



Coconino County DUI Court Abatement Grant Evaluation

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Executive Summary

The Executive Summary reviews significant findings from each section of the Coconino County DUI Court program evaluation report. The report findings beginning in Section D explore these items in greater detail.

Stakeholder and DUI Court Team Member Interviews

- ❖ According to the key stakeholders and DUI Court team members, the primary goal of the program is to increase public safety regarding criminal offenses related to drug and alcohol addiction, this is to be achieved by increasing the number of participants in the program and providing tools for maintaining their sobriety.
- ❖ Stakeholders and team members collectively describe the DUI Court program as a positive, self-empowering, long-term tool that improves the quality of life for participants, their families/friends, and Coconino County as a community. Enhanced by staff dedication, the program encourages personal responsibility, provides mentoring and peer review, and sets people up for success rather than failure—two thirds of DUI Court participants (67%) have graduated from the DUI Court program.
- ❖ The ultimate beneficiaries of a successful DUI Court program are the communities of Coconino County. Those who immediately benefit are those within the DUI population who have a home or children to lose; those who hold multiple offenses or have health problems associated with substance use; and those who use both drugs and alcohol.
- ❖ Chronic DUI offenders who are treated in the CCDCA program are exclusively Coconino County residents. They are volunteer, non-violent offenders. They are users of drugs and/or alcohol who may have been charged for other offenses in addition to DUI.
- ❖ Stakeholders praise the intensity of commitment DUI Court team members demonstrate. They say participants are empowered by taking personal responsibility and benefit from the well-monitored, long-term, intense treatment of the program. Additionally, participant experience and sobriety is passed on to friends, family, and the community as a whole. Crimes associated with drug and alcohol offenses were reduced during the grant period.
- ❖ The primary weaknesses of the program, according to the DUI Court team and stakeholders, are lack of funding for staff and therapeutic resources, the impeding of the participant enrollment process due to multiple

charges/multiple hearings, and the time and staff power consumed with the transfer of cases from division to division.

- ❖ Challenges to the DUI Court program include insufficient full-time personnel, lack of funding for clients who require additional counseling and housing, consistency in attorney referrals, and program management cohesion.
- ❖ DUI Court stakeholders encourage collaboration among team members; they suggest reallocating funds to provide clients with essential services, provide the program with a full staff, and pay attorneys for court time. They also suggest institutional adjustments to participant fines and fees to ease their financial burden within the current ten month period.

DUI Court Staff Meeting Observation

- ❖ The team was observed to work effectively and efficiently. Cases are thoroughly reviewed and action is taken when team members reach consensus. Consistency is maintained with sanctions and rewards across participants who exhibit similar behaviors and attitudes.
- ❖ The team expressed interest in each participant's social support system, their medical and housing challenges, and inability to pay fines and fees, which can impede phase and program graduation.

DUI Court Hearing Observation

- ❖ All DUI Court participants are required to attend weekly court hearings in Flagstaff. Court was well-attended and participants respectfully engaged in the proceedings. Each participant heard by the DUI Court Judge was treated with consideration and firm direction.
- ❖ Participants demonstrate solidarity with the program and encourage each other in their long and short-term objectives.
- ❖ Clients who attain A-team status are praised publicly and rewarded with privileges and prizes. On the day of observation, a record number of participants (18) gained A-team status. Additional activities and outside supports are provided and encouraged.

DUI Court Participant Demographics¹

- ❖ Participants in the program are adults with the majority being between the ages of 18 and 34 (56%). The remaining participants (44%) are between the ages of 35 to 59. The large majority of clients are male (89%) with slightly more Native American participants (56%) than White participants (44%).
- ❖ Two-thirds of participants have acquired some college education (67%) and over half were employed (56%) at the time of their admission into the program. Fifty-six percent of participants reported their income as below \$10,000 annually. Two-thirds of the clients are married (67%), while twenty-two percent are divorced. Eighty-nine percent report having children.
- ❖ On average, the mental health status of participants has been described as devoid of mental health problems or suicidal ideations, although some participants reported experiencing anxiety, nervousness, and/or depression at the time of assessment. All participants in the sample population have been diagnosed with alcohol dependence (according to the Diagnostic Statistics Manual IV, section 303.90).
- ❖ Half of the CCDCA program participants (50%) report a history of familial alcoholism. Another thirty-eight percent are unsure of their families' past behavior. The mean age of participant first intoxication is 15, and the mean age of heaviest alcohol use is 28 years.

Secondary Data (Data provided by the DUI Court Program)

- ❖ Public safety increased during the funding period. Out of 2,388 drug tests, only 50 (2%) yielded positive results. Thirteen participants were sanctioned for driving without a license.
- ❖ Sustained sobriety was achieved by fourteen participants who were able to remain clean and sober from the time of their DUI Court admission through graduation.
- ❖ There were 68 total participants (40 new) at the end of the fourth quarter of the funding period—an average of 10 new clients per quarter.
- ❖ The objective was to provide a long-term continuum of treatment and support services for participants. Over the one-year funding period, individual treatment occurrences totaled 2,465; support group meetings totaled 3,138.

¹ *This summary of participant information was gathered from the random sample of nine client files.*

- ❖ Program accountability was upheld by mandating weekly participant appearances before the DUI Court Judge. During the one-year grant period, a total of 142 sanctions were set by the DUI Court Judge.
- ❖ During the funding period participant arrest data was checked and documented to measure recidivism reduction. A total of seven arrests occurred by the end of the four-quarter report period. During the funding period 13 participant probation violations were documented.
- ❖ The total number of documented prison days saved is 5,520, indicating the reduction of prison overcrowding by non-violent, felony DUI offenders.
- ❖ Ninety percent of the DUI Court participants were required to work or attend school full-time (in contrast to 56% employment rate at the time of client admission). At the end of the grant period the average employment rate was recorded in excess of 90 percent.
- ❖ Services specific to the cultural needs of Native Americans were developed. These included programs by NACA (Native Americans for Community Action), sweat lodges for men, and culturally specific program manuals.
- ❖ DUI Court grant goals were met on ten of eleven objectives (see grant proposal). The total number of DUI offenders was not increased by 40 percent, although an increase was reported for each quarter of the grant period and a 24 percent total increase was achieved.