Pennsylvania Statewide Evaluation of Treatment Courts

OUTCOME & COST EVALUATION KEY FINDINGS REPORT

REVISED

DUI | ATC
2013-2018

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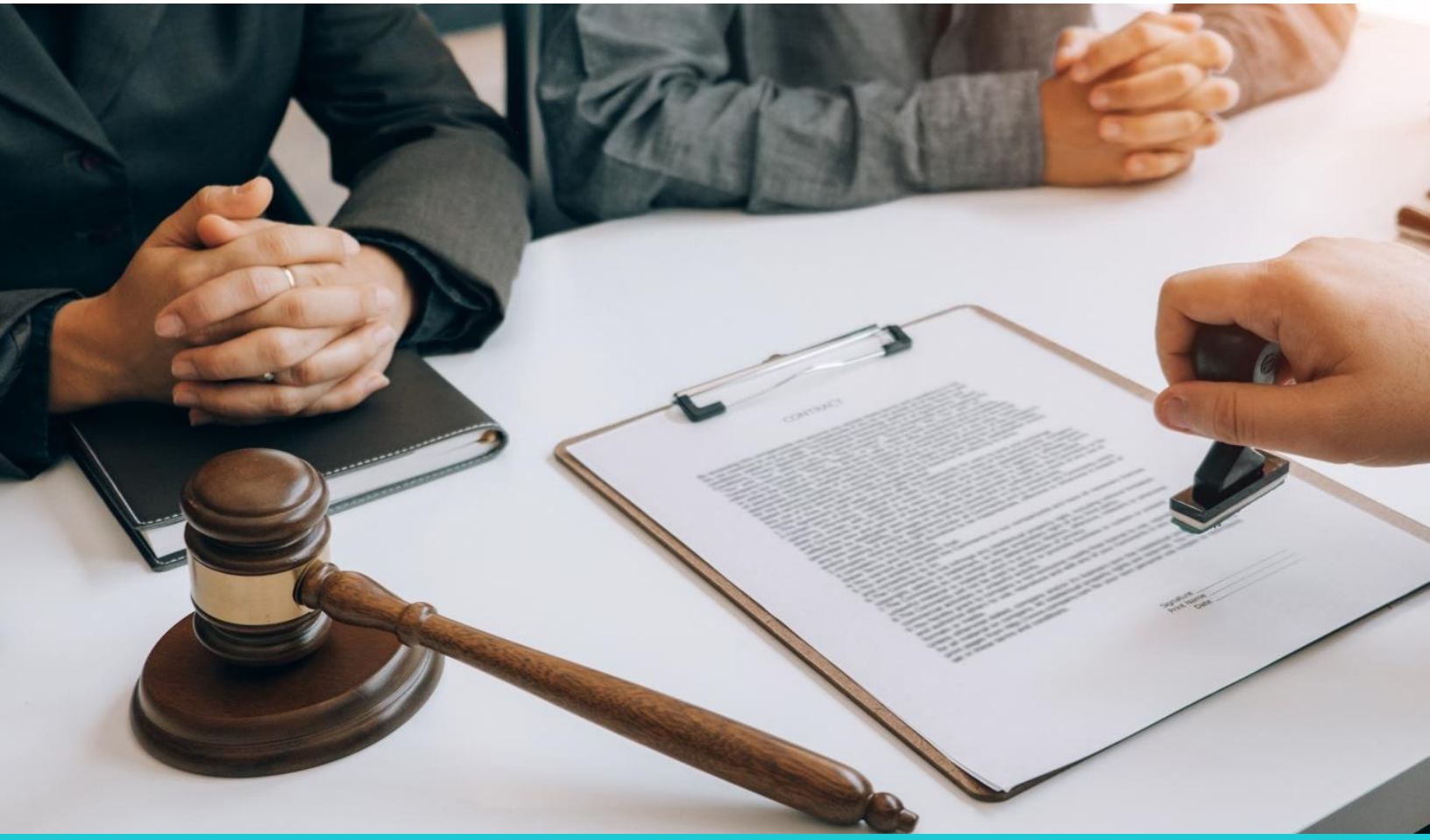
EVALUATION BACKGROUND

As of October 2021, the State of Pennsylvania has over 120 problem-solving courts, also known as treatment courts, with some dating as far back as 1997. These programs serve individuals charged with crimes related to substance use and/or mental illness. Treatment courts provide integrated substance use treatment, behavioral health services, and intensive judicial supervision as an alternative to incarceration. The ultimate goals of these courts are to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and provide treatment and other recovery support services to justice-involved individuals with substance use or mental health disorders to promote long-term recovery and enhance the quality of life for participants and their families.

In March 2017, supported by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) contracted with NPC Research to perform a statewide study of four treatment court types in Pennsylvania: Adult Drug Treatment Courts (ATC), DUI Courts (DUI), Mental Health Courts (MHC), and Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC). This report presents the outcome and cost evaluation of **Pennsylvania's Adult Drug Treatment Courts and DUI Courts**. Outcome and cost evaluation results for MHCs and VTCs will be completed in 2022.



METHODS

Pennsylvania Statewide ATC and DUI Court Evaluation Methods

This report highlights the key findings of the outcome and cost evaluation of 38 ATC programs and 14 DUI court programs in Pennsylvania. The outcome evaluation measured whether the ATCs and DUI courts met their goals of reducing recidivism. The economic impact of the programs was evaluated through a detailed cost-benefit analysis. The ATC and DUI court outcomes and costs were measured against matched comparison groups of defendants who had been arrested and charged with a treatment court eligible arrest. The comparison group constructed for each ATC and DUI court program were matched to the treatment court participants (using propensity scores) on age, gender, race, and criminal history, including a variety of charges.

To assess the extent to which Pennsylvania's ATC and DUI court programs were meeting the goal of reducing recidivism, we followed all individuals who participated in an ATC (N = 5,960) or a DUI court program (N = 2,529) between 2013 and 2018 (total N = 8,489) that were entered into the PAJCIS program database and the matched comparison groups from the same time period. The individuals in these groups were tracked through existing statewide databases for a follow up period of at least 2 years after ATC or DUI court program entry (or equivalent for the comparison groups). In addition, four focus sites were selected for a more detailed examination of program practices and the collection of data on county incarceration and probation.

The cost evaluation was conducted using the transactional and institutional cost analysis (TICA) approach in the four focus sites by analyzing the costs of program activities as well as outcome activities including arrests, new court cases, time in county incarceration, and time on probation. In addition, statewide data on court cases and time incarcerated along with the cost results from the focus sites were used to create statewide cost estimates.

This report presents the study findings starting with statewide outcome and cost results for DUI courts followed by results for two focus site DUI courts. The outcome and cost results for ATC programs are then presented and are followed by results for two focus site ATCs. Lessons learned, a summary of key findings, and recommendations are provided at the end of the report.

KEY FINDINGS:
DUI COURTS STATEWIDE

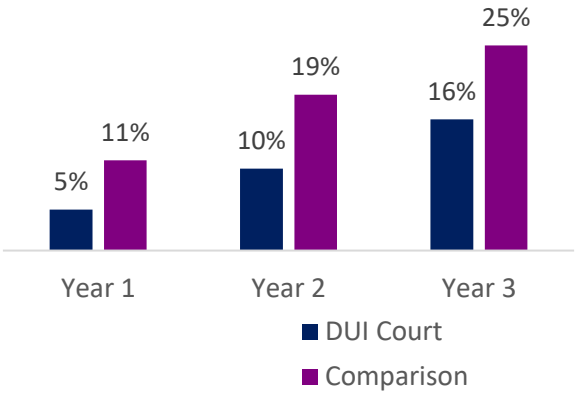
ALL PENNSYLVANIA DUI COURTS SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN RECIDIVISM FOR ALL CHARGE TYPES

Program participants showed reductions in recidivism across *all* charge types and severities up to 3 years post entry.

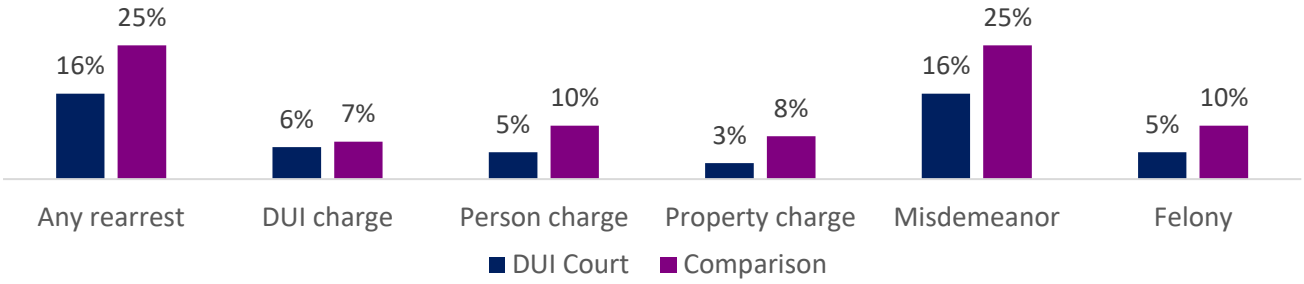
Statewide, the combined rearrest rates for any charge in all programs averaged 16% for DUI court participants at 3 years post entry compared to 25% for the matched comparison group.

The percent reduction in recidivism between DUI court participants and the comparison group was also computed. While all DUI courts showed lower recidivism than the comparison group, the reductions in recidivism for individual DUI courts varied widely, ranging from 87% to 29%. **The overall reduction in recidivism for DUI court participants statewide was 36%.** Although most of the individual DUI courts had reductions in recidivism that were much higher than 36%, the programs with larger sample sizes had smaller reductions that lowered the statewide average.

Fewer DUI Court Participants Were Rearrested for Any Offense 1, 2, and 3 Years Post Entry



At 3 Years Post Entry, Fewer DUI Court Participants Were Rearrested, Across all Charge Types and Severities



Note. DUI Court N at Years 1, 2, and 3 is 2,529; 2,529; and 2,057; respectively. The comparison group N at Years 1, 2, and 3 is 2,529; 2,529; and 2,269; respectively.

KEY FINDINGS
DUI Courts: Statewide Recidivism

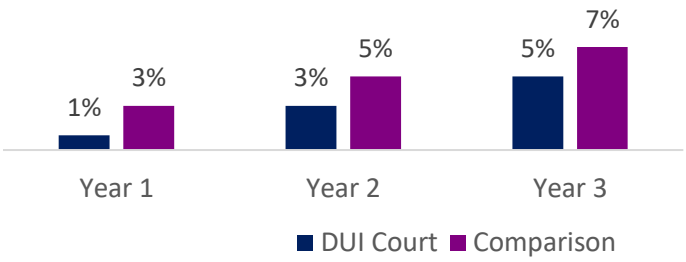
STATEWIDE, DUI COURT PARTICIPANTS HAD LOWER DUI RECIDIVISM RATES

Program participants showed reductions in DUI rearrests up to 3 years post entry.

Statewide, the combined rate for DUI rearrests in all programs averaged 5% for DUI court participants at 3 years post entry compared to 7% for the comparison group.

DUI arrests for program participants in each DUI court relative to their matched comparison groups revealed reductions in recidivism from **100%** in several DUI courts to **-17%** in one program (DUI court participants in only one program had more new DUI arrests than the comparison group).

Fewer DUI Court Participants Were Rearrested with a DUI Charge 1, 2, and 3 Years Post Entry



UNDERSTANDING THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

Key Data Limitations

Some treatment courts deleted graduates and other participants who received treatment court services from their database, resulting in participant samples that include fewer successful participants and the possibility that DUI court graduates were included in the comparison group. Therefore, these evaluation findings are conservative estimates and likely underreport the success of these programs. *More detail is provided later in this report.*

KEY FINDINGS
DUI Courts: Statewide Recidivism

DUI COURTS IN PENNSYLVANIA DEMONTRATED REDUCED RECIDIVISM

Despite the conservative estimates for the recidivism results due to the deletion of some graduates from the program dataset, the majority of DUI courts in Pennsylvania demonstrated lower rearrest rates in their participants for all charge types studied.

While most of Pennsylvania's DUI courts showed lower DUI recidivism than the respective comparison groups, three programs had similar rates of new DUI arrests between their participants and matched comparison groups. One program had more DUI-related arrests for their participants by 3 years post entry than their matched comparison group.

10 OUT OF 14 DUI COURTS SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN NEW DUI ARRESTS 3 YEARS POST ENTRY

13 OUT OF 14 DUI COURTS SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN NEW FELONY ARRESTS

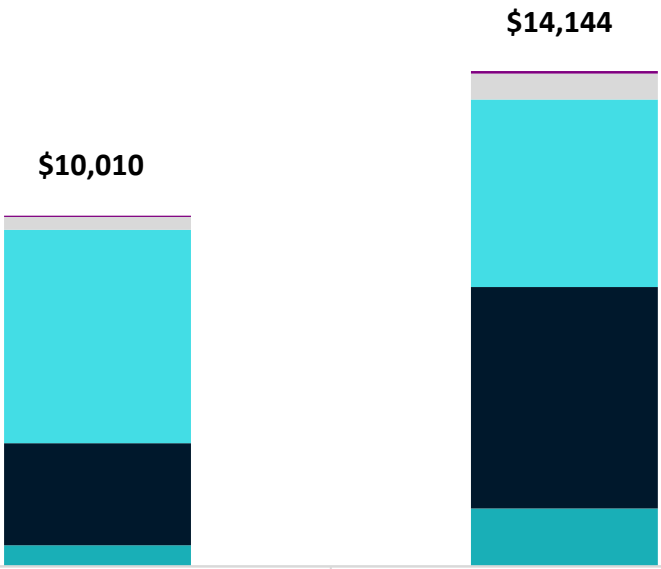
Aside from one DUI court showing similar reductions in felony-level recidivism as its comparison group, most programs showed effectiveness, ranging from 10% to 100% reductions in new felony arrests across DUI courts.

DUI COURTS SAVED OVER $8.5 MILLION STATEWIDE

The difference in the 3-year outcome cost between all DUI court participants and the comparison group was $4,134 per participant, indicating that DUI court participants cost the criminal justice system less than the comparison group. This difference shows that there is a benefit, or savings, to Pennsylvania taxpayers and to society at large due to DUI court participation, mainly due to fewer rearrests, court cases, and person and property victimizations. If this cost offset (or savings) is multiplied by the number of DUI court participants in the study sample (N = 2,057), the total savings comes to $8,503,638 for the 3 years after program entry. It is important to restate that these results are likely conservative and actual cost savings may have been even greater, if data for all graduates were available for evaluation.

The figure below shows all costs that were related to, and available for, the outcomes reviewed across groups. As county incarceration and probation are distributed and managed locally, those data were not included in statewide cost calculations. However, as more comparison group members were rearrested, it is reasonable to conclude that they may also have increased costs associated with related county incarceration and probation time.

Statewide DUI Court Cost Savings Per Participant Over 3 Years = $4,134



	DUI Participants	Comparison Group
Rearrests	$37	$78
Court Cases	$358	$738
State Prison Days	$6,096	$5,354
Person Victimizations	$2,918	$6,323
Property Victimizations	$601	$1,651

Note. $8,503,638 = $4,134 cost per participant X 2,057 participants.

DUI COURTS: FOCUS SITES

BLAIR COUNTY DUI COURT REDUCED RECIDIVISM

Blair County DUI Court, implemented in 2005, reported a capacity of 50 participants at the time of the Best Practices Assessment in 2017.

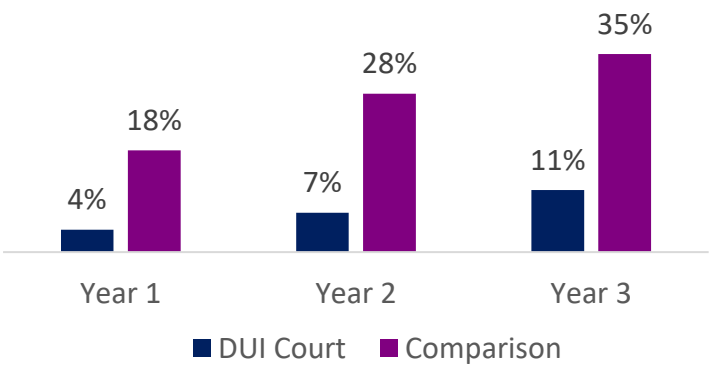
- Eligibility criteria includes only high-risk and high-need participants
- Most participants were referred post plea/pre-sentence
- In addition to alcohol, 2 out of 5 participants had a history of opioid use (prescription opioids as well as heroin)

Analysis of Blair County DUI Court program data showed a graduation rate of 78%, which is slightly higher than the national DUI court rate of 76%. Data also revealed that most participants were high functioning with over 90% completing 12th grade or above and over half employed.

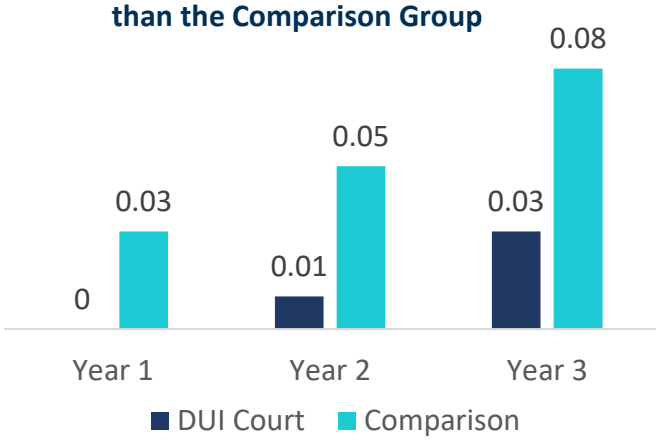
While the program implemented many research based best practices, results from the 2017 assessment showed that the program used county incarceration as a sanction more than recommended and did not accept participants who were using medications for substance use disorders (SUD). *Note: Blair County DUI Court no longer denies entry to participants who use medications for SUD.*

Results of the recidivism evaluation revealed that participants in Blair County DUI Court had substantially lower recidivism than the matched comparison group at every time point – 1-, 2-, and 3-years post-entry. At 3 years post-entry, three times fewer DUI court participants had been rearrested compared to individuals in the comparison group.

Fewer Blair DUI Court Participants Were Rearrested for Any Offense 1, 2, and 3 Years Post Entry



Blair DUI Court Participants Had Fewer New Arrests With DUI Charges at 1, 2, and 3 Years than the Comparison Group

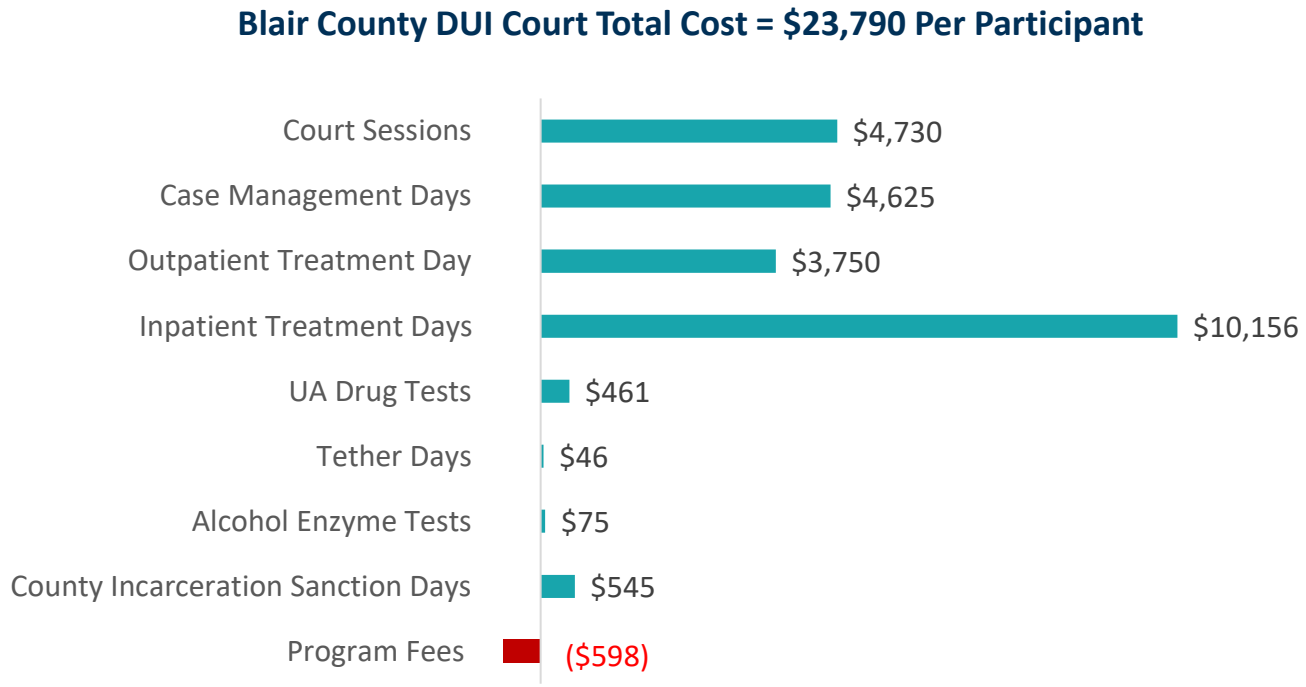


Note. DUI Court N at Years 1, 2, and 3 is 107; 107; and 90; respectively. The comparison group N at Years 1, 2, and 3 is 107, 107 and 95; respectively.

BLAIR COUNTY DUI COURT PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS = $23,790 PER PARTIPANT

Program costs, also called investment costs, were calculated for each event (or "transaction") experienced by those participants who exited the Blair County DUI Court (N = 76). Based on program data entered in PAJCIS, the following transactions resulted in an overall cost of just under $24,000 per participant.

- Treatment, outpatient and inpatient, represented the greatest cost
- Court sessions and case management, housed in the court, represented most of the remaining costs
- A small amount of costs were redeemed from program fees
- The cost of the Blair County DUI program is primarily due to its use of inpatient treatment

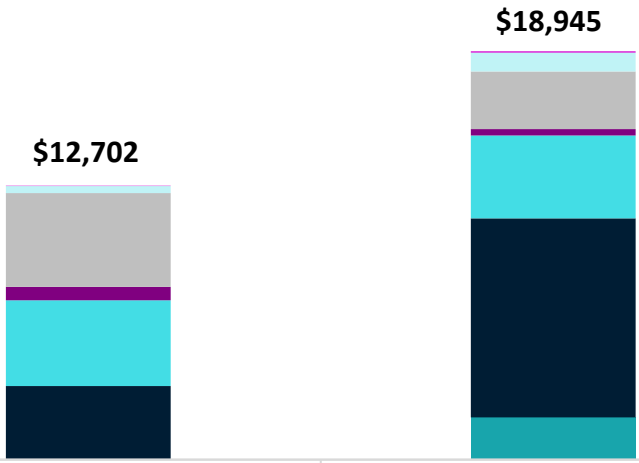


BLAIR COUNTY DUI COURT SAVED ALMOST HALF A MILLION DOLLARS OVER 3 YEARS

Outcome costs are those costs pertaining to each event (or "transaction") experienced after program entry, not related to program activities. Over 3 years post entry, Blair DUI participants had fewer rearrests, court cases, and person and property victimizations than the comparison group, but more county incarceration days, probation/parole days, and prison days than the comparison group.

When victimizations were not included, DUI court participants cost the taxpayer $1,545 more than the comparison group due to extensive time incarcerated. However, when the costs of victimizations were included, estimated savings per participant were $6,243 due to fewer person and property crimes. When the savings per participants were multiplied by the number of participants in the study (N = 76), total savings came to $474,468.

Blair County DUI Court Cost Savings Over 3 Years = $6,243 per Participant



	Participants	Comparison
Rearrests	$16	$64
Court Cases	$320	$872
County Prison Days	$4,353	$2,680
Probation and Parole Days	$630	$293
State Prison Days	$3,978	$3,843
Person Victimizations	$3,405	$9,241
Property Victimizations	$0	$1,952

YORK COUNTY DUI COURT REDUCED ARRESTS WITH ALL CHARGES BUT NOT ARRESTS WITH DUI CHARGES

York County DUI Court, implemented in 2010, had a capacity of 150 participants at the time of the Best Practices Assessment in 2017. The program takes low-, moderate-, and high-risk participants but does not have separate tracks for participants at varying risk levels. The program graduation rate is 72%, which is slightly lower than the national average of 76%. Most participants were high functioning with over 80% completing 12th grade or higher and two-thirds employed.

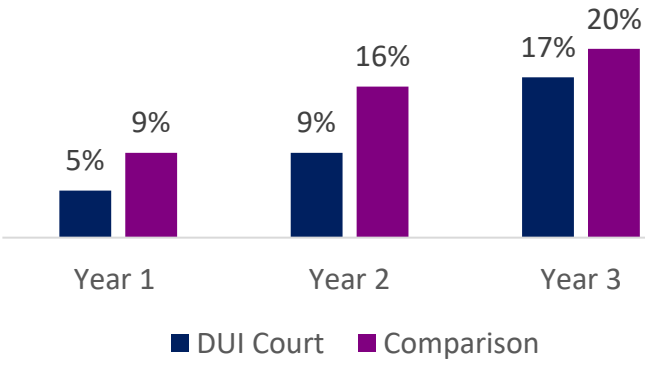
- Most participants were referred post-sentence
- In addition to alcohol, about 1 in 5 participants also used opioids/heroin

While the program implemented many research based best practices, assessment results showed that the program reported that they did not use a standardized assessment to determine level of care and used county incarceration as a sanction more than recommended.

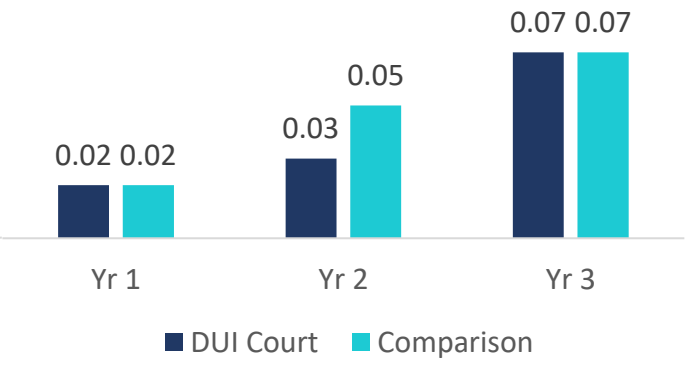
Recidivism results for York County DUI Court demonstrated that although participant rearrest rates in general were lower than the comparison group in Years 1 and 2 after program entry, this difference became smaller by Year 3. **DUI rearrests were not significantly different** between the participants and the comparison group at any time point.

It is important to note that, during the evaluation, it was discovered that York County DUI Court **deleted some individuals from their electronic data system** who had begun receiving DUI court services but were subsequently "rejected" for various reasons, usually within a few months of program entry. Deleting some participants who received program services may have led to those individuals appearing in the comparison group, and possibly skewed the results toward more positive outcomes for the comparison group.

York County DUI Court Participants Were Rearrested for Any Charge Less Often Than the Comparison Group



York County DUI Court Participants Had Similar Numbers of DUI Arrests as the Comparison Group at Most Timepoints



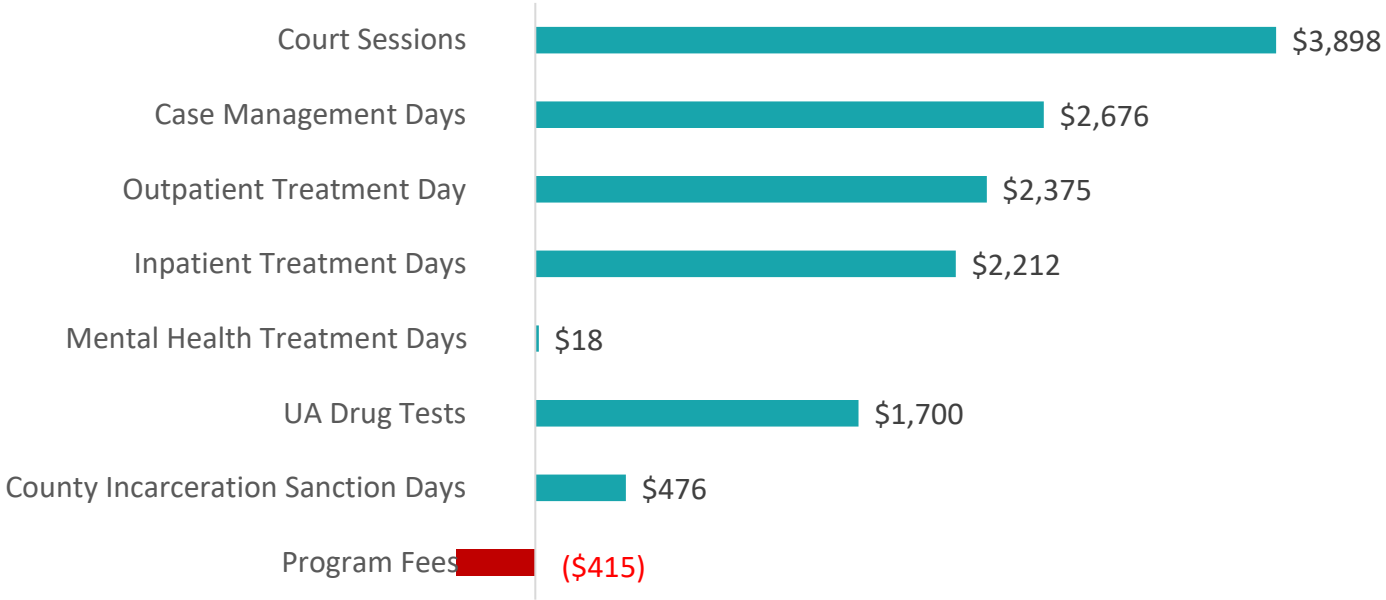
Note. DUI Court N at Years 1 and 2 is 417 and at Year 3 is 353. The comparison group N at Years 1 and 2 is 417 and at Year 3 is 392.

YORK COUNTY DUI COURT PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS = $12,940 PER PARTICIPANT

Program costs, also called investment costs, were calculated for each event (or "transaction") experienced by those participants who exited York County DUI Court (N = 323). Based on program data entered in PAJCIS, the following transactions resulted in an overall cost of just under $13,000 per participant.

- Treatment, outpatient and inpatient, represented the greatest cost
- Court sessions and case management, housed in the court, represented most of the remaining costs
- A small amount of costs were redeemed from program fees

York County DUI Court Total Program Cost Per Participant = $12,940



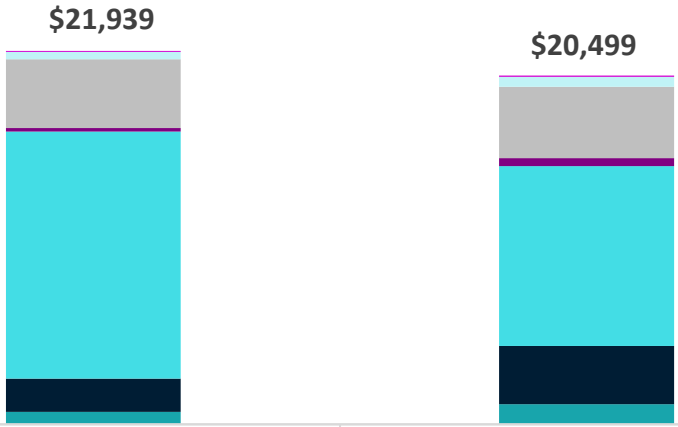
YORK COUNTY DUI COURT PARTICIPANTS COST MORE THAN THE COMPARISON GROUP

Outcome costs are those costs pertaining to each event (or "transaction") experienced after program entry, including new arrests, court cases, probation, incarceration, and victimizations (person and property crimes).

The difference in the 3-year outcome cost between all York County DUI Court participants and the comparison group was -$1,440 per participant, indicating that York County DUI Court participants cost the criminal justice system more than the comparison group. This result is entirely due to York County DUI Court **participants spending more time in prison** than the comparison group. **All other costs are lower for the DUI court participants.**

As described earlier, York County DUI Court deleted some individuals from their electronic data system who had begun receiving DUI court services but were subsequently "rejected". Deleting some participants who received program services may have led to those individuals appearing in the comparison group, and possibly skewed the results toward more positive outcomes for the comparison group.

York County DUI Court Costs $1,440 More Per Participant Than the Comparison Group Over 3 Years



	Participants	Comparison
Rearrests	$48	$67
Court Cases	$427	$597
County Prison Days	$4,049	$4,195
Probation and Parole Days	$212	$466
State Prison Days	$14,507	$10,568
Person Victimizations	$1,945	$3,405
Property Victimizations	$751	$1,201

KEY FINDINGS
ADULT TREATMENT COURTS: STATEWIDE

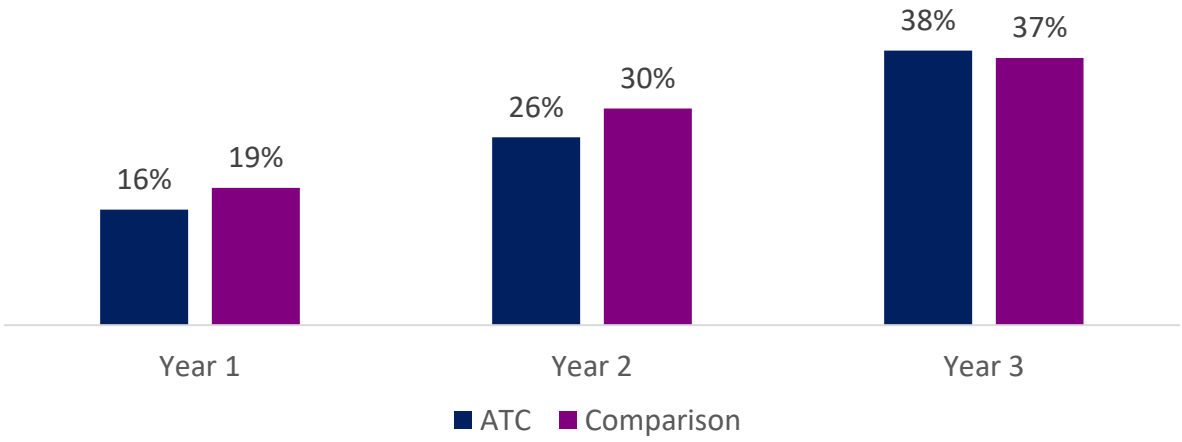
ADULT TREATMENT COURT PROGRAMS HAD VARIED SUCCESS

Many ATCs had significant reductions in recidivism while others did not, leading to slight reductions when averaged across all programs statewide

ATC participants in each jurisdiction were compared to individuals who were eligible for the ATC but did not participate. Reductions in recidivism in individual ATC programs ranged from **77%** to **-58%**, indicating that some programs are having significant impacts by reducing recidivism (up to **77% lower recidivism in ATC participants** than the matched comparison group), while others had higher recidivism (up to **58% higher** in ATC participants).

When all Pennsylvania ATCs are combined, the average recidivism rate was slightly lower for ATC participants than for the comparison group in Years 1 and 2, but not in Year 3. This pattern might indicate that program participants are beginning to recidivate as time passes post program exit. This indicates that these programs may benefit by focusing on "recovery capital" for their participants to provide them with connections in their community that support recover beyond their time in the programs. *It is also important to note that when all participants are combined in the statewide recidivism analysis, smaller recidivism reductions in larger programs (with many participants) offset larger recidivism reductions in smaller programs.*

While 1 and 2 Years Post Entry Showed Slightly Smaller Proportions of Rearrests in the ATC Group, Rearrest Rates for All Offenses Were Similar Across Program and Comparison Groups by 3 Years Post Entry

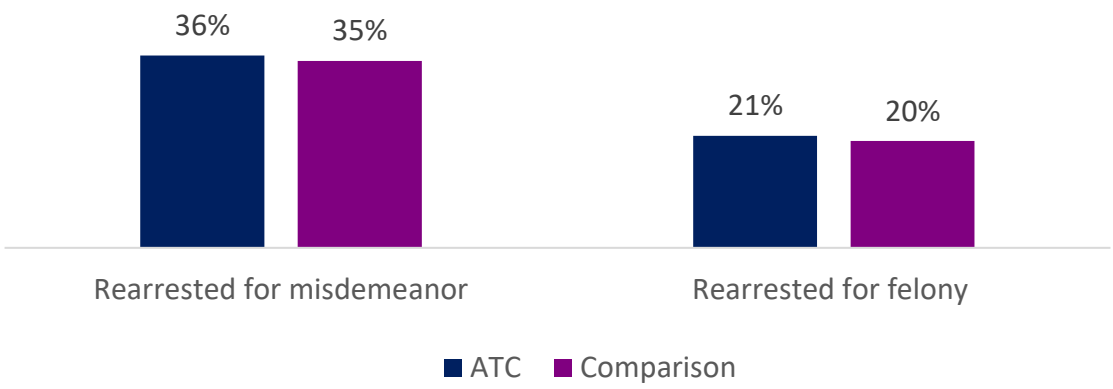


Note. ATC N at Years 1 and 2 is 5,960 and at Year 3 is 5,033. The comparison group N at Years 1 and 2 is 5,960 and at Year 3 is 4,975.

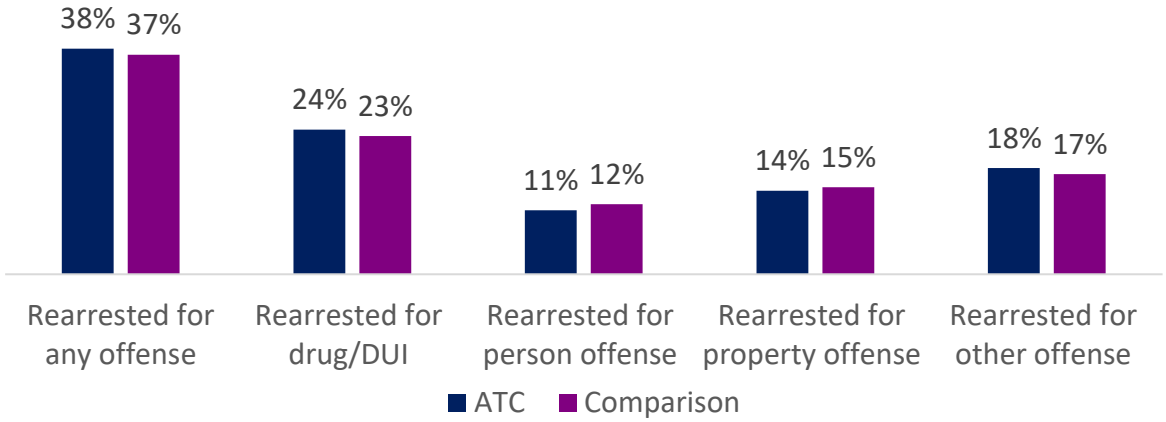
KEY FINDINGS
ATCs: Statewide Recidivism

The average rearrest rates 3 years post entry for all ATC participants combined were similar to the comparison group members for all charge levels and charge types. In addition to these statewide figures, it is important to review individual site results. The rearrest rate 3 years post entry ranged by ATC site from 10% to 62% for ATC participants. As described previously, **rearrest rates for individual courts varied,** with most ATCs showing lower rearrests for all charges than their matched comparison group.

ATC Participants and Comparison Group Members Were Rearrested for a Criminal Offense At a Similar Rate 3 Years Post Program Entry



ATC Participants and Comparison Group Members were Rearrested at Similar Rates for DUI, Person, Property, and Other Offenses 3 Years Post Program Entry



Note. ATC N at Year 3 is 5,033. The comparison group N at Year 3 is 4,975.

KEY FINDINGS
ATCs: Statewide Recidivism

UNDERSTANDING THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

Key Data Limitations

As described in the DUI court section of the report, some Pennsylvania problem-solving courts deleted graduates and other participants who received treatment court services from their database, resulting in participant samples that include fewer successful participants and the possibility that treatment court graduates were included in the comparison group. Therefore, these evaluation findings are conservative estimates and likely underrepresent the success of these programs. More detail about why graduates and other participants were deleted and how this was discovered is provided later in this report.

THE MAJORITY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S ATCs SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN RECIDIVISM

Despite deletion of graduates from the problem-solving court database in some programs, the individual site results showed that 21 out of 34 ATCs in Pennsylvania fared better than their respective comparison groups for all rearrests. The sizes of ATC programs varied and larger programs with the most participants influenced the statewide results. One of the sites with the highest participant recidivism also had the largest number of participants.

6 OUT OF 10 ATCs SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN DRUG/DUI REARRESTS

Most ATCs in Pennsylvania fared better than their respective comparison groups for drug- and DUI-related rearrests. However, in roughly 40% of ATC programs, participants had more drug- and DUI-related arrests by 3 years post entry than their matched comparison groups.

HALF OF ATCs SHOWED REDUCTIONS IN FELONY REARRESTS

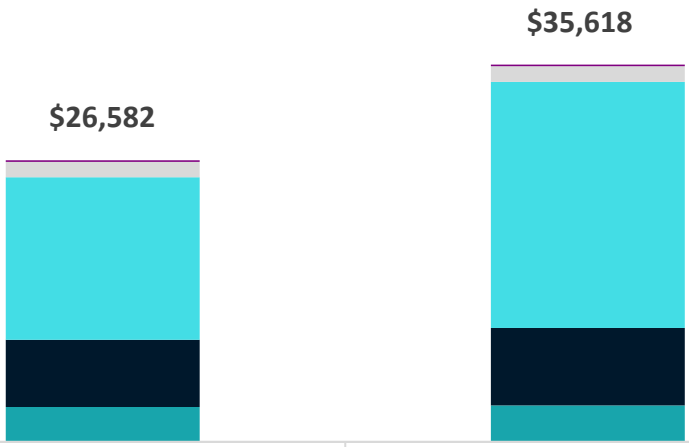
About half of Pennsylvania's ATC programs showed reduced recidivism in arrests with felony charges (ranging from 9% to 84%). However, the number of felony arrests across participants statewide is small (averaging less than 1 felony rearrest per participant by 3 years post entry).

STATEWIDE ATCs SAVED OVER $46 MILLION IN 3 YEARS

Over 3 years, average costs due to ATC participant outcomes in Pennsylvania were $9,036 less per ATC participant than costs for comparison group members. Outcome costs measured statewide include arrests, court cases, days incarcerated, and victimizations due to person or property crimes. These were the outcome costs that accrued during the 3 years after program entry and did not include local county incarceration or probation and parole costs (which may have increased the benefit had they been included). If this cost-offset (or savings) per person is multiplied by the number of participants in the study sample (N = 5,119), the total savings comes to $46,255,650 over just 3 years. Results are likely conservative and actual cost savings may have been even greater, if data for all graduates were available for evaluation.

The figure below shows all available costs related to outcomes reviewed across groups. As county incarceration and probation are distributed and managed locally, those data were not included in statewide cost calculations. However, as more comparison participants were rearrested, it is reasonable to conclude that they may also have increased costs associated with related county incarceration and probation time.

Statewide ATC Cost Savings Per Participant Over 3 Years = $9,036



	ATC Participants	Comparison Group
Rearrests	$127	$127
Court Cases	$1,454	$1,497
State Prison Days	$15,375	$23,245
Person Victimizations	$6,323	$7,296
Property Victimizations	$3,303	$3,453

ADULT TREATMENT COURT: FOCUS SITES

ERIE COUNTY ADULT TREATMENT COURT DEMONSTRATED REDUCTIONS IN RECIDIVISM

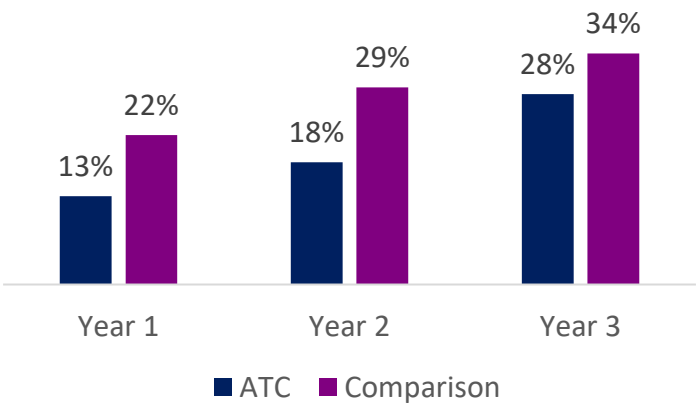
Erie County Adult Treatment Court (ATC), implemented in 2000, reported a capacity of 40 participants at the time of the Best Practices Assessment in 2017. The program reports taking only moderate- to high-risk and high-need participants and having separate tracks for varying levels of risk or need, but not using a standardized risk or needs assessment tool. The program graduation rate is 46%, which is lower than the national average of 59%.

- Based on PAJCIS data, most participants appeared to be educated as over 80% had completed 12th grade or above though fewer than 20% were employed.
- Participants were split between post plea/pre-sentence and post-sentence
- About two-thirds of participants used opioids/heroin

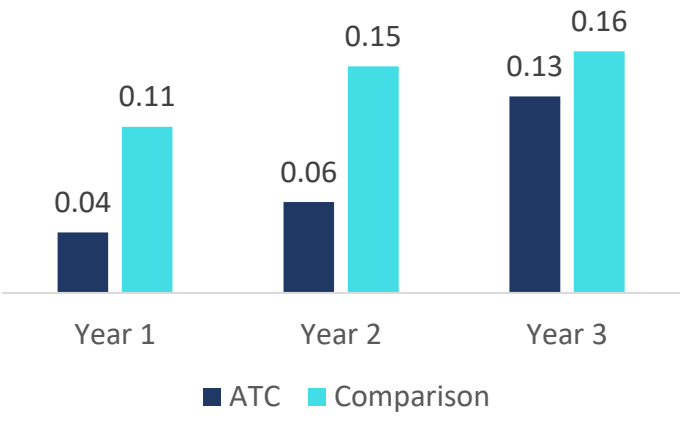
While the program implemented many research based best practices, assessment results showed that the program used county incarceration as a sanction more than recommended.

Recidivism results for the Erie County ATC demonstrated lower rates of recidivism for **any type of charges** and for **drug and DUI charges** than the comparison group all 3 years after program entry. However, this difference gets smaller by Year 3. This finding indicates that Erie County should consider building more recovery capital for participants in the community so that community supports for participants continue after graduation.

Erie County ATC Participants Were Rearrested at Lower Rates Than the Comparison Group



Erie County ATC Had Fewer Rearrests for Drug and DUI Charges than the Comparison Group



Note. ATC N at Years 1 and 2 is 112 and at Year 3 is 109. The comparison group N at Years 1 and 2 is 112 and at Year 3 is 99.

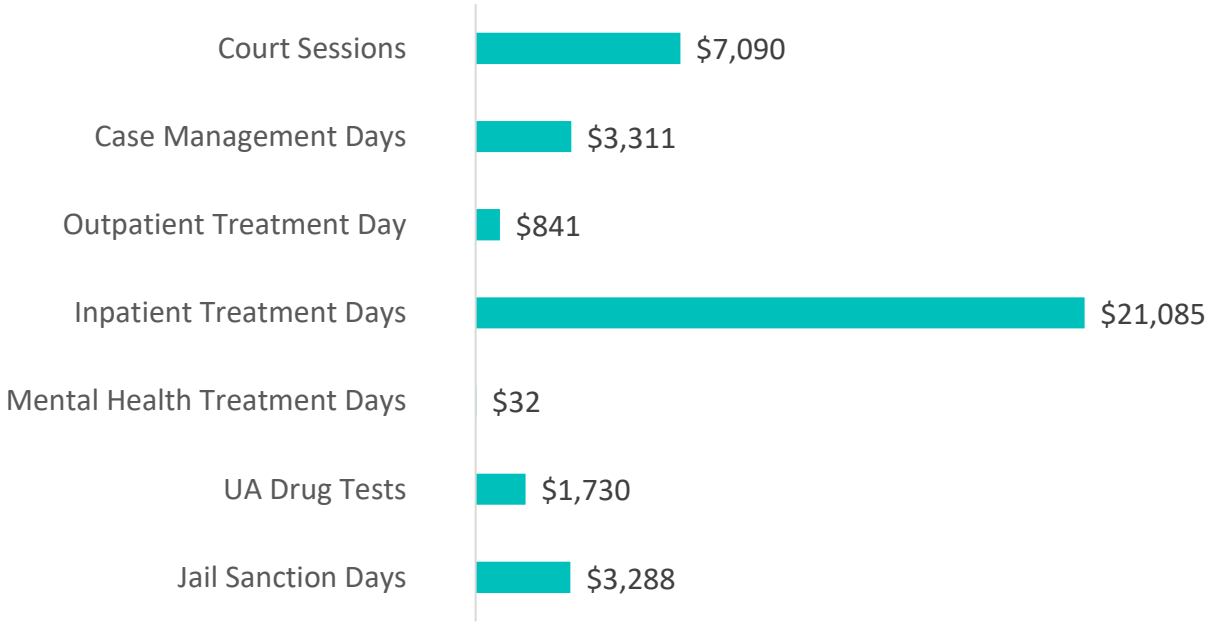
ERIE COUNTY ATC PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS = $37,377 PER PARTICIPANT

Program costs, also called investment costs, were related to each event (or "transaction") experienced by those participants who exited the Erie County ATC (N = 96). Based on program data entered in PAJCIS, the following transactions resulted in an overall cost of just under $38,000 per participant.

- Treatment, particularly inpatient, represented the greatest cost
- Court sessions and case management, housed in the court, represented most of the remaining costs
- The cost of the Erie County ATC program is primarily related to its use of inpatient treatment

Because the Erie County ATC reported that it does not use a standardized assessment to determine level of care or type of service needed, it is recommended that the program implement an assessment as soon as possible to ensure that participants receive services that match their needs and are not receiving expensive inpatient care unnecessarily.

Erie ATC Total Program Cost Per Participant = $37,377

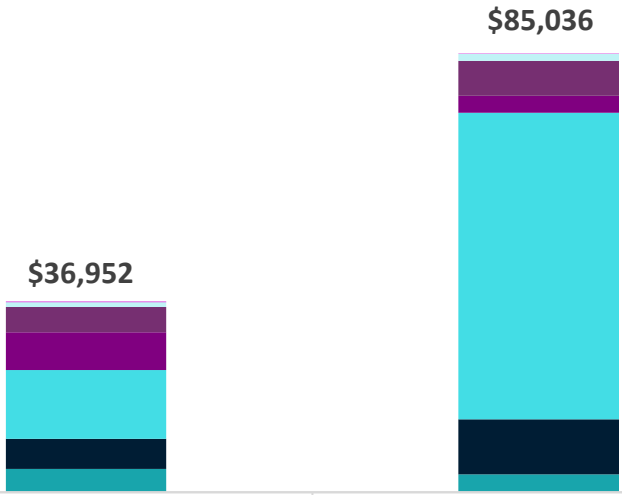


ERIE COUNTY ATC SAVED MORE THAN $4.6 MILLION OVER 3 YEARS

Outcome costs are those costs pertaining to each event (or "transaction") experienced after program entry, not related to program activities. Over 3 years post entry, Erie County ATC participants had fewer rearrests, court cases, person victimizations, county incarceration days, and (notably) prison days than the comparison group. Conversely, Erie County ATC participants had more time on probation and committed more property crimes (resulting in more victimizations).

Not including victimizations, ATC participants in Erie County cost the taxpayers $44,271 less than the comparison group. Once costs for person and property crimes were included, the estimated savings per participant were $48,084. Overall, the main driver of these very large savings is the number of prison days experienced by individuals in the comparison group. When the savings per participant are multiplied by the number of Erie County ATC participants in the study (N = 96), total savings are $4,616,064.

Erie ATC Total Cost Savings Per Participant Over 3 Years = $48,084



	Participants	Comparison
Rearrests	$102	$115
Court Cases	$978	$1,312
County Prison Days	$4,869	$6,765
Probation and Parole Days	$7,329	$3,330
State Prison Days	$13,334	$59,361
Person Victimizations	$5,836	$10,700
Property Victimizations	$4,504	$3,453

YORK COUNTY ATC PARTICIPANTS HAD SIMILAR RECIDIVISM AS THE COMPARISON GROUP

York County Adult Treatment Court, implemented in 1997, reported a capacity of 150 participants at the time of the Best Practices Assessment in 2017. The program used a validated risk screen (the RANT) to assist in determining eligibility and accepted only high-risk, high-need participants. In 2018, in response to the opioid crisis, York County ATC began a primary focus on participants using opioids. The graduation rate for participants in the study sample (those who entered the ATC between 2015-2018) was 42%, which is much lower than the national average of 59%.

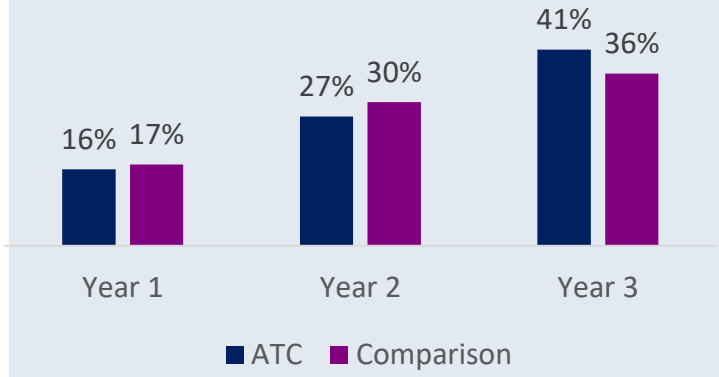
- The majority of participants were referred post plea/pre-sentence
- Most participants (over 75%) had education levels of 12th grade or higher
- One-third of participants were employed
- Roughly 80% of participants used opioids/heroin

While the program implemented many best practices, the ATC reported the use of county incarceration as a sanction more than recommended.

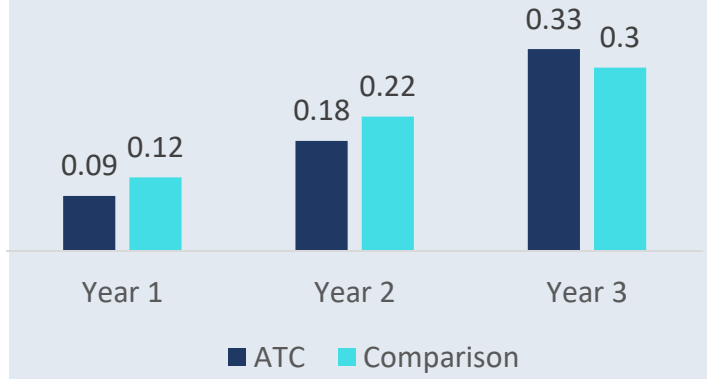
Recidivism results for ATC demonstrated that although participant rearrest rates **for any charge** and for **drug charges** were slightly, though not significantly, lower than the comparison group in Years 1 and 2 after program entry, this difference reverses in Year 3 with ATC participants having higher recidivism than the comparison group. The Year 3 finding indicates that York County ATC participants may benefit from the program building more recovery capital for participants so that community supports for participants continue after graduation.

In addition, it is important to note that opioid users consistently show lower graduation rates and higher recidivism rates than participants who use other substances, and those with opioid use disorder require extensive and specialized services, particularly benefitting from medication for addiction treatment (MAT). Although the program focused on opioid users, they reported not adjusting services specifically for this population.

Slightly Fewer York County ATC Participants Were Rearrested 1 and 2 Years Post Entry but More Were Rearrested in Year 3



York County ATC Participants Had Slightly Fewer Rearrests 1 and 2 Years Post Entry but Had Higher Numbers of Rearrests in Year 3



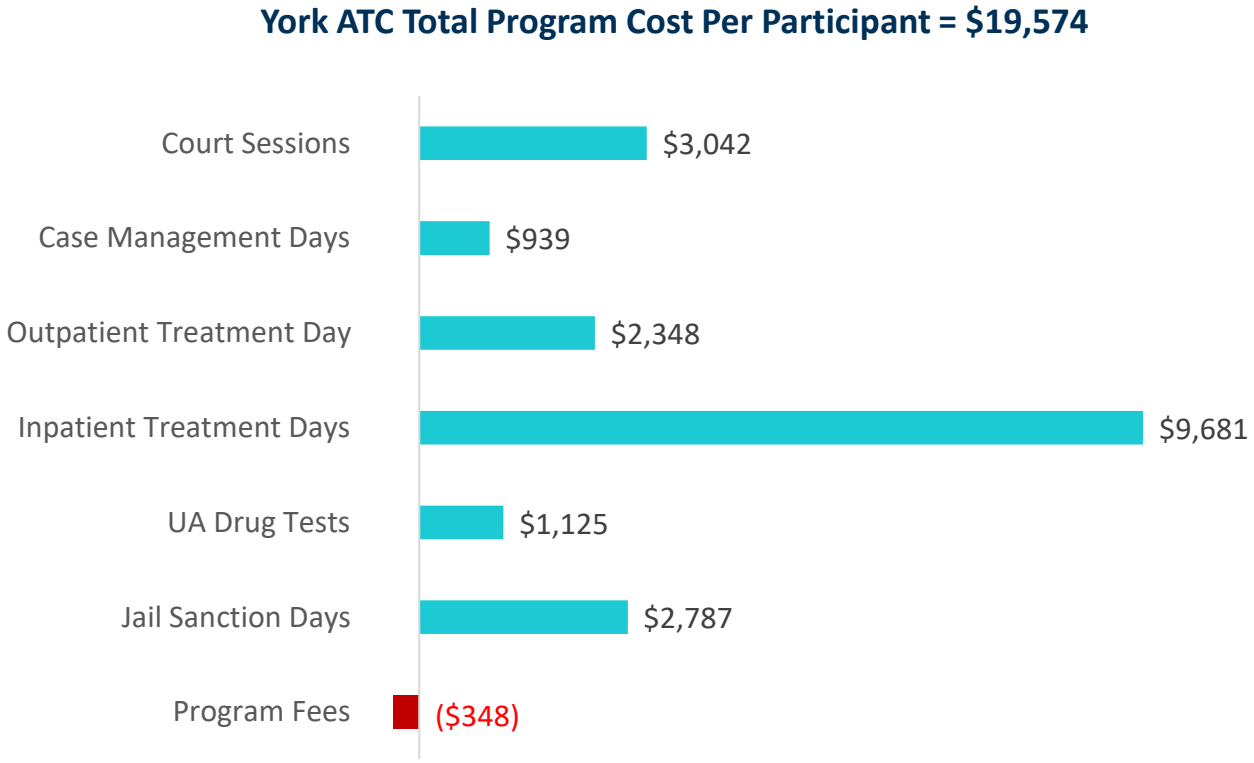
Note. ATC N at Years 1 and 2 is 423 and at Year 3 is 3792. The comparison group N at Years 1 and 2 is 423 and at Year 3 is 372.

YORK COUNTY ATC PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS = $19,574 PER PARTICIPANT

Program costs, also called investment costs, were related to each event (or "transaction") experienced by those participants who exited the York County ATC (N = 351). Based on program data entered in PAJCIS, the following transactions resulted in an overall cost of just under $20,000 per participant.

- Treatment, inpatient and outpatient, represented the greatest cost
- Court sessions and county incarceration sanctions represented most of the remaining costs
- A small amount of costs were redeemed from program fees
- The cost of the York County ATC program is primarily related to its use of inpatient treatment

Because the York ATC reported that it does not use a standardized assessment to determine level of care or type of service needed, it is recommended that the program implement an assessment as soon as possible to ensure that participants receive services that match their needs and are not receiving any expensive inpatient care unnecessarily.

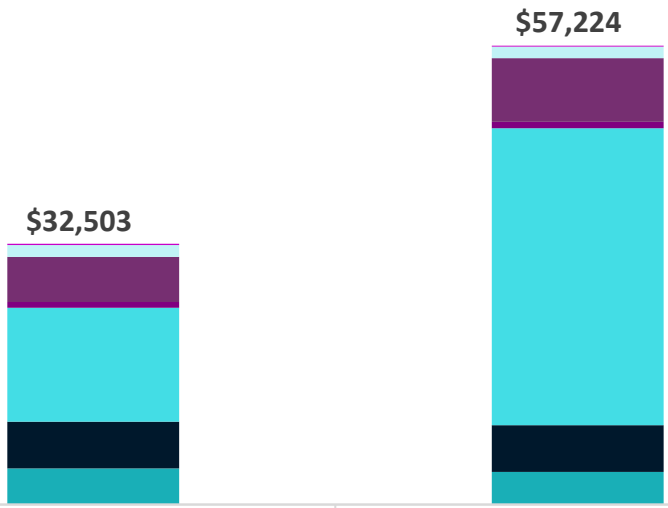


YORK COUNTY ATC SAVED OVER $8.6 MILLION IN 3 YEARS

Outcome costs are those costs pertaining to each event (or "transaction") experienced after program entry, not related to program activities. Over 3 years post entry, York County ATC participants had fewer rearrests, probation and parole days, county incarceration days, and (notably fewer) prison days than the comparison group. York County ATC participants had similar (though very low) numbers of person and property crimes (resulting in victimizations).

ATC participants in York County cost the taxpayer over $24,000 less than the comparison group, mainly due to spending less than half the number of days in prison than the comparison group. When the savings per participant are multiplied by the number of York County ATC participants in the study (N = 351), total savings come to $8,677,071 over a 3-year period.

York ATC Cost Savings in 3 Years = $24,721 Per Participant



	Participants	Comparison
Rearrests	$161	$146
Court Cases	$1,451	$1,430
County Prison Days	$5,653	$7,940
Probation and Parole Days	$714	$809
State Prison Days	$14,184	$37,009
Person Victimizations	$5,836	$5,836
Property Victimizations	$4,504	$4,054

Lessons Learned from the Evaluation Process

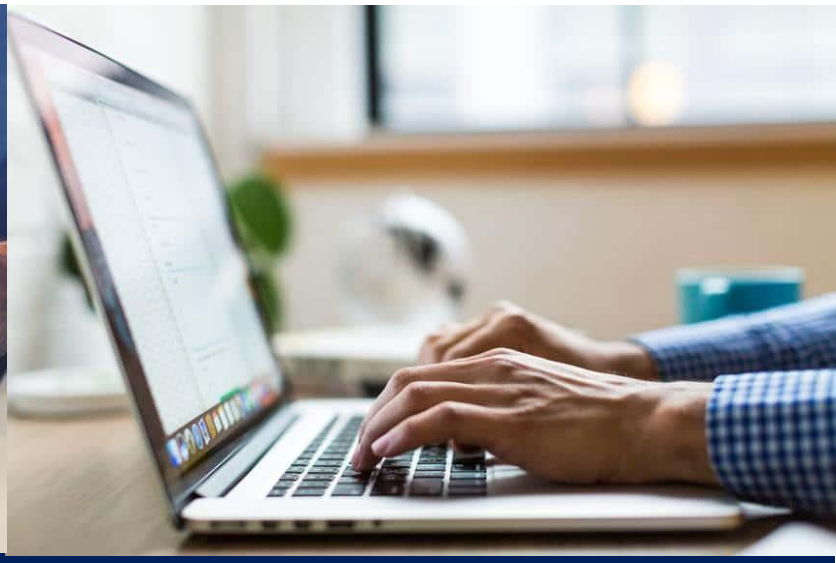
Summary, Recommendations, and Improvements Made

Improvements in Data Entry Practices Will Increase the Timeliness and Accuracy of Evaluation Results

PAJCIS data are self-reported and only 4 data elements undergo statewide validation. As a result, PAJCIS program data and inconsistent data entry practices hindered more robust program analyses and the ability to answer some research questions. While it is impossible to reduce data entry errors to zero, there are certain areas (outlined below) where improvement in PAJCIS data entry will enhance program case management as well as the ability to conduct useful evaluations. More consistent and reliable data entry will improve the ability of the treatment court teams to perform quality case management and for evaluators to understand how the programs are operating and why treatment courts are showing positive (or negative) outcomes for their participants. Improving data collection will ultimately allow Pennsylvania to further improve treatment court processes and outcomes, and ultimately the lives of their participants.

RECOMMENDATION: Have agreements for data sharing among agencies in place for treatment court staffing AND for evaluation

Lack of response to data requests and delays in the provision of data after some agreements were signed led to postponements in completing this study. In particular, data from county prisons and probation at many of the focus sites were difficult to access and resulted in months-long delays in completing the ATC and DUI court study. Further, lack of available statewide data on veteran status required the evaluators to find and access data from the federal government, resulting in the veteran court evaluation occurring later than the ATC and DUI court study.



RECOMMENDATION: Ensure consistent and reliable data entry of the following data elements:

Demographics and Participant Characteristics: Missing or incomplete data included **participant substances used, substance use disorder or mental health diagnoses, and housing status** information, resulting in an inability to accurately measure the impact of the program on participants with different substances of use and different diagnoses, and whether the program improved housing status. These data are not only important for evaluation but are crucial for effective case management and matching services to participants' needs.

Case Tracking: Tracking participant case information is essential for effective participant case management and for assessing program effectiveness in delivering intended services. Areas that need more consistent data entry include tracking **periods of inactivity (when participants are not engaging with the program), transfers to other treatment court programs, date of treatment court eligible arrest, date of referral to the program, and the dates of entry and exit into each phase** of the program.

Responses to Participant Behaviors: Incentives and sanctions (including county incarceration) were frequently incomplete or missing. This gap hampered meaningful analysis on the effectiveness of court responses to participant behavior. In addition, tracking responses to participant behavior allows the team to fine-tune their responses to each participant for more effective and long-lasting behavior change.

Drug Tests: Provide dates of all drug tests, results of drug tests, and the agency that administers each drug test. Many of the drug tests were missing the test result. Not having this information makes it difficult to track progress in the program. There were also many duplicate entries indicating multiple drug tests on the same day though many of these duplicate entries noted differing results (e.g., a positive and negative drug test result).

Court Attendance: 2,256 of the participants (11%) had no corresponding **court attendance** records. Tracking whether participants were required to and attended scheduled court hearings is essential for analysis of effective treatment court implementation and the intensity of supervision.

Treatment Services: 6,842 participant treatment episodes for participants who were no longer in their treatment court program were missing **a discharge date** (67% of these were outpatient). Other important treatment information missing from the PAJCIS database includes the dates and hours of **individual treatment** sessions, dates of **group treatment** sessions, entry and exit dates for **residential treatment**, dates of **mental health services**, and the agencies providing each of these services. These treatment service details are important for measuring the **dosage of treatment services** and whether participants who engage in more treatment sessions, remain in treatment longer, and successfully complete substance abuse treatment also have **better outcomes** (i.e., graduation and lower rates of rearrest).

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EVALUATION PROCESS
Expunging Cases While Supporting Program Evaluation

Expunging Charges for Graduates

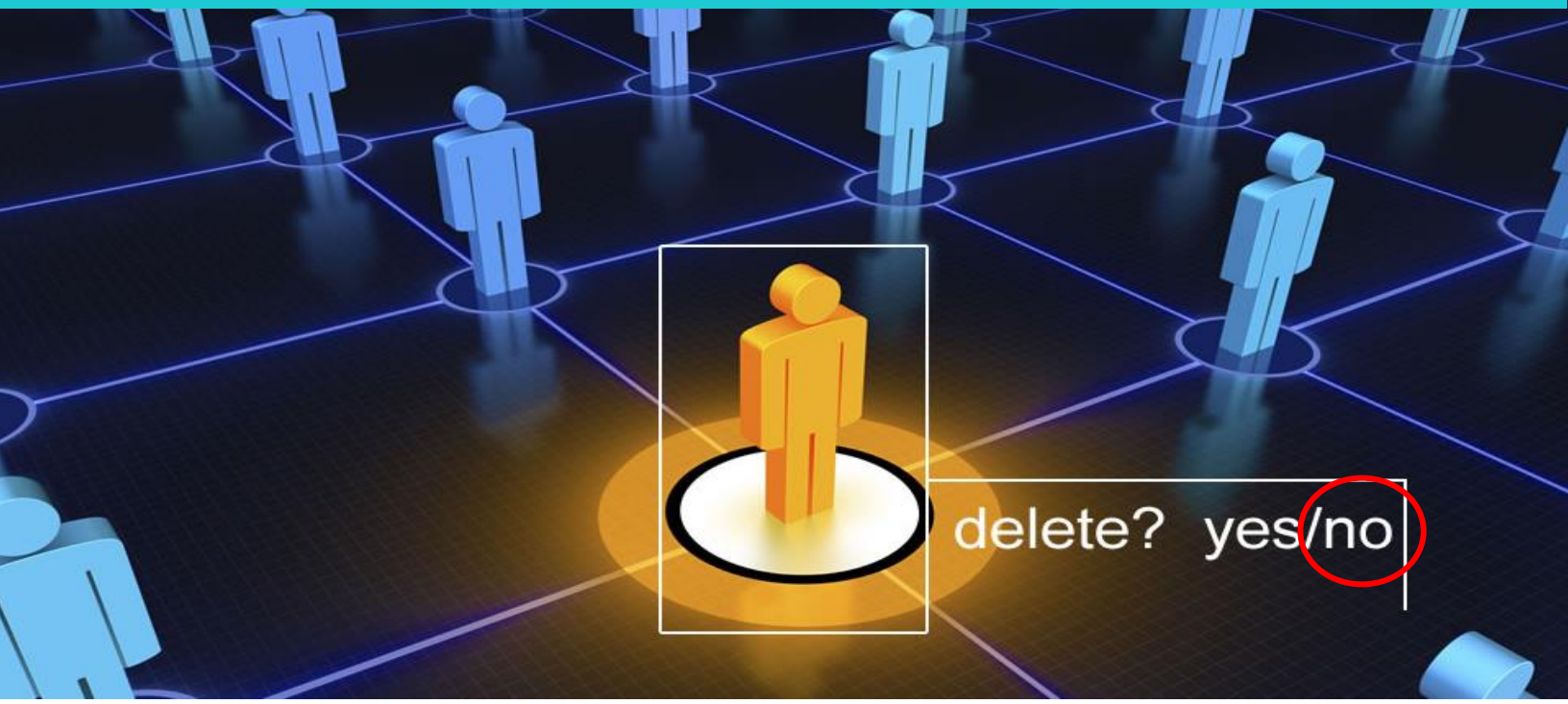
Some Pennsylvania problem-solving courts offer to expunge graduates' charges that led to program entry. Expunging charges is an important incentive because individuals with criminal records face barriers to obtaining employment, housing, and benefits (health and social). Criminal records are expunged with positive intentions to increase the continued success of graduates in the community following successful completion of program requirements. Using the expunge feature in PAJCIS allows for retention of key data elements for graduates whose charges are expunged in order to compute program graduation rates and measure recidivism of all participants.

Deleting Graduates and other participants who receive treatment court services from PAJCIS

Treatment courts in Pennsylvania should use the feature in PAJCIS that allows users to expunge graduates' data. When this feature is used, an "expunged" indicator is associated with the graduate and all their program data. Some programs in Pennsylvania approached the expungement process more vigorously by completely deleting from PAJCIS all electronic data for graduates, as well as using the "rejected" feature to delete data for participants who were rejected from the program but who had received substantial numbers of services. The evaluation team at NPC Research determined this practice was being used after reviewing multiple versions of data extracted from the PAJCIS database at different times and detecting that some participants who were previously in the database were no longer in the database. A few **focus site** programs confirmed for NPC Research that they deleted graduates from PAJCIS. Moreover, programs that deleted graduates from PAJCIS deleted the data in its entirety and had no records of the graduates whose data were deleted; thus, these data were not available for evaluation. While there is great value in expunging criminal records for legal purposes, participant data must be retained to effectively evaluate treatment court programs.

Impact of Deleted Graduates on Outcomes

As a result of data deletion practices, recidivism results may be incorrect and are conservatively skewed, meaning reductions in recidivism for court programs are likely larger than the results presented in this report. Deleting graduates would lead to conservative recidivism results for two reasons. First, programs that deleted graduates likely show higher average rearrest rates because non-graduates are consistently shown to be rearrested more frequently. Second, it is likely that deleted graduates were selected into the comparison group because they would have met program eligibility requirements, skewing comparison recidivism results lower. We are unable to estimate the full impact of deletion practices on recidivism rates because we do not know which court programs deleted graduates from PAJCIS, the number of graduates that were deleted, or the time periods during which programs regularly deleted graduates from the program database. Treatment court programs can continue to incentivize program entry by offering to expunge charges for graduates and can safely retain graduates' program data for evaluation purposes by using the expunge feature in PAJCIS.



#1 RECOMMENDATION
Program participants should NEVER be deleted from the PAJCIS data.

Deleting any participant data from the PAJCIS program database, especially deleting data for graduates or other participants who received a substantial amount of services, is a practice that **negatively impacts evaluation results, particularly the ability of the programs to demonstrate their success**.

The AOPC Responded Swiftly to Graduate Deletion Practices

Detecting that treatment courts deleted electronic program data is an unintended benefit of conducting this evaluation. The evaluation brought this problematic practice to the attention of AOPC leadership and doing so created an opportunity to address the problem. After learning from NPC Research that some programs deleted data completely out of PAJCIS, the AOPC modified PAJCIS to make it more difficult for court programs to delete admitted participants and their electronic records. The expunge feature continues to be available and courts have begun to be trained on properly using this feature. The AOPC should ensure that team members who use the PAJCIS database are fully trained in its use and perform regular ongoing training since team turnover in treatment courts tends to be high.

Actions Taken to Improve Data Practices

PAJCIS was implemented in 2013 as a data source for Pennsylvania's problem-solving courts. Use of the system is voluntary, but the AOPC has made several enhancements over the years to improve its usefulness for the problem-solving courts to encourage more data collection.

- In 2017, the AOPC began implementing data entry consistency and accuracy checks and inform problem-solving courts when their data entry needs improvement.
- In 2018, the AOPC received a grant to move PAJCIS to the DCCM (Drug Court Case Management) platform. Until this point, PAJCIS was static and had not received any software updates since its inception. Moving PAJCIS to the DCCM platform allowed the implementation of over 50 upgrades that had been provided to other states over the past 5 years. The upgrades also improved user accessibility and resolved browser compatibility issues. On the DCCM platform, PAJCIS receives regular updates and can request system enhancements to further make PAJCIS useful to the field.
- In 2019, AOPC implemented a grant program whereby operational problem-solving courts and those in the planning stage could apply for a discretionary or implementation grant. One of the conditions of an AOPC grant is the use of PAJCIS. In order to be reimbursed, programs must enter required data into the system: admissions, drug test results, judicial status hearings attendance, treatment attendance and sessions/dosage, probation contacts (monitoring), incentives/sanctions used, ancillary services, and discharges. In addition, a reporting feature was added to include "Grant Report," which makes it easier for coordinators to submit their data to AOPC for review.
- In 2021, AOPC began providing individualized training on PAJCIS to coordinators and various other team members.

Numerous additional updates and improvements have been made to increase the completeness and accuracy of program data. Since most data improvements were implemented after data were collected for this evaluation, Pennsylvania will benefit from an updated evaluation conducted with more robust data.

SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS: DUI COURTS

- All PA DUI courts showed reductions in recidivism
- Recidivism rates varied across DUI court programs
  - 10 out of 14 DUI courts showed reductions in DUI-specific recidivism
  - DUI courts showed reductions in felony-specific rearrests
- Statewide, DUI courts saved over $8.5 million, primarily due to participants spending less time incarcerated

KEY FINDINGS: ATCs

- Most PA ATCs showed reductions in recidivism
- Recidivism rates varied widely across ATCs with most programs showing substantial decreases in recidivism while some programs had increased recidivism
  - 6 out of 10 ATCs showed reductions in drug/DUI specific recidivism
  - Half of ATCs showed reductions in felony specific recidivism
- ATCs saved over $46.25 million statewide, also primarily due to participants spending less time incarcerated

SUMMARY: RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to provide regular trainings in incentives, sanctions, supervision, and therapeutic responses, and reduce use of county incarceration
- Encourage use of validated risk and need screening tools by all courts not currently using them, to ensure services are provided to participants based on their assessed risks and needs
- Explore resources for cultural competency training for staff and the availability of culturally specific services, particularly for individuals who are Latinx. Correlations between race/ethnicity, graduation rates, and recidivism rates (provided in previous reports) showed that individuals who were Latinx were less likely to graduate and more likely to recidivate.
- Expunge criminal charges for graduates and train problem solving court teams on why and how to use the expunge feature in PAJCIS. We commend AOPC for changing the PAJCIS database (in December 2021) in a way that removed the ability to delete admitted participants from PAJCIS.
- Find ways to incentivize more complete and reliable data entry into PAJCIS. Provide training and technical assistance in efficient and rigorous data management practices.

The results of the process, outcome, and cost evaluations should be used to inform efforts that strengthen treatment court effectiveness. Specifically, Pennsylvania treatment courts are encouraged to continue their efforts to implement changes to enhance adherence to best practices.

Over time, as programs continue to improve their use of best practices and program data collection and entry have been enhanced, Pennsylvania should conduct an updated statewide evaluation. The updated statewide evaluation should measure recidivism and compare findings to the baseline recidivism rates presented in this report to determine improvement over time.

For questions about this report or project, please contact
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