

# Bexar County Felony Drug Court Fact Sheet

## What are drug courts?



The purpose of drug courts is to guide offenders identified as drug-addicted into treatment under intensive judicial supervision that will reduce drug dependence, reduce recidivism, and improve the quality of life for them and their families.

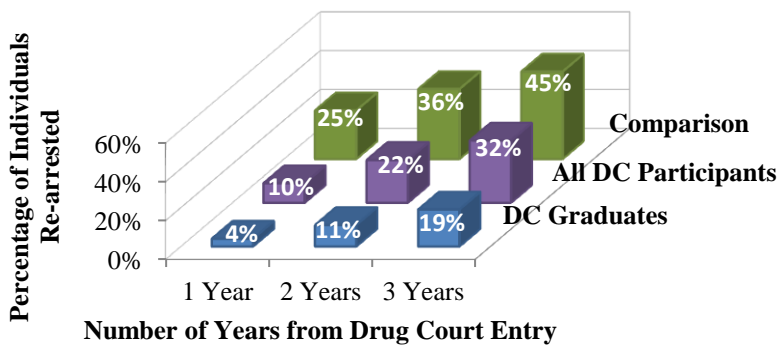
There are two key policy questions of interest to policymakers about drug courts. The September 2013 evaluation of Bexar County's Felony Drug Court (BCFDC)

provided answers to these questions. This study included participants who entered the program between 2009 and 2011, and a matched comparison group of offenders who were eligible but were not referred to the program. All participants were assessed as high-risk and high need and had prior felonies. Participants had an average of three prior drug arrests, and over half had prior property offenses.

## Do drug courts reduce recidivism?

**YES!** BCFDC program participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate ( $p < .05$ ).

### Fewer Drug Court Participants Re-Arrested Each Year



Participants were re-arrested (on any charge) 3 times less often than the comparison group in the 3 years after drug court entry.

Drug court participants also received **5 times** fewer re-arrests with drug charges, an indicator of *reduced substance use*, in the 3 years after entry than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate ( $p < .05$ ).

## Do drug courts result in cost savings to the taxpayer?

**YES!** There were substantial cost savings due to drug court participants' positive outcomes.

The total cost related to recidivism 3 years post drug court entry per participant (regardless of graduation status) was \$11,128, while the cost per comparison group member was \$20,532. This results in a total cost savings of **\$9,404** per BCFDC participant. This translates to resources (such as jail beds) that are now available for other purposes.

### Cost Savings by Agency

Agency	Savings per DC Participant
Criminal District Court	\$179
District Attorney	\$218
Appointed Defense Attorney	\$429
Department of Criminal Justice	\$1,284
Law Enforcement	\$804
Adult Probation	\$494
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,408</b>
Victimizations	\$5,996
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,404</b>

When the per participant amount is multiplied by the average number of participants served by the program per year (approximately 275 offenders), the total amount "saved" by the program per year due to positive outcomes for its participants (i.e., lower recidivism) is **\$312,400**, which can then be multiplied by the number of years the program remains in operation and for additional cohorts per year. After 5 years, the accumulated resource savings come to over **\$4.6 million**.

These results demonstrate that the BCFDC program is effective in reducing recidivism and drug use while using fewer criminal justice system resources. Bexar County and the State of Texas would benefit from sustaining and expanding this program.