

# Evaluation Challenges and Solutions in Family Drug Courts

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# Introductions & Format of Session

- Experiences with data challenges
- Share successful strategies and positive outcomes regarding developing partnerships and accessing data
- Share findings from recent evaluation projects
- Share connections between evaluation and technical assistance
- Discuss how evaluation and data collection can be used in system change work



# Topics

- Partners and data access (in particular: child welfare and the courts)
- Data quality
- Common technical assistance needs
- Outcomes and lessons learned

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of data quality for program improvement
- Learn about successful strategies programs have used to access data
- Learn strategies programs have used to build partnerships



# Outcome Measures

- Disposition (reunification, TPR, etc.)
- Recurrence of child maltreatment
- Length of stay in out-of-home care
- Timeliness of reunification
- Increased visitation
- Prevention of substance-exposed newborns (In program)

# Partnerships & Data Sharing - discussion

- Who has the data you need?
- How do you connect with these partners?
- What steps are needed to access their data?
- What strategies have you used that were successful?

# Partnerships & Data Sharing – lessons learned

- It takes work (and time) to get sharing to happen and be useful
- Develop a culture of exchanging information and using data
- Build relationships and work to decrease fear and risks

# Data Quality – discussion

- Why is data quality important?
- What are some important steps to ensuring quality data?
- What strategies have you used that were successful?



# Data Quality – lessons learned

- Keep historical data about removals, days in foster care, placements, etc.
- Use the same variable/field for the same information
- Use common data elements for aggregating across sites (see handout)
- Share information back to the community

# Technical Assistance – discussion

- How does evaluation inform TA needs?
- How does TA impact program improvement?
- How have you accessed guidance and support – either resources themselves or funds to access them?

# Technical Assistance – lessons learned

- Electronic data systems
- Capacity building
- Identifying family needs
- Connecting families to services
- Functional improvements
- Quality of services
- Retention

# Outcomes

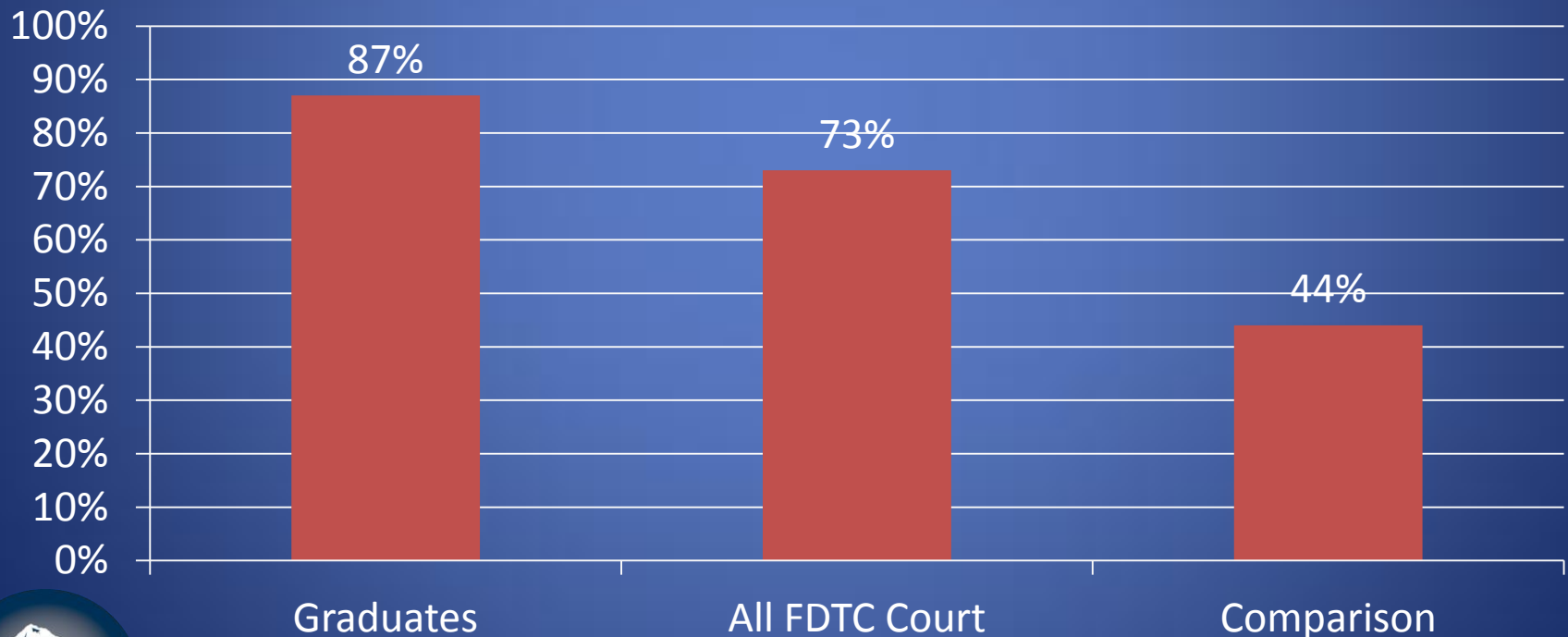
- Evaluation is important to help see trends and patterns – to see what makes a difference at the program level
- Data can help you tell a story, such as differences between people who graduated and those who didn't

# Treatment completion

Significantly more FDTC program parents successfully completed treatment after program entry compared to parents who did not participate in the FDTC.

(JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON)

## Percent of Parents who Successfully Completed a Treatment Episode



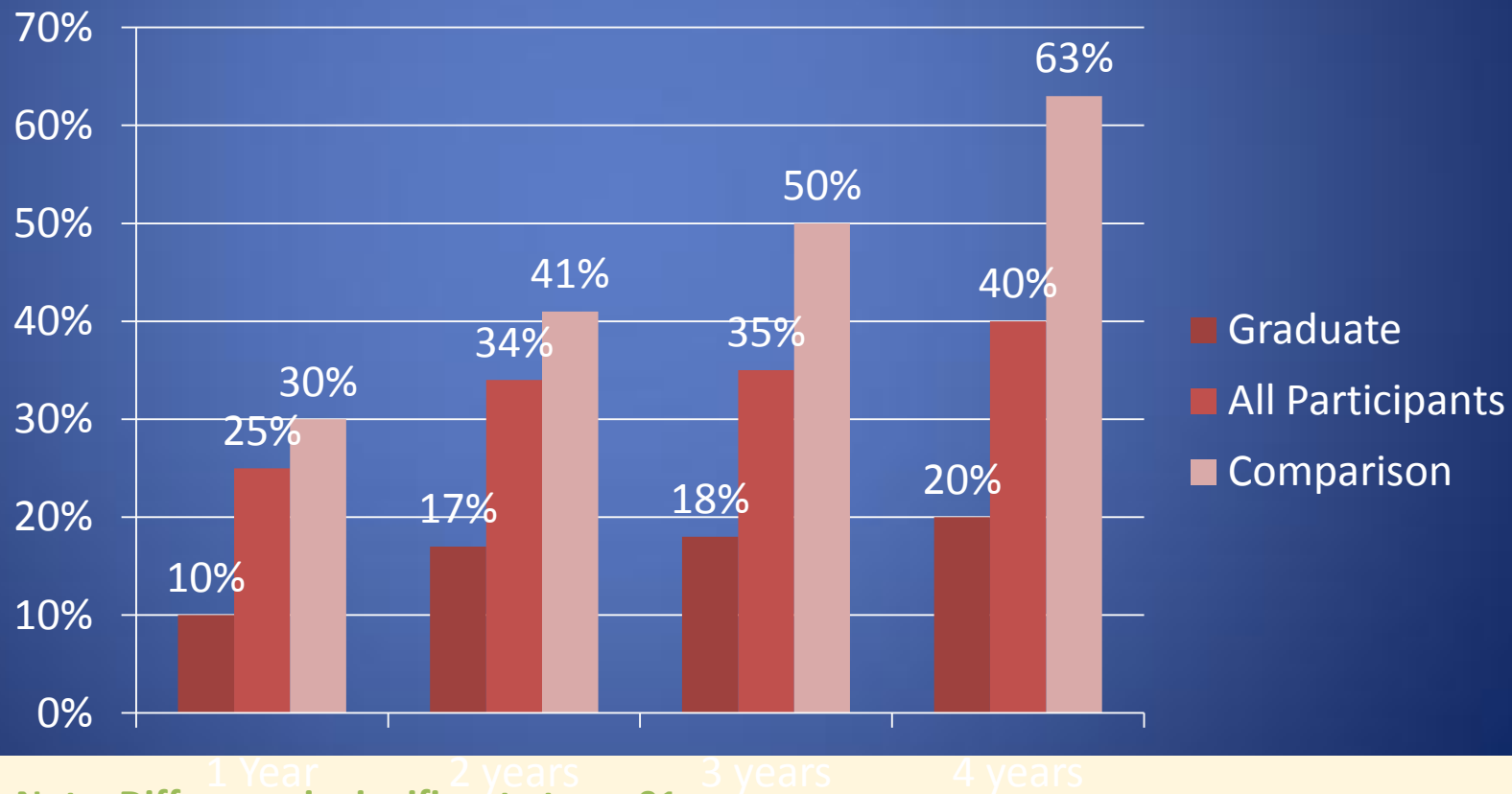
Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .01$



# Subsequent arrests

(JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON)

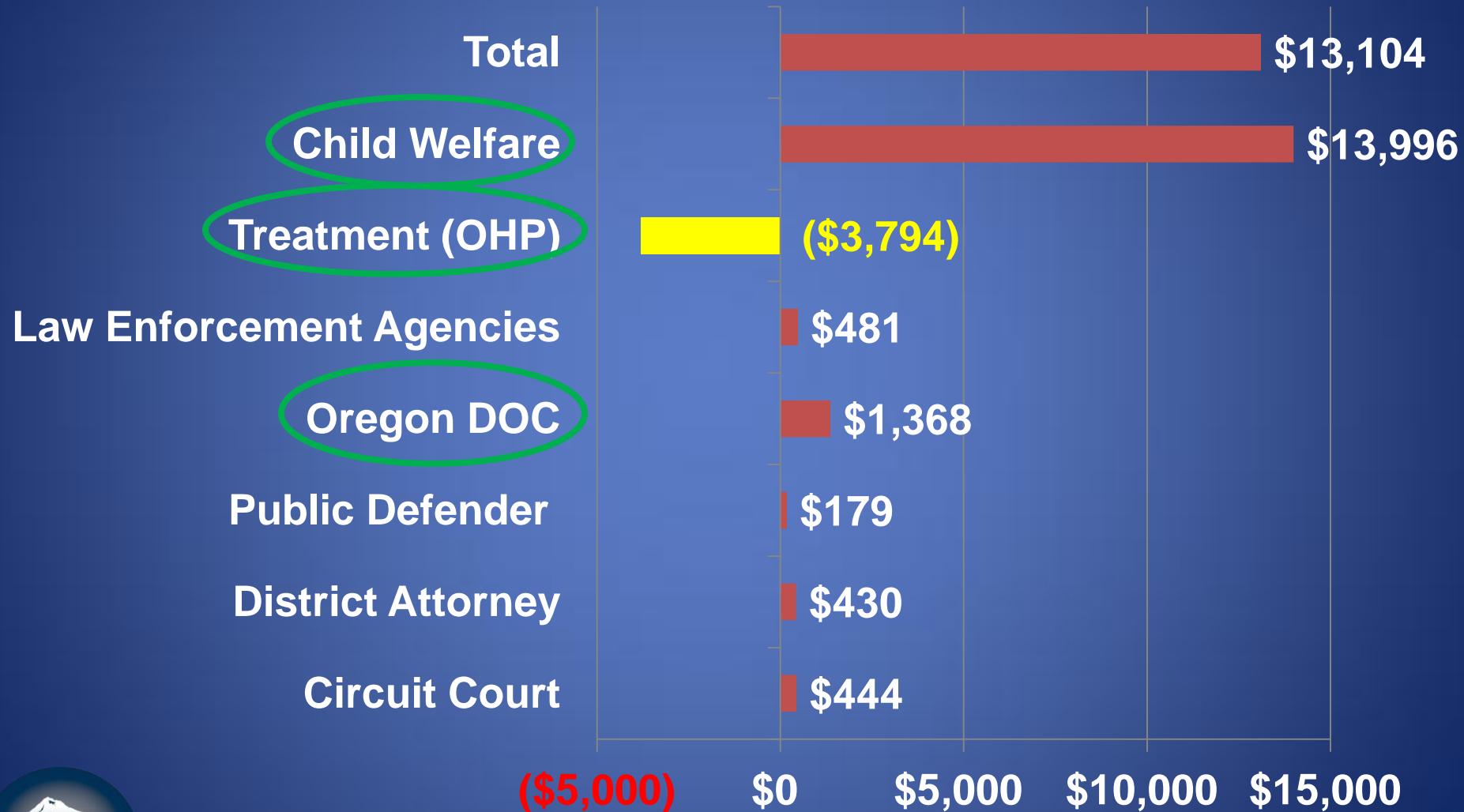
Drug court participants were re-arrested significantly less often than the comparison group over 4 years from drug court entry.



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .01$

# Savings per Participant by Agency

Criminal Justice, Treatment and Child Welfare [MARION COUNTY, OR]



# Lessons Learned

- Plan for the time (quantity AND duration) it will take to access information
- Build relationships – find out how the collaboration will benefit both parties
- Train program and data entry staff
- Think about what questions you want to answer and what information you need to answer them



# Lessons Learned

- Look at your data at regular times – see if you have missing or confusing information
- Use your data to inform program changes



# Questions



# Contact information

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