
Recidivism Rates of Missouri Adult Drug and DWI Court Program Participants

Introduction

There are no national standards defining how to determine recidivism rates for treatment court participants. The purpose of this report is to define how to measure the recidivism rates of Missouri's adult drug and driving while intoxicated (DWI) court program participants.

Methods

Regardless of how recidivism is determined, it is important to define what is being measured. The elements that need to be defined include: ⁱ

1. Who is being tracked?
2. What is being tracked – how to determine if a new offense has occurred?
3. What timeframe is being used for measurement – the starting and stopping events need to be defined:
 - a. During the treatment court program?
 - b. After treatment court program exit and for how long after program exit?
4. What is the source of the data being used?

These elements are used to define and measure recidivism rates for Missouri adult drug and DWI court program participants as follows:

Who is Being Tracked?

- The cohort is defined as a group of participants who entered the treatment court program between October 1, 2008, and September 30, 2011, and who exited the program due to graduation, termination or voluntary withdrawal. These are the same exit status groups currently included in the treatment court graduation rate calculations.

If the cohort is defined as a group who exited the program at the same time it would include individuals who entered in different time periods and therefore may have experienced different judges, other treatment court team members and potentially different services. ⁱⁱ

- If an individual has more than one treatment court case during the reporting period, the last disposed case is used when determining whether or not the individual has recidivated and should be counted as a graduate or a terminated participant.

- No adjustments are made to the size of the cohort for participants who committed new crimes while still participating in a treatment court program, even though there may be a period of time when the participant is unable to commit a new offense due to being incarcerated.

What is Being Tracked?

- Recidivism is defined as any plea or finding of guilt for new felony or misdemeanor ‘A’ charges that occur during a specified period following exit from the treatment court program. Charge level is used to determine if the new charges meet the criteria. Including all misdemeanor ‘A’ charges ensures that new DWI and possession charges count as recidivism. Traffic offenses are also included if at least one of the charges meets the charge level criteria.

What Timeframe is Being Used for Measurement?

- The time to recidivate is the length of time between the end of the treatment court case and the date the new offense occurred (Judicial Information System (JIS) charge date). The JIS charge date is used because it is closer to the actual arrest date than the charge file date (date charges are filed) or the filing initiation date (the date the case is filed). If there is an associate level case, then the charge date of that case is used to define the time to recidivate. A charge that is bound over to the circuit level that does not yet have a plea or finding of guilt is not counted as recidivism at this point.

The recidivism rate is the number of participants with a new plea or finding of guilt divided by the total number of participants who graduated, terminated or voluntarily withdrew from the program during the reporting period.

What is the Source of the Data Being Used?

- The search for new recidivating cases is statewide, across all circuit databases in JIS, based on a match of participant party IDs.

Results

Recidivism rates of adult drug and DWI court program participants are presented in Table 1. A three-year rate is given for adult drug court and DWI court. Participants who exited after December 31, 2013 were not included in the cohort in order to provide a three year window to track outcomes.

Several participants have cases bound over to the circuit level that do not yet have a plea or finding of guilt. These are not counted as recidivism in this analysis. The rates shown in Table 1 can be expected to increase when the charges for these cases are disposed.

Table 1
Recidivism Rates of Missouri Treatment Court Program Participants

Program	Exit Status	# of Exits	Percent with New Plea or Finding of Guilt Within		
			1 Year of Exit	2 Years of Exit	3 Years of Exit
Adult Drug Court	Grad.	2625	4.5%	8.6%	11.2%
	Term.	2074	9.9%	18.6%	23.0%
	Total	4699	6.9%	13.0%	16.4%
DWI Court	Grad.	705	2.0%	4.1%	6.2%
	Term.	140	5.0%	12.1%	17.1%
	Total	845	2.5%	5.4%	8.0%

New charges as of January 26, 2017, when JIS data was extracted.

End Notes

This analysis identifies the parameters needed to complete an accurate recidivism assessment of Missouri drug and DWI court program participants. Recidivism calculations should be replicated periodically to search for new criminal charges and for dispositions on previously identified charges that did not have dispositions when this data was extracted. Due to these factors, the rates shown in Table 1 can be expected to increase over time.

ⁱ Caroline Cooper, Research Professor and Director, Justice Programs Office, School of Public Affairs, American University, e-mail to Angela Plunkett, September 23, 2013.

ⁱⁱ Shannon Carey, Ph.D., Co-President, Director of Development, NPC Research, e-mail to Lisa Wilcox, November 14, 2014.