

# Maryland Drug Courts



## Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Programs

Office of Problem-  
Solving Courts

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Maryland's Guidelines for Planning and Implementing

Juvenile Drug  
Treatment  
Court Programs



MARYLAND'S GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

## Drug Treatment Court Programs

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# Preface

Drug treatment courts are built upon a unique partnership between the criminal justice system and the drug treatment community. A single drug treatment court judge, through his or her authority and personal involvement, structures treatment intervention. Drug treatment courts are dependent upon the creation of a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where a single judge and dedicated team of court officers and staff work together toward the common goal of breaking the cycle of drug abuse and criminal behavior.

*Maryland's Guidelines for Planning and Implementing Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Programs* was developed to assist planning jurisdictions with the planning and implementation of successful drug treatment courts. These guidelines provide a suggested road map for drug court development while allowing for jurisdictional creativeness and individuality.

# Introduction

## **Maryland's Drug Treatment Court Movement**

Maryland's drug treatment court movement started in the early 1990's as a response to the surge of drug-related cases, which overwhelmed dockets and caused enormous trial delays. Maryland's first drug treatment court began in March 1994. The first Juvenile Drug Court began in Baltimore City in 1998 and has since taken hold of alternative sentencing for Maryland's youth.

The Drug Treatment Courts provide a dynamic alternative to addressing drug and drug-related cases. Currently, there is extensive drug treatment court development and expansion underway in the State of Maryland.

The Office of Problem-Solving Courts established in 2006 pursuant to an Administrative Order of Chief Judge Robert M. Bell. The Office of Problem-Solving Courts leads the State's effort to operate and maintain drug treatment court programs for the State of Maryland. Oversight committee members include: Circuit Court and District Court judges, legislators, representatives from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Juvenile Services, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, State's Attorney's Offices, the Office of the Public Defender's, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, the Maryland Association of Public Health Officers, providers of addiction treatment services, community leaders, and faith-based professionals.

## Planning A Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

### 1. Judicial Leadership

**The planning and implementation of a Juvenile drug treatment court program is a demanding process, which requires on-going judicial leadership and oversight.**

Firm judicial leadership is critical to the success of the drug treatment court and requires at least one judge to promote the feasibility/planning process and the planning committee.

### 2. Planning Committee

**Initially, there must be an agreement to pursue a drug treatment court among principal players. It is important that key stakeholders are included in these initial discussions.**

Stakeholders should include the following:

- † Administrative judge
- † Director of local drug and alcohol treatment provider
- † Local director of the Department of Juvenile Services
- † Local law enforcement
- † Mayor or county executive's office
- † Local public defender
- † Private bar
- † State's Attorney's office
- † County School Superintendent
- Administrative Court Clerk
- † MIS/Program Evaluator

It is critical that the representatives attending the meetings have decision-making capacity for their organizations.

### 3. Assessing the Problem

**The answer to the question of whether a drug court is needed in a particular jurisdiction depends upon a determination of whether current practices and services for handling substance-addicted defendants are effective.**

Many jurisdictions have approached the planning task by selecting a sample of relevant cases handled in the past.

- Clearly stated, realistic results that achieve the program goals
- Quantifiable with measurable outcomes
- Responding to participant, stakeholder, and community needs
- Attainable program design and resources available

#### 4. Target Population

Identify the population that will be best served by the drug treatment court. This will help define the scope and focus of the program.

Initial considerations in developing the target population may include:

##### Symptoms/red flags

Symptoms/red flags that may suggest the need to improve the court's handling of drug offenders and potentially the utility of a drug court program can include:

- Relatively high percentage of drug and drug-related offenses filed
- Relatively high rates of recidivism and probation violations
- Relatively high rates of addiction to alcohol and other drugs reflected in the respondent population
- Relatively low rates of substance abuse treatment retention for this population
- In detention and commitment facilities

The impact of substance-abusing respondents may initially be reflected in the criminal docket but generally spills over to the entire caseload of the court, in particular, domestic, juvenile, dependency, and traffic matters.

##### Identifying the problems

Symptoms of ineffective practices regarding the court's handling and disposition of substance abusing respondents are generally reflected in (1) evidence that a significant percentage of arrestees are drug users; and (2) relatively high recidivism (e.g., re-arrest) rates and probation violation among these respondents. If data is not readily available to ascertain the degree to which these factors are present in your jurisdiction, a sample of cases disposed of over the past two to three years may need to be taken. Generally Department of Juvenile Services staff can be very helpful in compiling this sample.

##### Information needed to determine current practices

- Respondents demographics: age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, public assistance status
- Employment status
- Substance abuse history
- Prior record and dispositions
- Post sentence services provided to respondent
- Recidivism among the current substance-abusing population
- Criminal justice resources available/needed



### Identify treatment availability

- What treatment services are available in the community? Where are they located? What are their eligibility requirements?
- What is the waiting time for a respondent to enter treatment? What is the nature of treatment being provided? What mechanisms are used to determine whether a respondent has stopped using drugs following his/her adjudication?
- What mechanisms ensure the coordination and the delivery of services as well as accountability of both the service providers and the parents?
- What other support services are available including: treatment services, mental health services, public health services, housing, vocational, educational, family, and other support services?
- Where are the gaps in treatment resources? What other ancillary resources do substance-abusing individuals need to recover?

### *5. Planning Committee Expansion*

**Once the need for a drug court has been established, it is often helpful to add additional representatives to the planning committee who can enhance the perspectives and resources of the initial group.**

They members may be drawn from:

- Business community
- Public health community
- Faith community
- Day care providers
- Vocational and job training/  
placement agencies
- Higher/ Alternative Education Community
- Housing providers
- Medical/dental providers
- Community based entities
- Citizen groups

While not all of these representatives may be involved actively in the planning process, they can serve as a valuable resource from which to draw upon, as needed, to develop a full range of program services. These representatives also will be able to serve as advocates for the program as planning and implementation occur.

## DEVELOPING PROGRAM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

### *1. Mission, Goals, and Objectives*

**The mission and the goals define the purpose of the drug treatment court and provide a road map for its direction.**

This is accomplished by first turning individual goals into team goals and then developing those team goals into a concise, meaningful mission statement. From those team goals, the team also can develop objectives, which can be evaluated and measured to determine eventual program success. Below is a sample of some critical issues for this component.

#### *Mission Statement*

Provides a concise and clear statement, which captures the spirit and motivations of the planning team and the goals they hope to accomplish.

#### *Program Goals*

Goals are general statements about what must be accomplished in order to meet your purpose or mission. Program goals may include:

- Enhancing public safety
- Promoting personal responsibility
- Improving utilization of community resources
- Boosting cost effectiveness for the criminal justice system
- Improving rates of treatment program retention and completion
- Assuring open access to services and due process
- Upgrading the functioning of individuals (e.g. acquiring/retaining employment, attaining educational diplomas, improving literacy skills, and retaining children)
- Improving efficiency of case processing
- Promoting interagency collaboration between criminal justice and treatment systems
- Decreasing recidivism

## Program Objectives

Objectives are specific outcomes or action steps to achieve each goal. Exactly what you will attempt to accomplish for whom and in what time period – set of measurable situations, which when achieved will satisfy need. Program objectives should be:

- Quantifiable with measurable outcomes
- Responding to participant, stakeholder, and community needs
- Attainable program design and resources available
- Clearly stated, realistic results that achieve the program goals

## *2.Target Population*

**Identify the population that will be best served by the drug treatment court. This will help define the scope and focus of the program.**

Initial considerations in developing the target population may include:

### Respondent characteristics

- Risk level of respondent
- Extent of substance abuse problem
  - Criminal history
  - Community resources
- Treatment availability
- Docketing limitations
  - Supervision and drug testing capacity

### Policies

- Community impact
- Political realities
- Geographical obstacles
- Cultural competence
- Language barriers

The nature of drug use, arrest patterns, treatment and other resources, as well as, justice system handling of substance-involved offenders is continually changing in most communities. What was a given situation at the time of program planning may well change by the time the program has been operating for six months. Redefining the program's target population will be an ongoing aspect of an operational drug treatment court.

### 3. Program Eligibility

**In many cases the program can't serve the entire target population. Therefore, eligibility criteria need to be developed to focus on the substance-abusing parent that the program can serve.**

Specific eligibility requirements must be designed to ensure consistency in respondent selection and reduce net widening or omission of appropriate candidates. Generally, the eligible population will be more limited than the targeted population. This will be due primarily to a lack of available resources, e.g., fiscal, programmatic, transportation, staff, etc.

The concept of eligibility should be broken down into four components: offense qualifiers/disqualifiers and offender qualifiers/disqualifiers.

#### Eligibility Considerations

##### *Offense Qualifiers/Disqualifiers*

- Nature of crime — felons and/or misdemeanors
- Severity of crime – violent or non-violent
- Type of crime – drugs, drug motivated or alcohol related
- Type of drug – specific drugs or all, alcohol

##### *Offense Qualifiers/Disqualifiers*

- Legal
- Open warrants
- Pending cases
- Probation status
  - Prior record
    - Violent offenses
    - Weapon offenses
    - Arrests vs. adjudications
    - Severity of offense
    - Length of time since offense
  - Personal
    - Demographics – age, residency, gender
    - Severity of drug use
    - Types of drugs abused
    - Prior treatment
    - Mental health issues

#### Other Considerations

- Funding sources often require that programs exclude offenders with certain types of criminal histories.
- Exclusion of certain offenses that impact victims.

#### 4. Program Structure

**The type of program structure establishes the method of entry (*pre-plea, post plea, etc.*) into the drug court and subsequent program operations.**

Determining the program model will be based on several factors including:

- The nature of the target population (e.g., first offenders or persons with significant prior contact with the justice system)
- Prosecution policies
- Existing programs regarding drug-related offenses

Generally, the program structure will have little or no effect on that actual service provided to each participant, which is determined, primarily, by the initial and ongoing clinical assessments of the individuals' substance abuse needs and performance in the program.

Below are the most common models; however, a combination of them and others are also employed based upon the individual needs of the jurisdiction.

- Informal Adjustment – prosecution of the case is deferred during the respondent's participation in treatment. The court with the consent of the respondent extends the ninety (90) day informal adjustment period and the case is closed at intake upon successful completion of the program.
- Converted Plea – the respondent admits responsibility as a requirement of participation in the program; however the admission is withdrawn and the case is dismissed upon completion of the program.
- Deferred Commitment – an admission or finding of responsibility is made at adjudication and commitment is deferred pending program participation. Upon successful completion of the program an appropriate probationary period is imposed and the finding of delinquency is ultimately stricken once probation period is completed and case is closed.
- Re-entry/Aftercare Probation – the respondent is coming out of inpatient treatment and is placed on probation with the successful completion of the program as a condition of probation.

#### 5. Screening and Assessment

**Intervention and screening of potential drug treatment court participants should occur as soon as possible after arrest to expedite their involvement in treatment and capitalize on motivation for behavior change associated with the crisis of the recent arrest.**

##### Screening Process

The screening process determines whether individuals are appropriate and eligible for the program based upon the target population criteria. Potential drug court participants screening should address both legal and the clinical components. Currently in Maryland, the Department of Juvenile Services performs this.

**Legal:** Criminal history, offense type, and severity

- The Department of Juvenile Services and the State's Attorney's Office traditionally handle this function; however, the Public Defender's Office, law enforcement, the drug treatment court coordinator or other court personnel also may conduct this assessment.

**Clinical:** Brief assessment of substance abuse, social history, and willingness to participate

- The Department of Juvenile Services generally performs this function; however the drug court case manager or the treatment provider can also conduct this assessment.

### ***Assessment Process:***

The purpose of the assessment is to match the drug treatment court candidate with the type of treatment services necessary to address needs of the youth while ensuring that the community is reasonably protected from the risk of further criminal behavior.

All candidates are assessed either before entry into the program or at treatment entry to develop individualized treatment plans to establish clinical appropriateness for the treatment provider. A clinically trained and qualified counselor, social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist should perform this assessment.

Assessments should culminate in a placement that is least intensive/restrictive first and then intensify as clinically indicated. Ongoing assessments, pursuant to accepted clinical practices, are necessary to monitor progress, to change the treatment plan if necessary, and to identify relapse.

Cultural proficiency is an important element of the assessment process and should be considered when engaging the respondent and motivate the individual to want to participate in the program and recognize the advantages it can provide in terms of recovery and life situation. Program staff involved in the assessment process should bear in mind that a significant number of respondents may distrust the justice system and not feel comfortable initially in becoming involved in a program as intensive and intrusive as the drug treatment court.

There are a variety of FDTC Models currently in operation. It is important for each jurisdiction to consider each of the models or some hybrid to determine what is the best model for their jurisdiction.

## ***6. Entry Process***

**Detailed procedures to identify and process respondents into the drug treatment court program are necessary to expedite the transfer of cases to the program while ensuring that legal safeguards and rights of the individual are preserved.**

The drug court team should answer the following questions:

- How will cases move through the drug treatment court system? What time frames will apply?
- What court events will apply? Will there be a need to create new court events? (e.g., initial program entry hearing, review hearings, etc.)
- How will terminations be handled?
- What mechanisms will be needed to promote early case screening and disposition?

## ***7. Incentives and Sanctions***

**Both positive and negative reinforcements help to develop the drug treatment court participant's sense of accountability and to encourage compliance with the program.**

### Incentives:

Criminal justice agencies traditionally have used punishment to negative behavior and rarely have used incentives to encourage positive behavior. Drug treatment courts use a variety of incentives to encourage positive behavior with a strength-based approach. The program also provides positive reinforcement to those who have rarely received praise. Drug treatment courts should identify and incorporate the strengths and past successes of the participants and build upon them. The program should look constantly for new ways to encourage participants to succeed.

Incentives might include:

- Applause and/or verbal accolades
- Earning points toward a reward
- Modifying treatment requirements
- Increasing the time between judicial status conferences
- Decreasing supervision
- Early termination from the program
- Waiving of program fees

### Sanctions:

Sanctions are immediate consequences for negative or inappropriate behavior. They demonstrate that participants will be held accountable for relapse and other programmatic and behavioral infractions. They are typically imposed during status hearings. Sanctions should be graduated and become more restrictive as the severity and frequency of infractions increase.

Planning sanctions in advance enables the team to have a rational response to participants who test the limits and boundaries of program rules or who are ambivalent toward treatment. They should be revisited after the program is operational to assess their effectiveness.

Immediacy of consequences is a critical factor in the effectiveness of both incentives and sanctions. Behavior is most effectively addressed when directly attributed to a specific action.

Sanctions may include:

- Increased urinalysis, supervision, or treatment
- Essay writing
- Community service
- Imposition of a curfew
- Courtroom/jury box detention
- Electronic monitoring and/or community detention
- Brief and immediate period of detention Termination from the program

## *8. Judicial Supervision*

**The focus and direction of a drug treatment court program are provided through the effective leadership of a single drug treatment court judge.**

- **Pre-hearing Staffings:** Staffings enable the drug treatment court team to discuss each case so that the judge will have a foundation for the recommendations made and as relevant background as possible to address each participant meaningfully at the court hearing.
- **Drug Treatment Court Hearings:** These hearings are conducted in open court to monitor respondents' participation and progress, and to alter case management plans as needed. Conferences generally occur every 2 to 6 weeks depending on the level of the respondent's participation, progress and addiction. Generally, they are more frequent at the initial stages of program participation. If necessary, the drug treatment court coordinator will summons the respondent to appear before the judge for an accelerated hearing.

## 9. Community Supervision

**The Department of Juvenile Services' Juvenile Counselors provide community supervision for all participants and monitor their compliance with conditions imposed by the drug court judge throughout the length of the program.**

Juvenile counselors apply different levels of supervision designed to help the participants combat their addiction and prevent relapse, as well as to obey the law and comply with program conditions. They maintain close contact with each participant through frequent office and home visits.

Juvenile counselors also will interact with the treatment team, family members, employers, schools, and social services agencies to implement the team approach to each participant's recovery. They also routinely coordinate, refer, monitor and help manage daily activities to ensure compliance and promote well-being. They often act as the liaison between local agencies and the drug treatment court program, striving to incorporate the community into each participant's treatment plan.

Juvenile counselors often provide community supervision for drug treatment courts, but this function can be served by other sources, such as treatment or the drug court coordinator.

## 10. Substance Abuse Treatment Services

**Treatment is an integral part of the drug treatment court program and its role is to provide counseling and techniques of self-examination that promote continued abstinence from drugs and alcohol.**

The program will be most effective if a seamless continuum of services is available and responsive to the needs of each participant. Most treatment programs attempt to accomplish this by varying structure, duration, and intensity of services. A continuum of service allows for placement of individuals recovering from substance abuse in a setting that is equipped to meet individual needs.

Ranges of treatment modalities to treat substance abusers are described below:

- **Early Intervention Services** – treats patients who may be in the early stages of alcohol or drug use. **Services include:** assessment, treatment planning, case management, group or individual counseling, and family services.
- **Detoxification Services** – monitors the decreasing amount of alcohol and other drugs in the body, manages withdrawal symptoms, and motivates the individual to participate in an appropriate treatment program for alcohol or other drug dependence.



- **Outpatient detoxification services include:** physical examination, medical evaluation, assessment, treatment planning, administering and monitoring medication, monitoring vital signs, discharge or transfer planning, and referral services. **Inpatient detoxification services include:** nursing assessment at admission, physical examination, addiction assessment, treatment planning, discharge or transfer planning, monitoring of vital signs, administering of medication, family services, alcohol and drug education, motivational counseling, and referral services.
- **Intensive Outpatient** – provides structured outpatient evaluation and treatment of patients who require programming nine or more hours weekly. Services include: assessment, treatment planning, case management services, individual counseling at least once monthly, and leisure and recreational activities.
- **Halfway Houses** – offers a living space, plus treatment services directed toward preventing relapse, applying recovery skills, promoting personal responsibility, and reintegration. **Services include:** case management, individual counseling at least once monthly, and leisure and recreational activities.
- **Long Term Residential Care** -provides structured environment in combination with medium intensity treatment and ancillary services to support and promote recovery. **Services include:** assessment, treatment planning, alcohol and drug education, individual counseling, leisure and recreation counseling, referral services, and assistance with vocational issues.
- **Therapeutic Community** – provides a highly structured environment in combination with moderate to high intensity treatment and ancillary services to support and promote recovery, and uses the treatment community as a key therapeutic agent. **Services include:** medical assessment, physical examination, assessment, treatment planning, medication monitoring, therapeutic activities which may include, individual and group counseling, alcohol and drug education, career counseling, nutrition education, and family services.
  - **Medically Monitored Intensive Inpatient Treatment (Intermediate Care)** – provides a planned regimen of 24-hour, professionally directed evaluation, care and treatment in an inpatient setting. **Services include:** weekly individual counseling, treatment planning, group counseling, alcohol and drug education, nutrition education, weekly family sessions, case management, medical evaluation, physical examination, medication monitoring, sub-acute detoxification, medical services, diagnostic services, and referral services.
- **Medication-Assisted Treatment** – uses pharmacological interventions such as methadone to provide treatment, support and recovery services to opium-addicted patients. **Services include:** medical assessment, physical examination, counseling, drug testing, medication administration and monitoring, and referral services.

### Accessibility

Accommodations should be made for persons with special needs, including but not limited to:

- Physical disabilities
- Language and fluency issues
- Literacy issues

Treatment programs, ideally, are located in areas that enable access to the support services and are accessible by public transportation, when possible. Treatment services also should be available during both day and evening hours.

### Cultural Proficiency

Treatment services must be culturally proficient (e.g., have both the staff and services that acknowledge the values and perspectives of the participant’s culture). “Culture” in its broadest sense encompasses gender, race, ethnic background, age, economic status, social status, etc.

## 11. Ancillary Services

**Most drug treatment court participants have other problems that contribute to addiction and require variety of other services to aid in recovery.**

Substance abuse treatment services may be limited in their impact if these services are not provided. Therefore, local officials will need to develop a range of support services that should be provided to participants such as:

- AIDS Counseling
- Anger Management
- Childcare
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Community Support Programs
- Educational Training
- Family Counseling
- Housing Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Life Skills Training
- Meditation or Yoga
- Money Management
- Parenting Skills Training
- Self-Help Groups
- Sexual, Emotional, Domestic Abuse Counseling
- Social/Athletic Activities
- Vocational Training and Placement

## 12. Case Management Services

**The function of case management services is to provide a central point for referral to an array of ancillary services to support drug treatment court participants in their substance abuse treatment.**

Most treatment providers limit their services to treatment. Therefore drug treatment courts may wish to designate an individual to serve as a case manager to oversee the treatment and other services relevant to each participant.

The case manager ensures that each participant receives appropriate services that are needed and can act as a liaison between the court, the participant, the other participating agencies, and service providers.

## 13. Alcohol and Other Drug Testing

**Frequent, random and monitored testing provides current information regarding participants' progress and holds them accountable for their actions.**

An effective drug treatment court program must have the capacity to:

- Conduct frequent and random alcohol and other drug tests of participants
- Obtain test results immediately
- Maintain a high degree of accuracy in test results

Substance abuse testing within a drug treatment court is designed to deter future abuse, to identify participants who are both maintaining abstinence or who have relapsed, and to guide treatment and sanction decisions. Research indicates that with greater frequency of tests, drug use declines substantially and the potential for both short and long term outcomes is increased.

Alcohol and other drug tests are most commonly conducted in probation offices, treatment agencies, and court offices. However, these tests can be conducted in any public location that will not conflict with public safety and participant's personal development, such as their home, school, or place of employment.

### ***Considerations in Selecting the Appropriate Testing Method***

To determine which testing method will best meet the needs of a particular drug treatment court program consider:

- The volume of tests that will be conducted
- The drugs that will be analyzed
- The number of trained individuals available to conduct the analysis
- The turnaround time needed for obtaining test results
- The need for confirmation of test results
- The quantification of levels of drugs required.

***For jurisdictions with limited resources that conduct a small number of tests (e.g., less than 10,000 annually), consideration might be given to:***

- Using an on-site, manual testing methodology for routine tests, with instrument confirmation and analysis conducted by an outside laboratory on an as-needed basis
- Identifying other entities that conduct drug testing and pooling resources to develop the most cost-effective strategy for meeting these multi-agency drug testing needs (State probation departments, for example, frequently conduct a high volume of drug tests for respondents under probation supervision and can add the drug court testing component to their existing operations.)
- Identifying other agencies that might be willing to join with the drug treatment court in developing a cost-effective drug testing capability

***Jurisdictions that decide to use on-site, manual testing methodologies, consider the following:***

- The efficacy of the test in accurately detecting the targeted drug(s)
- Policies regarding confirmatory testing (Will confirmations be made for all positive tests or only in situations in which the test result is challenged? Who will pay for the test if the positive test result is confirmed? Negated?)
- Special procedures for detecting adulteration
- Chain of custody procedures

### ***14. Graduation/Termination Criteria***

**Policies for successful completion of the drug treatment court program as well as unsuccessful terminations will need to be addressed prior to program implementation.**

### Typical Graduation Criteria

- Completion of established treatment plan
- Completing all other drug treatment court conditions
- Remaining drug and crime free for an established period of time prior to graduation date
- Successfully completing all phases of drug treatment court recommended treatment and aftercare
- Paying any outstanding court costs, fines, restitution, and/or program fees

### Graduation Ceremony

For many participants, completion of the drug treatment court program represents the first significant achievement of their lives. A graduation ceremony provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the success of the participants and of the program.

A graduation ceremony can be incorporated into the drug court docket or held separately. Regardless, consideration should be given to inviting relatives, friends, and support groups of the participant to the ceremony. Consideration also should be given to inviting a guest speaker to the graduation ceremony and allotting time for the graduates to speak. A certificate of graduation or other form of recognition is appropriate.

### Termination

Conditions for unsuccessful termination of the drug treatment court after graduated sanctions have been exhausted typically are:

- Continued non-compliance with treatment recommendations
- Failure to attend scheduled drug court hearings
- Continued non-compliance with supervision guidelines
- Arrest on a new charge which the program determines warrant termination
- Demonstrating violent behaviors towards self or others

### *15. Information System to Monitor Participant Progress and Program Operation*

**An automated management information system (MIS) facilitates the operation of the drug court and improves its functioning by compiling and making readily allowable ongoing information regarding participant involvement in the program, program operations, and other data.**

Having adequate and current information available on an ongoing basis relating to (1) participant information (e.g., demographics, program status, as well as their individual progress) and (2) program information (available treatment services and their utilization, funding sources, expenditures, etc.) is essential to enable the program adequately to monitor participant progress, oversee program operations, and periodically evaluate the programs' effectiveness and degree to which it is meeting its intended goals. MIS also offer an effective means to facilitate the exchange and sharing of information among team members, including criminal justice, substance abuse treatment, mental health, public health, social services, and family services agencies.

An effective MIS also will provide the data needed to assess the operation of the program and its accomplishments as well as make modifications as necessary.

MIS should be designed to provide a wide range of participant information, including the following:

- Screening and assessment information
- Demographic information (including employment, family, living situation, etc.)
- Dates and results of all drug tests
- Dates and attendance of all treatment sessions and other services scheduled for the participant
- Schedules of court hearings and actions taken at these sessions (e.g. sanctions imposed, incentives offered, conditions prescribed (e.g., look for work, etc.)
- Ancillary services being provided (e.g., housing, job training, etc.)

All drug treatment courts in Maryland will use the University of Maryland’s Institute for Governmental Services and Research’s Automated Management Information System (SMART) which is designed to allow for the entry and sharing of offender and client information across various organizational networks, while maintaining confidentiality requirements.

All drug treatment court programs in the State of Maryland will have access to SMART and will be provided with user accounts to access client records and enter client data. Access will be granted to authorized staff of each specific agency based on a consent process that is consistent with Titles 42 and 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

*16. Ongoing Program Review and Evaluation*

**Routine review of program operations is essential in order to manage and to modify as needed.**

Evaluations are critical to assess the operations of the program and to determine the accomplishments relative to the program’s objectives. An objective evaluation which examines important issues and concerns for the drug court’s stakeholders will support future funding endeavors, gain community support, and may facilitate passage of legislation to assist the drug court movement.

Several types of drug treatment court evaluations are utilized to assess the overall operational effectiveness and success of these programs and include:

**Process Evaluations**

- Documents how the drug treatment court program is currently operating and contrasts that with how it was intended to operate

**Outcome Evaluation**

- Assesses the effect of the drug treatment court program on the lives of the drug court participants after they have left the program, as compared with outcomes associated with more traditional criminal justice processing
- Focuses on a wide range of outcomes resulting for (1) the participant (e.g., abstinence, employment, family unification, etc.), (2) the criminal justice system (e.g., recidivism, criminal case processing efficiency, etc.), and (3) the larger community (jail utilization, public health, etc.)

**Cost Analysis**

- An economic analysis that contrasts cost and benefits to help determine whether the drug treatment court program warrants sustained or increased funding.
- It addresses the question of how the drug court compares with the costs for probation or incarceration, as well as other societal costs associated with crime such as, poor health, child welfare, workforce production, and consequences of continued substance abuse.

## Addressing Policy Issues

### 1. *Assuring Due Process*

**Drug treatment courts function within the traditional criminal case adjudication system, and therefore, must comply with constitutional, statutory and other provisions applicable to the criminal case disposition process.**

The drug treatment court program may alter traditional relationships among justice system officials and treatment providers. Respondents may waive certain rights in return for entry into a drug treatment court program; the fundamental rights of each respondent to legal representation and due process should not be jeopardized.

In particular, eligible participants should be assured the opportunity to consult with counsel prior to program entry and should be represented by counsel throughout the period of program participation. They should be clearly informed of the requirements of the drug treatment court program, including potential sanctions to which they may be exposed for noncompliance with program conditions. The drug court team should make relevant recommendations regarding participant placement, sanctions, incentives, etc., but all judicial decisions remain the responsibility of the judge.

### 2. *Confidentiality*

**The confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records is governed by Federal regulations 42CFR Part 2 and HIPPA regulations which cannot be disclosed without written consent of the participant unless otherwise stated in the regulations.**

Federal law and regulations do not protect any information regarding suspected child abuse or neglect from being reported under state law to appropriate state or local authorities. Other instances of mandated reporting are in case of emergency, threats to harm self or others or for research purposes.

### 3. *Relapse*

**Relapse is described as a series of behaviors that lead to and include the actual drug or alcohol use following a period of abstinence.**

Regardless of the care and effort made by the treatment provider and/or the participant, relapse often occurs and may be related to a variety of reasons including: client's history of physical, sexual or emotional trauma; environmental conditions; self-efficacy; co-occurring disorder and physiological state.

Relapse, although not condoned, generally is accepted as part of the recovery process and, although a judicial response should result, it is not, in itself, a cause for program termination, as long as the respondent continues to participate in treatment and complies with other program conditions. The drug court team should establish clear requirements for the number of relapse episodes that the court will tolerate and the court's response to each one. Rather than the typical criminal justice response to drug or alcohol usage, the primary response should be to enhance treatment, however, the use of graduated sanctions should be considered when appropriate.

#### *4. Alumni Activities*

**Alumni groups provide valuable support, continued structure, guidance, and networking opportunities for those who have already graduated and who are preparing for graduation.**

Alumni volunteers can assist the program as follows:

- Serve as mentors to new participants
- Serve as peer counselors on drug court hearing days
- Attend monthly meetings
- Plan social activities
- Facilitate relapse panels for current participants
- Develop and distribute newsletters
- Speak at graduations and host receptions
- Develop resource networks and support for alumni who may have relapsed or have other needs.

#### *5. Cultural Competence*

**Culture has been defined as “the shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people.” A person’s cultural affiliation often determines the person’s values and attitudes about health issues, and even the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. It also may influence a person’s willingness to participate and respond to treatment services.**

Cultural competence refers to a set of interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs and to work with knowledgeable persons in developing targeted interventions, communications, and other support.

A culturally competent program is one that demonstrates sensitivity to and understanding of cultural differences in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Culturally competent programs:

- Acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions
- Acknowledge and accept that cultural differences exist and have an impact on service delivery
- Believe that diversity within cultures is as important as diversity between cultures
- Respect the unique, culturally defined needs of various client populations

- Recognize that concepts such as “family” and “community” are different for various cultures and even for subgroups within cultures
- Understand that people from different racial and ethnic groups and other cultural subgroups are usually best served by persons who are a part of or understand their culture and recognize the potential impact of one’s cultural values on one’s response to the drug treatment court program
- Recognize that taking the best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all

## 6. *Media and Public Relations*

**Success of the drug treatment court, to a large extent, depends upon public awareness and acceptance.**

Public interest and media attention inevitably will be drawn to the drug court program. For this reason, a public relations strategy should be developed before the drug court even becomes operational. Community meetings, radio and television programs, legislative events, and public hearings provide excellent forums to educate the public, media, and legislature regarding the program.

The day the drug treatment court enters its first participant is usually the worst time for the drug treatment court team to manage media coverage. Challenges routinely surface at the start of the program and are better resolved away from media scrutiny. Since media will be aware of the drug treatment court prior to its actual implementation, a news conference should be scheduled as quickly as possible after, or even before commencement, to answer questions, and to discuss activities and access to the program in the future. Media kits, consisting of a Fact Sheet and other information regarding the program and the nature of substance abuse in the community, are helpful in disseminating information and are greatly appreciated by reporters.

The media also may ask to film or photograph a live session of the drug court or attend a pre-hearing conference. Great care should be exercised in granting such requests due to the participant’s rights to confidentiality. All effort should be taken to ensure the media “shades” the identity of the juvenile drug court participant when any filming is done. Since filming is prohibited in Maryland’s courts, consider the following alternatives:

- Stage mock courtroom proceedings.
- Allow several participants to be interviewed. (Be sure to secure 42 CFR confidentiality waivers prior to interviews.)

## 7. *Oversight Committees*

**Oversight committees provide advisory services regarding the design, implementation, operation, and improvement of the drug treatment court. In many instances, these committees also assist in gaining community support.**

The size of oversight committees varies and routinely includes the drug treatment court team. In addition, membership frequently includes representatives from the legal, medical, education, business, faith, and public health sectors of the local community, citizen representatives, local anti-drug initiatives representatives, and drug court alumni representatives.

The frequency of oversight committee meetings can vary, however, in the beginning, the meetings should generally be held fairly frequently.

The formation of other committees may also be necessary to address specific issues such as funding, evaluation, operational issues, public relations, and ancillary resources.



## 8. *Funding the Program*

**Securing stable and dedicated funding from a combination of local, state, federal, and private sources is a critical need of all drug treatment court programs.**

A comprehensive funding strategy should include identifying potential government and private sources at the national, state, and local levels. The type of information that needs to be obtained and distributed to funding sources should always demonstrate the worth of the drug treatment court program from a variety of governmental and social perspectives. Law enforcement agencies, for example, have been very supportive of drug courts, frequently providing funds from forfeitures and other sources.

### ***Consider:***

- Providing evaluation results for the drug treatment court program to show that the basic concept is viable and cost effective
- Emphasizing collaboration and development of alliances at local and state levels, and between local and state executive and legislative leaders
- Incorporating a fee schedule, which is commensurate with each participant's ability to pay; however, no one should be turned away solely because of an inability to pay
- Incorporating a community service component as part of treatment plan