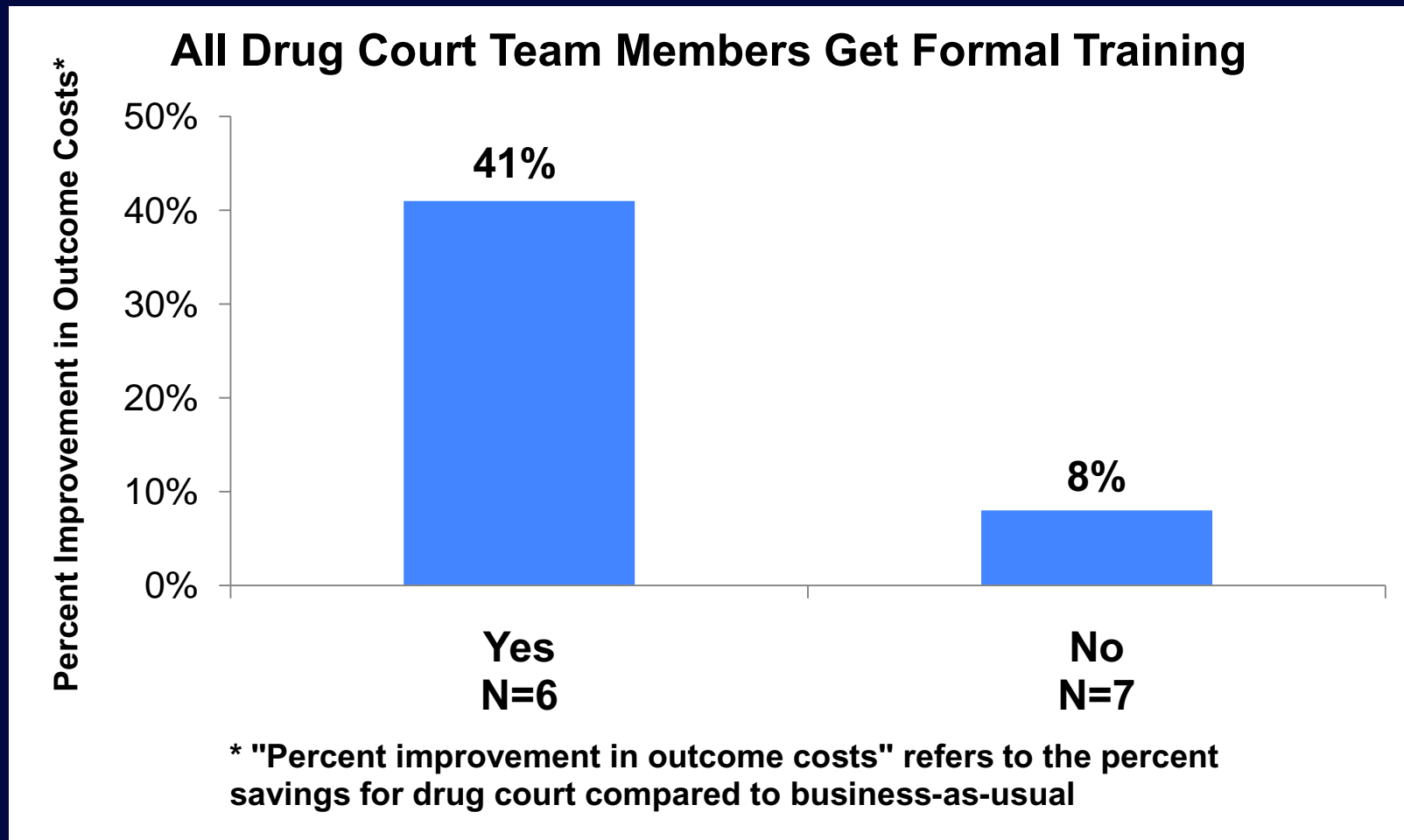
Key Component #9

Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation, and operations.

- **Can your team save money by training on-the-job or by selecting only certain team members for formal training?**



Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for All Team Members Had 5 Times Greater Savings



Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

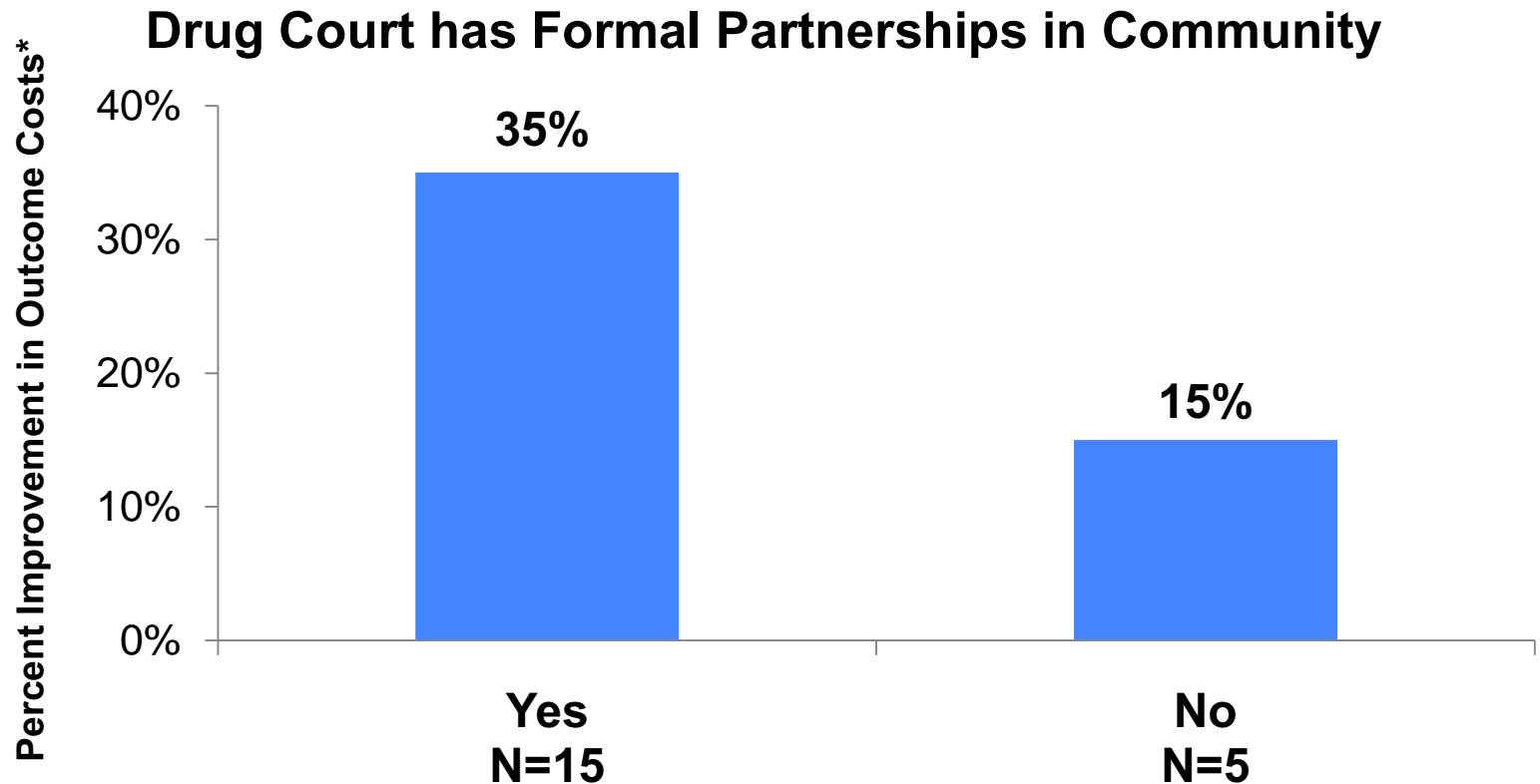
Key Component #10

Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances drug court program effectiveness.



- **How important are partnerships in the community for your drug court?**

Drug Courts that Had Formal Partnerships with Community Members Had More than Twice the Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant as a trend at $p < .15$

Summary:

Three Best and Three Worst Courts

DRUG COURT TEAM INVOLVEMENT

Drug Courts With the Best (B) and Worst (W) Outcomes

	Court B1	Court B2	Court B3	Court W1	Court W2	Court W3
Practice						
The treatment representative is expected to attend all drug court sessions.	y	y	y	n	n	n
The prosecution attends team meetings.	y	y	y	n	n	n
The prosecution attends drug court sessions.	y	n	y	n	n	n
The drug court team includes a representative from law enforcement (not probation).	y	y	y	n	n	n
Percent Cost Savings	62%	52%	50%	4%	-3%	-44%
Graduation rate	68%	68%	65%	27%	55%	25%

Summary:

**Practices that relate to better outcomes
(lower recidivism, bigger savings).**

**Or download handout online at
www.npcresearch.com**

Conclusion:



Before DC



After DC

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To learn more about NPC or more about drug court evaluations including cost-benefit evaluations see:

[**www.npcresearch.com**](http://www.npcresearch.com)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the judges, coordinators and staff at numerous drug courts who welcomed us to their program, answered our un-ending questions and helped us find and collect mountains of data!

What We Know

Costs and Benefits

- How much does drug court cost?
- Are drug courts cost-effective? (Do they save taxpayer money?)
- Which agencies invest the most in drug court (and which invest the least)?
- Do any agencies save money due to drug court?



Investment Cost (per Participant)

Transactions	Investment cost Drug Court (n = 6,502)	Investment cost BAU (n = 4,600)	Cost Difference (benefit)
Arrest (1)	\$203	\$203	\$0
Booking (1)	\$299	\$299	\$0
Court time	\$768	\$714	(\$54)
Treatment*	\$2,001	\$2,746	\$745
Jail time*	\$1,017	\$1,243	\$226
Probation time*	\$880	\$1,355	\$475
Total cost	\$5,168	\$6,560	\$1,392

* Difference is significant: $p < .01$

Note: Drug Court cost less than traditional court processing

CJ Recidivism Costs per Participant

Outcome transactions	Drug Court outcome costs	BAU outcome costs	Difference (Benefit)	Savings over 10 years (n = 6,502)
Arrests*	\$852	\$1,197	\$345	\$2,243,398
Bookings*	\$598	\$868	\$269	\$1,750,566
Court time*	\$569	\$802	\$232	\$1,510,545
Jail time*	\$5,198	\$8,474	\$3,277	\$21,305,168
Treatment	\$1,392	\$1,779	\$387	\$2,514,974
Probation*	\$2,185	\$2,730	\$545	\$3,544,630
Prison*	\$5,402	\$7,091	\$1,688	\$10,977,002
Total outcome costs	\$16,197	\$22,941	\$6,744	\$43,846,283

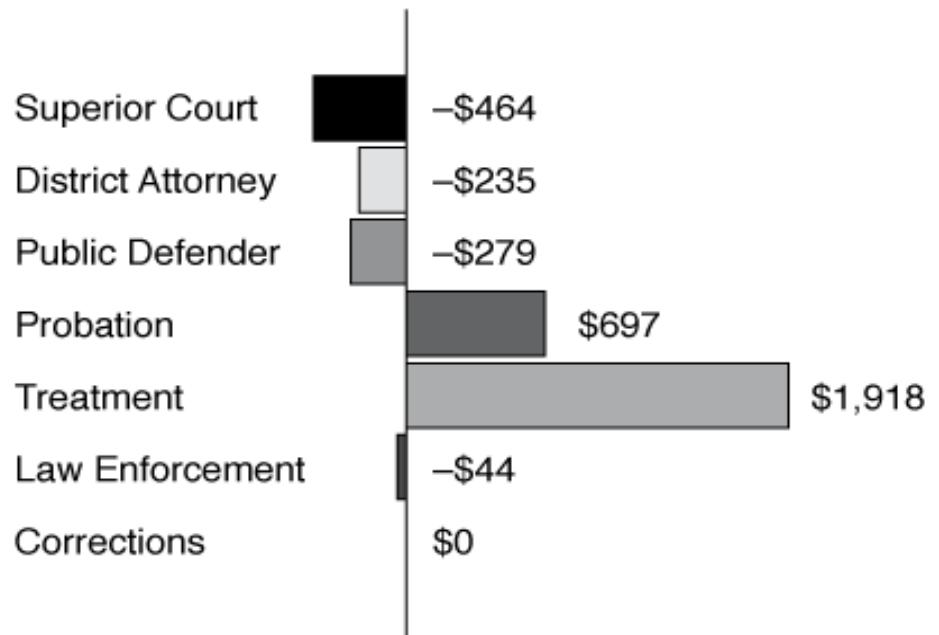
➤ Outcomes showed a benefit of **\$6,744** per drug court participant

Costs and Benefits

Average investment across 9 drug courts in California

Net Investment

Most agencies spent less on drug court than on traditional case processing.



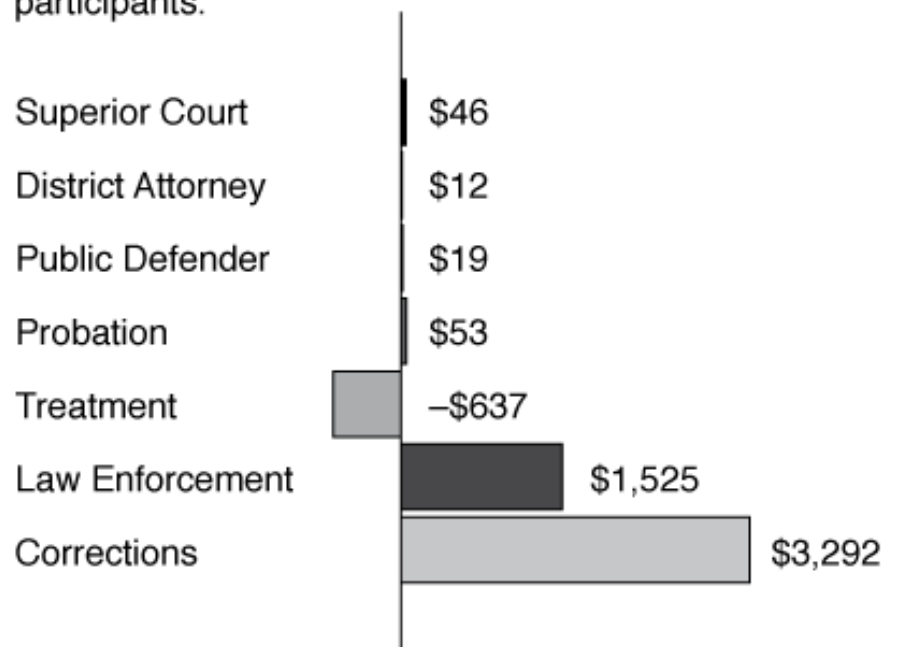
Nine-site average per participant

Costs and Benefits

Net savings
across 9
drug courts
in California

Net Savings

Corrections and law enforcement realize greatest savings from reduced recidivism of drug court participants.



Nine-site average per participant

Costs and Benefits

Indiana	Drug Court #1	Drug Court #2	Drug Court #3	Drug Court #4	Drug Court #5
Cost savings per drug court participant	\$1,570	\$314	\$4,250	\$4,133	\$7,040
Total cost savings for all participants since program implementation	\$318,710	\$247,746	\$2,962,250	\$1,921,845	\$1,408,840