



ARKANSAS JUDICIARY

Published on *Arkansas Judiciary* (<https://courts.arkansas.gov>)

Drug Court Programs

What is the Division of Drug Courts?

Nationally, drug courts first began in Dade County (Miami), Florida, in 1988, in response to the massive clog in the criminal court system created by the increase in illicit drug use and the resultant overcrowding of the prison system. The first court in Arkansas was piloted in the 6th Judicial District (Pulaski County) under the guidance of then-Chief Justice Jack Holt and former Sixth Circuit Judge Jack Lessenberry in 1994. Funding for this court was provided by the federal Department of Justice and the Arkansas Department of Health.

There are now 39 drug court programs functioning throughout the state of Arkansas. Some are pre-adjudication venues while others are post-adjudication. Some are a combination of both. This varies based on the particular needs of the community in which the court program is established.

Drug court programs are an interdisciplinary, non-adversarial judicial process for diverting an offender (or alleged offender) who has a demonstrated dependence on alcohol or an illicit drug, into a strenuous treatment program that includes frequent drug testing, required employment, treatment and counseling and regular court appearances to monitor program compliance. Drug courts are typically staffed by a team consisting of the judge and court staff, a prosecutor, a public defender or private attorney representing the offender, a probation or parole officer and drug counselor. Treatment services are provided through community providers. Most treatment programs last an average of eighteen months.

Although data in Arkansas is limited, initial reports indicate that drug court programs are cost effective and do save the state in incarceration costs. It costs approximately \$4.50 per day for an offender participating in a drug court program. By contrast, the average cost per day for incarceration in Arkansas is \$45.00. The treatment program in drug court averages eighteen months while the length of incarceration is frequently much longer. In addition, many participants perform public service in their communities while maintaining employment during the treatment program, thus avoiding additional welfare costs and foster care expenditures by the state in support of their families. The final savings is realized in the improved health of the participant once they have successfully transitioned from drug or alcohol dependency to a healthier lifestyle.

For additional information about Arkansas Drug Courts, contact Kari Powers, State Drug Court Coordinator, Administrative Office of the Courts, 1-800-950-8221, or kari.powers@arcourts.gov ^[1].

Attachment

Size

 88th General Assembly Legislative Report on Drug Courts ^[2]	1.09 MB
--	---------

Attachment	Size
 Legislative Report ^[3]	2.49 MB
 89th General Assembly Legislative Report ^[4]	426.74 KB
 Annual Report to the Arkansas General Assembly - 2014 ^[5]	1.02 MB
 Membership Application Form 2016 ^[6]	219.3 KB
 2016 Conference Registration Form ^[7]	153.45 KB
 Arkansas Specialty Court Best Practices Assessment Report ^[8]	1.67 MB

Source URL: <https://courts.arkansas.gov/courts/circuit-courts/drug-court-programs>

Links:

[1] <mailto:kari.powers@arcourts.gov>

[2] <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/Binder1.pdf>

[3] https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/Legislative_Report.pdf

[4] <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/89th%20General%20Assembly%20Legislative%20Report%209-13-2013.pdf>

[5] <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/Annual%20Report%20to%20the%20Arkansas%20General%20Assembly%202014.pdf>

[6] https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/ADCPA%20Membership%20Application%202016_0.pdf

[7] <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/ADCPA%20CONFERENCE%20REGISTRATION%20FORM%20-2016.pdf>

[8] <https://courts.arkansas.gov/sites/default/files/tree/AR%20Statewide%20Best%20Practices%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>