

What is a Drug Court?

Drug Court is a special court that hears selected cases involving non-violent, substance-abusing offenders (both drugs and alcohol). Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring intensive supervision based on frequent drug testing and appearances before the judge, along with a long-term regimen of treatment and recovery services. This level of supervision allows the program to actively support the recovery process and react swiftly to impose sanctions or to reinstate criminal proceedings when participants cannot comply with the program. Drug court can be used in lieu of probation, diversion programs and/or jail.

How many Drug Courts are there?

There are over 1,500 Drug Courts throughout the Country in operation or in the planning stages (includes Adult, Juvenile and Family Drug Courts).

Who is involved in Drug Court?

The Drug Court Team consists of the following representatives:

- District Court Judge
- County Prosecutor
- Public Defender
- Law Enforcement Officers
- Probation Officers
- Case Managers
- Treatment Providers

Who is eligible for Drug Court?

Offenders who are arrested for certain non-violent, felony, controlled-substance crimes and felony DWI (driving while intoxicated) crimes are eligible for drug court, with some crimes at the discretion of the Drug Court Team.



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

If you would like additional information about Blue Earth County Drug Court, contact Community Corrections Supervisor Brenda Pautsch at (507) 344-8718 or brenda.pautsch@co.blue-earth.mn.us.

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY DRUG COURT

*Creating a climate for rehabilitation,
recovery & reducing crime.*



FAQs
ANSWERS TO YOUR
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS



Mission: The Blue Earth County Drug Court is a community-wide, collaborative effort to reduce crime, increase public safety, lower recidivism, and rehabilitate substance-abusing offenders by providing them with multifaceted interventions, frequent court contacts, and intensive supervision.



Why do we need Drug Court?

Arrests for controlled-substance crimes in Blue Earth County are on the rise, particularly due to the methamphetamine epidemic. Here are some of the facts:

- In 2000, Blue Earth County law enforcement conducted two “meth” lab seizures; in 2001, there were three; in 2002, there were 20; and in 2003, there were 25 after just six months.
- Since 2000, Blue Earth County’s probation caseload for drug-related crimes has more than doubled.
- Over 80 percent of all probation cases in Blue Earth County are the result of drug or alcohol crimes.
- 30 to 60 percent of offenders in the Blue Earth County jail are incarcerated for drug or alcohol arrests.

Are Drug Courts cost effective?

The treatment programs used by Drug Courts are relatively inexpensive when compared to incarceration costs. While studies are ongoing, the California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment estimates a cost of less than \$8 per day for outpatient treatment, compared to estimates of \$86 per day for incarceration (Incarceration costs in Blue Earth County are \$52/day). In addition, the savings to the community can be significant, including a reduction of property crimes, reduced public health costs, and a decline in out-of-home placements for children with parents addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. Dallas estimates that \$9.43 is saved for every \$1.00 spent on drug court, and Oregon reports a projected \$10.00 savings for every \$1.00 spent.

Are Drug Courts effective in reducing crime?

A recent national study conducted by the Urban Institute -- a non-partisan economic and social policy

research organization in Washington, D.C. -- concludes that 84 percent of drug court participants did not have any criminal activity within one year of graduation. The San Diego County District Attorney’s Office researched their Adult Drug Court recidivism and found that 86 percent of drug court participants did not have a new conviction within one year of completion; 75 percent did not have a new conviction within two years of completion; and 71 percent did not have a new conviction within three years of completion.

How is chemical dependency treatment different in Drug Court?

Statistics show the longer a person is in treatment, the likelihood of relapse decreases. Drug Court keeps offenders in treatment for 12 to 18 months. This long-term treatment, combined with the judge’s ability to hand down immediate sanctions and rewards, makes Drug Court different from existing correctional programs. Treatment services may include:

- Group and individual therapy
- Case Management
- Urinalysis drug testing
- Placement in detox, residential treatment, sober living and mental health programs as deemed appropriate by the Drug Court Team and availability of resources.

Additional services may include job training and employment assistance, education (such as G.E.D.) and health referrals.

How often does Drug Court convene?

Depending upon the phase they are in, Drug Court participants appear before the judge weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. A report of each participant’s progress is prepared and given to the Drug Court Team prior to the hearing. The judge is notified of positive and negative urinalysis tests, as well as attendance at counseling and educational classes. The judge may increase the frequency of drug testing and/or order increased participation in programs as a requirement to stay in Drug Court. The judge may also order jail time as a sanction.