



Restoring Lives, Reuniting Families and Making Communities Safer!

Program Design

The Drug Treatment Court (DTC) Program has been operating as an innovative and non-traditional court sponsored program aimed at stopping the cycle of alcohol and other drug abuse related to criminal activity since 1995. The program offers substance addicted offenders charged with non-violent offenses an alternative to incarceration. Program participants are held accountable for their behavior in a rehabilitative environment that provides a holistic approach to substance abuse while ensuring the safety of the citizens of Mecklenburg County. Funding for DTC has come from a mix of State and County sources.

- **Adult Drug Treatment Courts:** There are six Adult Criminal DTCs (1 Superior Court, 2 District Courts, 2 DWI and 1 Mental Health Court), which continue to increase the number of participants served each year.
- **Family Drug Treatment Courts:** The F.I.R.S.T. Program is a collaborative effort of the Court, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Youth and Family Services Division, and the Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health Authority. This Program coordinates and monitors the delivery of substance abuse treatment services to all parents involved in the dependency process.
- **Youth Treatment Court:** The YTC program in Mecklenburg County is designed to effectively and efficiently address adolescent mental health and/or substance abuse issues by offering participants immediate access to treatment services, case management and increased monitoring.

Support for Drug Courts

I believe that we need to help those addicted to drugs and alcohol, not simply throw them in jail without any sort of treatment program . . . not only does the program work, but it saves thousands of dollars per offender each year in prison costs alone, not to mention the societal costs saved by having one less drug user on the street.

- Vice President Joseph Biden

Drug usage of offenders participating in drug court programs is substantially reduced when they are in the programs, and [for] most participants who complete the program, drug use is eliminated altogether – let us get that message out to Congress, to state legislatures, to cities, county commissioners – treatment does work.

- Former Attorney General Janet Reno

As a judge, it is indeed heartening to see people with severe drug and alcohol problems come into our drug courts, matriculate through a rigorous program, and then graduate with what is effectively a new life ahead of them. Not only do these courts reduce recidivism for these offenders, but also they give them and their families a new life.

- The Honorable Thomas F. Moore
District Court Judge

[DRUG COURT WORKS!](#)

North Carolina's Drug Treatment Courts (DTC) began in Mecklenburg County 14 years ago (February 1995). These vital programs have been so successful that they have now grown to more than 41 adult, youth and family treatment courts throughout the state. Nationwide, there are now over 2,300 Drug Treatment Courts. During FY 2007-2008, North Carolina Drug Treatment Courts admitted more than 1,000 participants. On average, 40 percent of the participants in Drug Treatment Court graduated successfully. Of those who exited, 60 percent remained in treatment for more than six months.

[DTC Facts - Recidivism](#)

- 84% of criminal offenders in the justice system are drug and/or alcohol involved. Most are addicted.
- 75% of repeat offenses by addicts are prevented by participation in Drug Treatment Court.
- Over 75% of abuse and neglect cases have parental drug and/or alcohol abuse as a major cause.
- An independent evaluation of NC DTCs shows that DTC graduates are rearrested at half the rate of non-graduates. 18% of DTC graduates were rearrested in the 12 months after discharge compared to 44% of the comparison group. In Mecklenburg County, the recidivism rate was even lower at 11%.

[DTC Facts - Cost Effectiveness](#)

- Incarceration of drug-using offenders costs between \$23,000 and \$50,000 per person, per year.
- A series of national studies have also shown that for every dollar invested in these programs, savings between \$3.00 and \$7.00 have been realized.
- More importantly, though, are the human and societal benefits. In 2008, the S.T.E.P. Program had a total of six drug free babies born to participating mothers. That equates to \$750,000 - \$1.4M saved for every baby born.

[Recent Mecklenburg DTC Program Accomplishments](#)

- In December 2002, the DWI Treatment Court was awarded the *Adjudication Award* by the National Commission Against Drunk Driving and MADD.
- After launching The National Center for DWI Courts in May 2007, the NCDC and Beam Global Spirits and Wine, Inc. recognized the DWI Treatment Court as an effective solution for DWI offenders.
- The National Drug Court Institute has recognized the DWI Treatment Court and FIRST Program as model courts.
- The FIRST Program received the 2003 *Pioneer Award* from the Chemical Dependency Center and was recognized as a program of excellence by the NC Council of Community MH/DD/SA Programs.
- The FIRST Program received recognition by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts as an "*Exemplary Family Court Program.*"
- In 2007, The North Carolina Conference of Court Administration recognized the FIRST Program for its "*Meritorious and Exemplary Service Toward Improving Justice in the Court System of North Carolina.*"