



# drug courts:

## providing treatment instead of jail for non-violent offenders

Office of National Drug Control Policy 2008

President Bush has pledged to increase and expand treatment options for America's substance users. One aspect of increasing and enhancing that access to treatment is through Drug Courts. Drug Courts utilize the coercive powers of the criminal justice system to encourage drug addicts to abstain from substance use and alter behavior. Drug Courts do this through a combination of escalating sanctions, mandatory and random drug testing, and aftercare. The Courts have also proven to be tremendously successful. Since their inception in Miami, Florida in 1989, almost 2,000 drug courts have begun operating across the United States.

### Overview

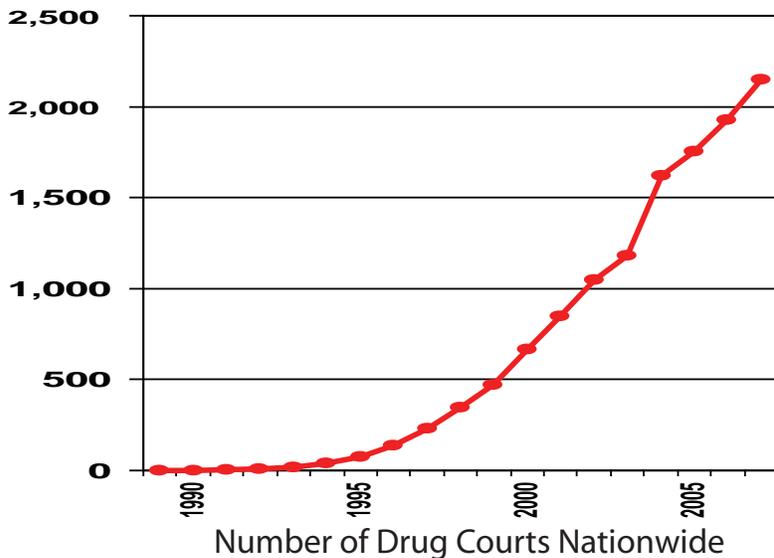
- Drug Courts are specialized, mostly locally-based and supported courts, dedicated to diverting non-violent, low-level offenders whose underlying problem is drug use away from prison and jail and into supervised treatment.
- The courts bring the judicial, law enforcement, and treatment communities, and other social and public services together through rigorous case management to address a participant's overall needs, be it education, housing, job training, mental health referrals, etc.
- Their end goal is to break an offender's drug-addiction, and in turn prevent future criminal activity, while simultaneously reducing the burden on America's courts, jails, and prisons.

### Drug Courts Save Lives

Drug court programs have a real effect on criminal recidivism. A National Institute of Justice study compared re-arrest rates for drug court graduates with those of individuals who were imprisoned for drug offenses and found significant differences. The likelihood that a drug court graduate would be rearrested and charged for a serious offense in the first year after graduation is 16.4 percent. at the two-year mark, the recidivism rate is just 27.5 percent.

### By the Numbers

- The drug court movement continues to grow rapidly. Since 1989, Drug Courts have been implemented or are being planned in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and more than 70 tribal locations.



- Nearly 40 percent of America's counties are operating or are planning to open a drug court. (NDCI)
- As of December 2007, there are 2,147 drug court programs in operation, and another 284 being planned or developed. (NDCI)
- The President's budget requests \$40 million within HHS treatment to support Drug Courts - a \$30 million increase.

Source: National Drug Court Institute, 2008

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