

# Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation

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# ***Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation***

**January 2003**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The current evaluation describes the implementation of the Christian County Juvenile Drug. To this end, data were collected on court operations and participants and were examined in accordance to how effectively the 16 Strategies (OJP, 2001), a set of standards defining effective Drug Court operations, were implemented by this court. Process evaluation methods included interviews with Drug Court team members, participant observation, a focus group, and a review of program documentation. The conclusion of this report is that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court is in compliance with the 16 Strategies specifically:

### **Strategy #1. Collaborative Planning – Engage all stakeholders in creating an interdisciplinary, coordinated and systemic approach to working with youth and their families.**

Findings from staff/team interviews and from the participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team members have formed a cohesive unit that involved community-based stakeholders during the planning and implementation stages of the Drug Court process. The Drug Court planning team includes representatives from various local agencies who work together to develop policies and procedures regarding Drug Court operations. The planning team and the policies that are written ensure program collaboration, participant accountability, and effective program evaluation.

### **Strategy #2. Teamwork – Develop and maintain an interdisciplinary, non-adversarial work team.**

Findings from the focus group and from the participant observation showed that members of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team work efficiently together and collaborate when making decisions about participants. Observations and interviews by University of Kentucky researchers indicated that prosecutors, defense attorneys, and treatment professionals on the team communicate well with one another, therefore maximizing the efficacy of the program. The opinions of all team members are equally respected, thus ensuring the promotion of public safety and protection of each participant's rights.

### **Strategy #3. Clearly Defined Target Population and Eligibility Criteria – Define a target population and eligibility criteria that are aligned with the program's goals and objectives.**

Findings from the focus group and from staff/team interviews showed that the target population and eligibility criteria established by the Drug Court team are appropriate and well-defined. Team members have utilized data regarding various aspects of the community as well as assessed local resources in order to correctly identify juveniles who might benefit from the program. Eligibility criteria have been established and incorporated into a written set of guidelines so that each potential participant may be effectively screened. In this way, the Drug Court team is able to consistently target and screen possible candidates and in turn monitor the ever-changing needs of the participants, the Drug Court process, and community stakeholders.

### **Strategy #4. Judicial Involvement and Supervision – Schedule frequent judicial reviews and be sensitive to the effect that court proceedings can have on youth and their families.**

Findings from the participant observation and subsequent interviews showed that judicial involvement and supervision is highly regarded in the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program. During court sessions the Judge relates well to each participant and takes an obvious interest in their lives. Between court sessions the Judge stays in contact with staff and team members to remain updated on

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation participants' progress. The judge provides a well-balanced atmosphere of legal supervision and personal relationship with the participants.

**Strategy #5. Monitoring and Evaluation – Establish a system for program monitoring and evaluation to maintain quality of service, assess program impact, and contribute to knowledge in the field.**

Findings from staff/team interviews and from the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug court team effectively monitors and evaluates the program. The Drug Court team has contracted with the Center on Drug and Alcohol Research at the University of Kentucky to perform an independent, external evaluation.

**Strategy #6. Community Partnerships – Build partnerships with community organizations to expand the range of opportunities available to youth and their families.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and from the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has forged partnerships with the community in order to offer as many support services as possible. Recreational opportunities, educational programs, and community service work are integrated to provide assistance for all participants. The team has successfully enlisted support from various community resources such as the Animal Shelter, the school system, and Pride, Inc.

**Strategy #7. Comprehensive Treatment Planning – Tailor interventions to the complex and varied needs of youth and their families.**

Findings from the participant observation, focus group, and staff interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has met the diverse needs of participants and their families. By using tools such as the initial assessment (Addiction Severity Index) and Individualized Program Plan (IPP) staff members are able to address the special needs of each participant and their family. Each participant's IPP is reviewed several times throughout the course of the program and plans are modified if necessary to best meet the needs of the participant. The effectiveness of the program is increased by this individualized treatment-based approach.

**Strategy #8. Developmentally Appropriate Services – Tailor treatment to the developmental needs of adolescents.**

Findings from the focus group, staff interviews, and the participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has based their program on developmentally appropriate methods. The program caters to the needs of the juvenile population by adapting treatment sessions to meet the significant issues that are current in the lives of the adolescents. Services such as this provide participants with opportunities and encouragement to successfully complete the program.

**Strategy #9. Gender – Appropriate Services – Design treatment to address the unique needs of each gender.**

Findings from the focus groups and staff interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has recognized the need for gender-appropriate services and has thereby initiated certain program characteristics to accommodate these differences. Inpatient treatment sessions are used to accommodate specific gender issues when necessary. By tailoring their approaches to gender-specific issues the team is able to develop appropriate relationships with each participant and deliver treatment that is beneficial to both males and females.



**Strategy #10. Cultural Competence – Create policies and procedures that are responsive to cultural differences and train personnel to be culturally competent.**

Findings from the participant observation, team interviews, and the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has demonstrated cultural competence by sending team members to training conferences where cultural issues are taught. Team members also make efforts to learn about the participant's background and interact with family members in order to gain an understanding of the youth's culture. These actions reflect the team's awareness of the importance of cultural issues, help strengthen relationships between the participant and the staff, and effectively address the needs of both the participant and the family.

**Strategy #11. Focus on Strengths – Maintain a focus on the strengths of youth and their families during program planning and in every interaction between the court and those it serves.**

Findings from the participant observation, focus group, and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team focuses on the individual strengths of each participant and their family throughout the duration of the Drug Court program. As part of the initial assessment (AIA), the Drug Court team includes a "Strengths Assessment" questionnaire, which helps the participant to concentrate on his/her accomplishments and successes. This approach begins the participant's program with a strength-based perspective and prepares the participant to accept a more responsible role in the community. This strengths-based approach also aides in creating bonds between the participant and his/her family and helps the family provide support to the child during the program.

**Strategy #12. Family Engagement – Recognize and engage the family as a valued partner in all components of the program.**

Findings from the focus group, participant observation, and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program recognizes the importance of family roles and support in the treatment of the juvenile participant. Members of the Drug Court team understand that family members can influence the juvenile to make important choices throughout the duration of the program. Therefore, the team makes every effort to engage the family in all components of the program. In the Christian County program parents or other family members are required to attend and participate in court sessions. Participants and their family are also required to attend family treatment sessions. The Drug Court team also uses the initial assessment and other tools to evaluate the role of each family member and the dynamics between the family and the participant. By involving the participant's family members during the Drug Court program the participant's progress is enhanced and the family relationship is strengthened.

**Strategy #13. Educational Linkages – Coordinate with the school system to ensure that each participant enrolls in and attends an educational program that is appropriate to his or her needs.**

Findings from the focus group and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program has a strong relationship with the local school system including guidance counselors and teachers. This enables them to closely monitor the participants' attendance, grades, and teacher assessments. Because team members stay in contact with school officials they can quickly address any issues that might arise in order to best meet the needs of the participant. Each participant is required to attend school or to work toward a GED. The Drug Court also works with community resources such as day treatment, continuing education, and workforce development in order to help participants with continuing educational and vocational needs.

**Strategy #14. Drug Testing – Design drug testing to be frequent, random, and observed. Document testing policies and procedures in writing.**

Findings from the focus group and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program performs frequent, random drug tests to all participants throughout the duration of the program. Participants must test negative for eight weeks before they become eligible to graduate. Participants must undergo drug testing a minimum of three times per week in Phase I, two times per week in Phase II, and once per week in Phase III. Additional tests are administered if team members think it is necessary. The first drug test is given after the initial assessment (Addiction Severity Index) is completed. The integrity of the drug tests is maintained by observing all urine drops and testing for evidence of tampering.

**Strategy #15. Goal-Oriented Incentives and Sanctions – Respond to compliance and noncompliance with incentives and sanctions that are designed to reinforce or modify the behavior of youth and their families.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program has one system for graduated sanctions that applies to all participants. These sanctions include community service, decreased curfew, detention and placement into residential treatment. Although they have specific sanctions in place, the Drug Court may adjust the sanction in order to better address the participant's non-compliant act. Incentives are also given based on clean drug tests, exceptional school performance, group leadership and positive attitudes. The Christian County Drug Court awards gift certificates, a plaque for the participant of the month, and milestone coins order to recognize the participants' success. Sanctions and incentives are consistent and fair and are given immediately in order to help the participant understand that his or her actions lead to corresponding reactions.

**Strategy #16. Confidentiality – Establish a confidentiality policy and procedures that guard the privacy of the youth while allowing the drug court team to access key information.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team members have designed policies and procedures to protect each participant and their family members while in the Drug Court program. Participant files are kept in a locked storage area and computer records are protected by passwords. Court sessions and staffing meetings are closed in order to ensure the maximum amount of privacy for the participant and his or her family members.

**History and Background**

**Need for Juvenile Drug Courts**

Between 1989 and 1998, national juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 86% and arrests for curfew and loitering violations increased 178% (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs, OJJDP, 1999). An estimated 2.6 million juvenile arrests were made in 1998, which accounted for 18% of all arrests in 1998 (OJJDP, 1999). In addition, juveniles were involved in 13% of all drug abuse violation arrests in 1998 (OJJDP, 1999). In the majority of sites reporting on drug use among juvenile arrestees, more than half of the juvenile males tested positive for at least one drug (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring System, 1999).

Substance use for adolescents is in many ways normative behavior (Kaminer and Tarter, 1999). By age 18, almost 80% of youths in the U.S. report having drunk alcohol, 64% report smoking cigarettes, and 50% report using marijuana at least once (Johnston et al., 1996). For adolescents, drug and alcohol abuse reduces motivation, interferes with cognitive processes, contributes to mood disorders, has implications for immediate and long-term physical health, and increases the risk of accidental injury or death (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Paglia & Room, 1998). In addition, early substance use and abuse is associated with a variety of other risk factors including early and frequent sexual intercourse (which is associated with STDs, HIV, and unwanted pregnancies) as well as delinquency and later criminal activity (Ball et al., 1982; Dembo et al, 1991; Elliott, Huizinga, & Menard, 1989; Jessor & Jessor, 1977; Speckhart & Anglin, 1985; Watters et al., 1985). For society at large, adolescent substance abuse is related to a high cost in health care, educational failure, mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, and juvenile crime. Treatment for juvenile delinquency has not been overwhelmingly successful. For example, Lipsey (1992) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of juvenile delinquency treatment and found that overall there was a modest treatment effect, but there were certain circumstances in which treatment was much more effective than others, although the circumstances of effectiveness were not readily apparent. In response to juvenile delinquency and substance abuse, and to

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the search for better outcomes with juvenile populations more than 140 juvenile drug courts have been established across the nation since 1995, and more than 125 are currently being planned (Cooper, 1999; 2001). However, juvenile drug court models are still being established, and it is not clear what works best in a juvenile drug court. Because the field of juvenile justice is in a constant state of flux, evaluation efforts clearly are needed to provide “snapshots” of established juvenile drug courts. **Therefore, the focus of the current report will be to provide a detailed description of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court and to describe preliminary outcomes of participants seen in this program.**

**This report will meet these 2 objectives:**

- 1. Provide an in-depth description of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court. This will include summarizing program goals, components, structure, procedures and process, and caseload.**
- 2. Describe program outcomes, summarizing the impact of the Drug Court on the lives of its participants. Measures will include treatment retention, arrests and re-incarceration, drug use, employment, sanctions, and phase promotions.**

### **Drug Courts in Kentucky**

The motto for Kentucky Drug Court is “A chance...a change.” Kentucky’s Drug Court is aligned with hundreds of Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts in operation across the United States. The mission of Kentucky’s Drug Court is to create a criminal justice environment that stops illicit drug use and related criminal activity and promotes recovery and resocialization.

Juvenile Drug Court in Kentucky is grounded in the 16 Strategies described in the publication Juvenile Drug Courts: Strategies in Practice (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2003). These Strategies were developed by the Drug Court Standards Committee to ensure that a core set of standards were defined for all Drug Court programs (Table 1) to follow. The Strategies were adapted in order to better fulfill the needs of a juvenile drug court. In exchange for successful completion of the Drug Court program, the Judge may choose to dismiss the participant’s original charge, reduce or set aside a sentence, offer a lesser penalty, or use a combination of these rewards. Drug Court transforms the roles of both criminal justice

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation practitioners and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment providers as they collaborate with each other in an attempt to help the adolescent offender learn to live drug-free, crime-free prosocial lives. A balance is struck between the need for intensive supervision (ensuring public safety and offender accountability) and focused treatment on the many treatment needs evident in adolescents who abuse drugs. Family therapy, drug problem therapy, relapse prevention, anger management, stress management, education, employment, life skills, structure, responsibility, accountability, and impulse control are only a few of the areas that Juvenile Drug Court must address in order to have a favorable impact on the juvenile offender, and the community as a whole. The Judge is the central figure in the Drug Court, which is a team effort that focuses on participant sobriety and accountability as its primary goals. As the central authority figure for the team, the Judge acts as both “parent,” advocate, and instructor. This fundamentally shifts the relationship between the Judge and the participant from being an “adversary” and punisher, to being a “mentor” and socializing agent.

**Table 1. Drug Court Strategies**

1. Collaborative Planning – Engage all stakeholders in creating an interdisciplinary, coordinated and systemic approach to working with youth and their families.
2. Teamwork – Develop and maintain an interdisciplinary, nonadversarial work team.
3. Clearly Defined Target Population and Eligibility Criteria – Define a target population and eligibility criteria that are aligned with the program’s goals and objectives.
4. Judicial Involvement and Supervision – Schedule frequent judicial reviews and be sensitive to the effect that court proceedings can have on youth and their families.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation – Establish a system for program monitoring and evaluation to maintain quality of service, assess program impact, and contribute to knowledge in the field.
6. Community Partnerships – Build partnerships with community organizations to expand the range of opportunities available to youth and their families.
7. Comprehensive Treatment Planning – Tailor interventions to the complex and varied needs of youth and their families.
8. Developmentally Appropriate Services – Tailor treatment to the developmental needs of adolescents.
9. Gender-Appropriate Services – Design treatment to address the unique needs of each gender.
10. Cultural Competence – Create policies and procedures that are responsive to cultural differences and train personnel to be culturally competent.
11. Focus on Strengths – Maintain a focus on the strengths of youth and their families during program planning and in every interaction between the court and those it serves.
12. Family Engagement – Recognize and engage the family as a valued partner in all components of the program.

**Table 1. Continued**

13. Educational Linkages – Coordinate with the school system to ensure that each participant enrolls in and attends an educational program that is appropriate to his or her needs.
14. Drug Testing – Design drug testing to be frequent, random, and observed. Document testing policies and procedures in writing.
15. Goal-Oriented Incentives and Sanctions – Respond to compliance and noncompliance with incentives and sanctions that are designed to reinforce or modify the behavior of youth and their families.
16. Confidentiality – Establish a confidentiality policy and procedures that guard the privacy of the youth while allowing the drug court team to access key information.

Source: Bureau of Justice Assistance (2003, March). Juvenile Drug Courts: Strategies in Practice.

### **History and Development of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court**

In Christian County, during Fiscal Year 1999, a total of 125 adolescents in Christian County were arrested for drug and alcohol offenses: 64 were arrested for narcotic drug offenses; 43 were arrested for driving under the influence; 6 were arrested for liquor laws, and 12 were arrested for drunkenness.

(Crime in Kentucky – Commonwealth of Kentucky 1999 Crime Report)

The Christian Juvenile Drug Court program received a planning grant in April of 2000. The Drug Court Judge, along with the representatives from Department of Juvenile Justice, and other local officials, initiated the planning grant application. Community linkages were established with the local schools, the Health Department, and local employers in order to prepare an effective Drug Court program.

The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court differs from Adult Drug Courts in Kentucky in its focus on the special needs of drug-involved adolescent offenders. This program must address the special needs of this group, which include: (1) the negative influences of peers, gangs, and family members; (2) the needs of the family, especially families with substance abuse problems; (3) confidentiality requirements for juvenile proceedings while obtaining information necessary to address the adolescent's problems and progress; and (4) motivation for juvenile offenders to change, especially given their sense of invulnerability and lack of maturity.

## **PROCESS EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **Interviews**

A set of interview instruments that collected both quantitative and qualitative data from key drug court stakeholders was used during this process evaluation (see Logan, Lewis, Leukefeld, & Minton, 2000). These interviews were conducted with, (1) judges, (2) drug court staff, (3) prosecutors, (4) defense attorneys, (5) treatment providers. The Drug Court Judge Interview assessed level of prior experience with the target population, the perceived potential impact of the drug court on the community and judicial system, who determined program eligibility, overall capacity, the consequences for failing the program, the services needed, the planned level of supervision, and the types of graduated sanctions and rewards used. The Drug Court Coordinator Interview is a comprehensive questionnaire which was completed with a drug court coordinator and detailed the specific operational characteristics of the drug court program. Specific sections highlighted the target population, program goals, program organization and function (e.g., recruitment, capacity, assessment, services), supervision practices, staff characteristics, and community organization involvement. The Drug Court Staff Interview gathered detailed data about the roles and treatment orientation of the drug court staff members. The Prosecution and Defense Interviews focused on perceived benefits, level of understanding of what the new program will include, level of commitment to help make it work, and perceived problems it might cause. The External Treatment: Interview helped to pinpoint what types of treatment services were offered and through what avenues.

### **Court Observation**

Two researchers from the University of Kentucky observed one Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Session, providing two unique observations of the operations of this court. Data were coded using a protocol developed by Satel (1998) during a national study of 15 adult Drug Court programs. This allowed for a systematic description of the interactional (exchanges between the judge, court staff, and participants) and environmental (physical characteristics of the setting) variables of the drug court session.

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The method involved coding the session on 17 specific characteristics that focused upon the interaction between the Drug Court judge and participants (including eye contact, physical proximity of the judge to the participant, who the judge first addresses, whether each participant remains present in the court room throughout the entire session, and time spent with each participant) and the court room setting (including seating arrangements and ambient noise level). In addition, Drug Court staff was asked to rate how typical the observed session was for regular court operations. Findings suggested that these observed sessions were typical of court operations, with program staff indicating high level of agreement that the court status hearing was typical. A copy of the observation code sheet is included in Appendix A.

### **Monthly AOC Statistical Reports**

The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court makes monthly reports to the Administrative Office of the Courts. These reports summarize the number of candidates referred, the number assessed, the number of individual drug screens, number of candidates eligible, and the number transferred from probation. Also reported are the number of participants receiving phase promotions or demotions; the number of court sessions; the number of participants identified as using an illicit substance based on urine drug screens; the number of individual sessions; the number of drug sessions; the number of family/support sessions; the number of participants referred to outside agencies; employment and educational status of participants; number of employment and housing verifications, amount paid toward court obligations; the number of sanctions, the number of participants rearrested for new charges; the number of terminations; and the total number of active participants in the preceding month. For the current evaluation, the monthly statistics reports covering July 2001 through June 2002 were reviewed and coded for data.

### **Program Documentation**

Several sources of program documentation also were reviewed for the process evaluation. These included copies of the grant application submitted by each court for funding, handbooks provided by each drug court to its participants to outline the design and expectations of the program, and the policy and procedure manuals for each court. In addition to these, monthly administrative reports from the program



Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation to the Administrative Office of the Courts were reviewed. Each report summarized the monthly activities of each drug court, including case flow, number of treatment sessions held, number of court sessions, and graduation and terminations from the program in the preceding month.

### **Focus Group and Logic Model**

A focus groups also was conducted during the process evaluation with drug court team members. The goal of the focus group session was be to synthesize a comprehensive description of program elements for this drug court using a “logic model” approach. A preformatted logic flow model (adapted from Harrell, 1996) was be completed during a researcher-led focus group to help drug court staff to articulate specific goals, outputs, and activities for their Drug Court, with special emphasis placed on identifying links between specific program activities and their influence on the stated goals and objectives.

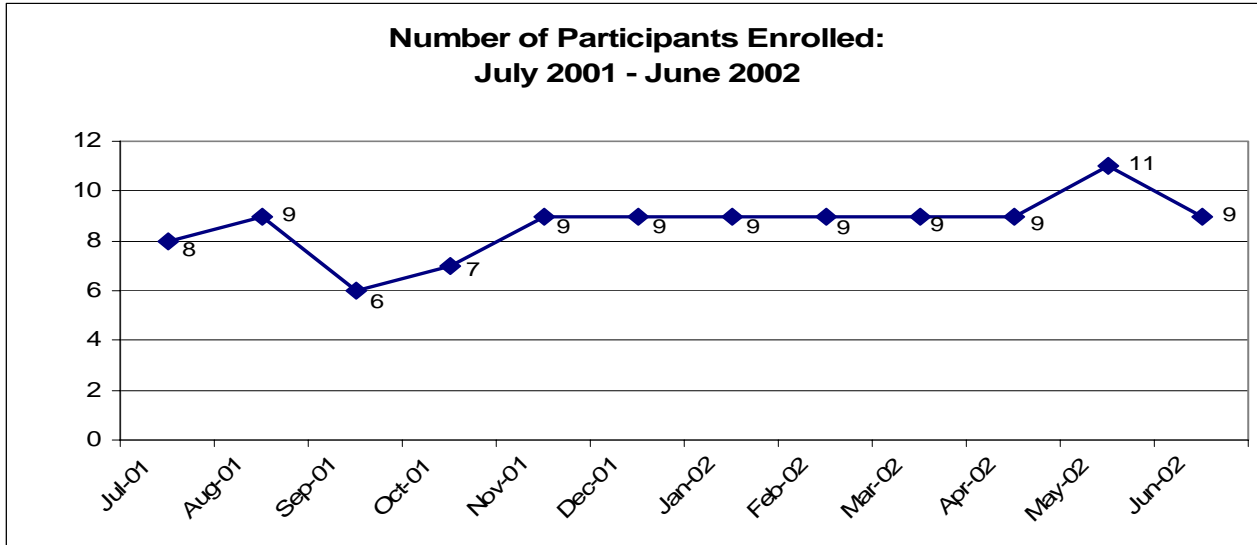
## **FINDINGS: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### **Drug Court Program Structure and Processes**

**Location.** The Christian County Drug Court program will serve residents in the Christian County district. Christian County is located in the Penny Rile region of the state. Population estimate for the county in 2000 was 72,265. In 2000 approximately 28.3 percent of the population was under 18, with 70% Caucasian, 24% African American, 4.8% Hispanic, and .9% Asian. In 1999 a total of 125 adolescents in Christian County were arrested for drug and alcohol offenses: 64 were arrested for narcotic drug offenses; 43 were arrested for driving under the influence; 6 were arrested for liquor laws, and 12 were arrested for drunkenness.

**Capacity and caseflow.** The Christian County Drug Court has treatment slots available for up to 20 participants. Currently the Christian Drug Court has 9 active participants. **Three of these participants are female (two Caucasian females one African American females) and seven are male (Caucasian male and four African American males).** Participants enter the program after being assessed as eligible for the Drug Court and there currently is no waiting list.

**Figure 1**



**Drug Court staff and team members.** The Christian County Drug Court currently has two full time employees. There is one Treatment Coordinator and one Case Specialists on the Drug Court team. The Drug Court Treatment Coordinator is primary responsibility is case management, while the Case specialists assist with case management. Both of the staff members are full time employees, and manage an average of 10-15 cases per person. The Drug Court Judge volunteers his time to the program, and works approximately 3 hours per week on Drug Court cases. The group team also includes a representative of the Division of Juvenile Justice, County Attorney, Public Defender, Police Officer, County Clerk, Treatment Provider, and a representative of Day Treatment.

**Referral, eligibility, and admission procedures.** Participants are referred into the program through the prosecutor informing the defendants, defense counsel informing the defendants, and the judge informing the defendants, brochures inviting arrestees to apply, and word of mouth between inmates. When a potential participant is referred into the program either the Drug Court Treatment Coordinator meets with them to begin to prepare a report about their eligibility to participate in the Christian County Drug Court program. The Adolescent Intake Assessment (AIA) is used to assess eligibility of each of the potential participants. The AIA is administered in the Drug Court office. The assessment is done within one week of the judge’s referral of a potential participant.

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To be eligible for the Christian County Drug Court program, youths must be assessed on certain inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. Participants must be under the age of 18, have committed a public offense, have substance abuse issues, have transportation readily available, and be a resident of Christian County. The Christian County Drug Court will not accept a youth who has committed a violent or sexual offense, status offenders, or a youth that will turn 18 before the time frame that is needed in order to complete the program. Once a youth and their legal guardian(s) are determined eligible for the Drug Court they are required to sign a written agreement of participation.

**Phase structure.** Like all Kentucky Drug Courts the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court is divided into 3 distinct phases, each with a separate set of goals, procedures, and strategies for reaching these goals. A general overview of these 3 phases (including drug court sessions, treatment activity, and supervision level) is presented in Table 2. The total minimum expected duration of the participants' stay in Drug Court is 9 months, but many participants take much longer than this to finish the program.

Generally, as participants move through the three Drug Court phases, the number of court sessions that they are required to attend decreases, as does their level of supervision. Participants in Phase I are required to attend Court sessions once a week. Participants in Phase II are required to attend Court sessions once every two weeks, and participants in Phase III are required to attend Court sessions once every three weeks.

The number of support groups that participants are required to attend also is dependent on their treatment phase. During phase I participants will attend at least six treatment sessions per week, including five group sessions and one individual session. As the participant progresses through the program the number of required treatment sessions is reduced. In addition to treatment and urine supervision, other expectations include participation in a 12-step group like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and/or Narcotics Anonymous (NA), school attendance or work toward a GED.

**Table 2. Phase Structure**

Phase I:

Minimum Requirements

(Can be completed in two (2) months)

1. Attendance at all assigned individual, group, and family counseling sessions.
2. Provide all assigned drug screens, which reflect no use of drugs or alcohol.
3. Attend weekly Court sessions.
4. Attend community support groups as required by the treatment program, the Juvenile Drug Court staff and, or the Juvenile Drug Court Judge.
5. Maintain Court approved employment, vocational training, and or regular school attendance.
6. Comply with any necessary referrals made by the treatment program, the Juvenile Drug Court staff and, or the Juvenile Drug Court Judge.
7. Remain Drug and Alcohol free.
8. Curfew will by 8 p.m. Weeknights and 10 p.m. weekends (Friday and Saturday)

Phase II:

Minimum Requirements

(Can be completed in four (4) months)

1. To attend one Juvenile Drug Court session every four weeks.
2. To provide all assigned drug screens each week, which reflect no use of drugs or alcohol.
3. To attend community support meetings as required by treatment program, the Juvenile Drug Court staff and, or the Juvenile Drug Court Judge
4. To attend all assigned group, family and individual counseling sessions.
5. To develop a payment plan and begin making payments to satisfy any Court related financial obligations, such as restitution, public defender fees, treatment fees, etc.
6. To maintain Court-approved employment, training and or education.
7. To comply with any necessary referrals, by treatment program, the Juvenile Drug Court staff and, or the Juvenile Drug Court Judge.
8. Remain Drug and Alcohol free.
9. Curfew will be 9 p.m. on weeknights and 11:00 p.m. on weekends (Friday and Saturday).

Phase III:

Minimum Requirements

(Can be completed in three (3) months)

1. To attend on Juvenile Drug Court session every four weeks.
2. To provide all assigned drug screens each week, which reflect no use of drugs or alcohol.
3. To attend community support groups as required by treatment program, the Juvenile Drug Court staff and, or the Juvenile Drug Court Judge.
4. To attend all assigned group, family and individual counseling sessions.
5. To continue making payments to satisfy Court related financial obligations such as restitution, public defender fees, treatment fees, etc.
6. To maintain Court-approved employment, vocational training and or school attendance.
7. To obtain/maintain an approved mentor or NA/AA sponsor and maintain regular contact.
8. Remain Drug and Alcohol free.
9. Curfew will be 10 p.m. weeknights and 11:30 p.m. on weekends (Friday and Saturday).

Completion of each phase is based on your performance. The Juvenile Drug Court Judge will promote or demote you according to your progress with recommendations from the Juvenile Drug Court Staff.

**Program goals.** The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court has many goals and objectives for their program. The team’s hopes are to stop illegal activity, substance use, improve educational levels, and decrease recidivism. Court dockets, criminal history, school records, and urine analysis will be used in order to measure if the goal is being met by the Drug Court program. Other goals of the Drug Court program are presented in table 3.

**Table 3. Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Goals**

1. Provide treatment and other services to appropriate nonviolent, substance-abusing juvenile offenders and their families.
2. Provide a judicially supervised program to appropriate nonviolent, substance-abusing juvenile offenders and their families.
3. Divert appropriate juvenile offenders from the traditional juvenile court delinquency proceedings.
4. Promote public safety by contributing to a reduction in recidivism among participating youth.
5. Reduce reliance upon secure detention while promoting intense supervision of participating youth.

**Graduation.** The Judge has the discretion to determine who should graduate or be terminated from the Drug Court, and his decisions are based on input from the rest of the team. Participants are recommended for graduation from the Drug Court after they have been in the program for at least 9 months, have actively participated in the program, successfully completed all three program phases, maintained stable living conditions, provided clean urine screens for eight weeks, and are caught up on their fee payments.

Graduation occurs once every 3 months. The participants are able to invite anyone to their graduation. Family and friends are welcomed. The Graduations are held in court room, and a guest speaker is invited to speak. The participant is given a plaque, and a T-Shirt. After the ceremony everyone is invited to a reception in honor of each graduate. Once the participant graduates their charges will be dismissed.

**Program rules and termination from Drug Court.** Each new drug court participant and their family is given a Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Participant Handbook at program entry that details the operations of the program, policies and procedures, rules, and what each participant can expect and what is expected in return. Rules are important for many reasons. They impose a structure (often unfamiliar to participants) to the lives of the participant, help ensure the safety of the staff and participants, show participants that society follows a social order, and help the program to run more smoothly and not seem arbitrary. Table 3 presents the statement of the rules imposed on the participants when they enter drug court. Failure to follow rules can and frequently does result in the imposition of a disciplinary sanction and also can result in the expulsion of the participant from the program (for either serious infractions or for repeatedly breaking rules). When a participant is in no-compliance with the program rules, they can be terminated from the program. Upon termination the participant will return to Juvenile Court for further disposition and their sentence will be re-evaluated. Violence, mistreatment of any of the Drug Court team member, consistent dirty drug screens, and new felony charges filed prompts termination.

**Table 4. Participant Rules**

1. Appropriate clothing is expected at all times. You must wear a shirt or blouse, pants or skirt, and shoes. Sunglasses will not be worn inside the Juvenile Drug Court Office or Court. Clothing bearing drug or alcohol related themes, or promoting or advertising alcohol or drug use is not allowed. No gang colors or gang clothing shall be worn at any time. No gum chewing in court. No use of tobacco.
2. You and your family must attend all scheduled counseling sessions, urine tests, educational sessions, and Court sessions, unless you obtain prior approval. You must arrive on time and not leave until the meeting is over. If you are late, you may not be allowed to attend the session and may be considered absent. Arrangements must be made to make up missed groups before your next court appearance.
3. The following actions will not be tolerated:
  - a. Violence or threats of any kind
  - b. Use and or possession of drugs and or alcohol
  - c. Belligerent behavior
  - d. Possession of any type of weapon
  - e. Inappropriate sexual behavior or harassment
4. Your friends, including children, cannot loiter on the premises. If they are providing transportation, they should simply drop you off and pick you up at the end of the session. Your immediate family (mother, father, guardian or the person with whom you are living) will be required to attend all Court sessions and family counseling sessions.
5. You may not carry cellular phones or beepers/pagers to court or group sessions. You may not carry cellular phones or beepers/pagers unless approved by the Drug Court Staff.
6. All participants must notify staff of any arrest (within 24 hours) or court obligations.
7. The program shall comply with the Kentucky law regarding the reporting of cases of abuse or neglect of minors. The program shall also comply with Kentucky law regarding the reporting of cases of abuse and neglect of adults. Federal law and regulations do not protect any information about suspected child abuse or neglect from being reported under state law to appropriate state or local authorities.
8. You will be expected to maintain appropriate behavior at all times during permitted to show support and encouragement to fellow participants by applause, but only during appropriate times. Your behavior is indicative of the progress you and your fellow participants are making toward your recovery.
9. All participants will be given curfew times. The Juvenile Drug Court Judge or staff must approve the only exceptions. If you work later than these hours, you have a 30-minute leeway to get home.
10. Any violation of Drug Court rules will cause the issuance of a Detention Order or a summons for a Drug Court appearance at the next available Drug Court.

**Drug Court Program Elements**

Drug Courts include a general set of components designed to engage participants in treatment while supervising their progress. Central to this effort is the coordination of these major program

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation components, including Drug Court sessions, treatment, supervision, and other resources. Through a team effort marshalling these aspects of the Drug Court program, the judge, Drug Court staff, and treatment and service providers can directly address the central goals of the program (described above, Table 3).

**Court Sessions.** Court sessions are held every Thursday at 1:00 pm at the Christian County Court House. Prior to all sessions the staff meets in a conference room in the Court House for “staffing”. Staffing lasts for approximately one hour during which the progress of each participant that will appear in court is discussed. The Judge reviews the progress notes of each participant with the 14 other staff members. The staff members present at staffing included a representative from Christian County Day Treatment, the Police Department, the Division of Juvenile Justice, and Pennyroyal Regional Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board. Also present at staffing was the Court Liaison, Clinical Director and Therapist from Cumberland Hall, two Public Defenders, the County Attorney, the Juvenile Clerk, the Court Designated Worker, the Case Specialist, and the Drug Court Administrator. These staff members assisted the judge in his decisions on which sanction and rewards will be given to each participant. The judge reviews each participant and then additional input is given from the staff. It was evident that the team and Judge worked together closely to make recommendations for particular participant cases, including when a participant will be ready to be promoted to the next phase, if and what type of sanction or reward should be used, unmet service needs, and clinical and professional opinions regarding strategies that could be used to help the participant to progress in their treatment goals.

A summary of the observations by researchers from the University of Kentucky is provided below to give a detailed picture of how a Drug Court session is organized and conducted. The ambient noise level was low throughout the drug court session. Participants and their family members enter the court room as a group and in no particular order. Each participant remained throughout the entire Drug Court session. The judge addressed the case specialist first who stood at a podium in front of the Judge. The case specialist gave a review of the participant’s weekly progress. The participant and their family member stood at a podium in front of the Judge. The podium was located 14 feet from the judge’s bench.



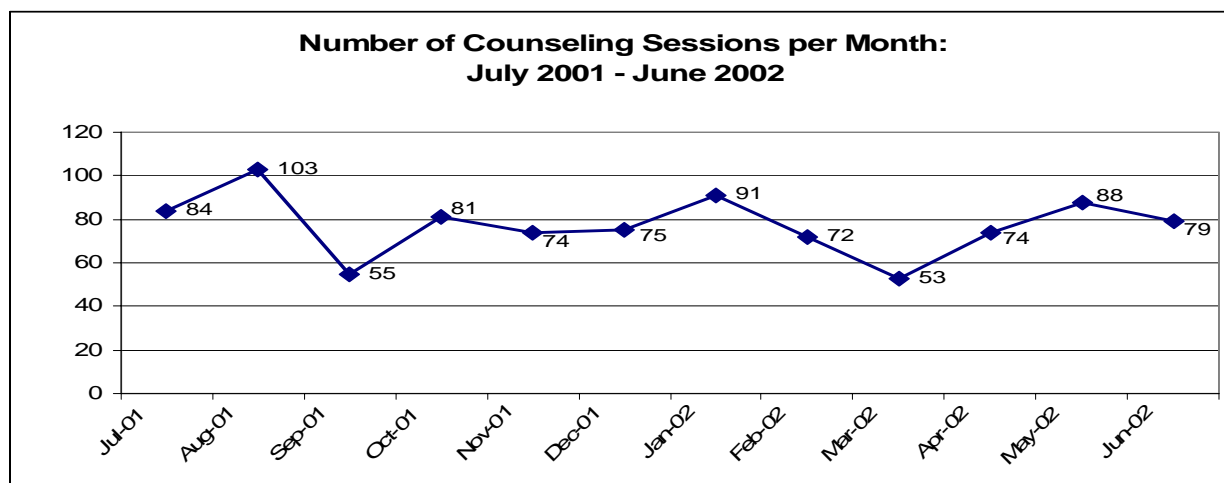
## Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation

The judge remained seated on the bench throughout the session. The Treatment Administrator and one Public Defender sat at the table of the defense. The participants sat in two rows of benches that were located in the back of the courtroom. A microphone was present on the podium which the participant stood at, however it was not turned on. The judge addressed family members when pertinent. The judge sustained eye contact with the participants and family members throughout each session. The program has developed a fixed sanction algorithm, but these sanctions are not set in stone. During the court session there were no participants who were being reviewed on short notice. After viewing one session, researchers witnessed a total of 4 participant sessions. The average individual session length was 8 minutes. Individual session lengths ranged in length from 21 to 1 minute. The variance in the time of each session was in result of one participant arguing with the Judge about Drug Court requirements. The number of times participants appear in court each month varies depending on their phase level and varies from once a month to every week. The judge and participants addressed the gallery frequently throughout the Drug Court session.

**Treatment.** The first key element of Drug Courts, "...integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing," is implemented at the Christian County Drug Court program to help juveniles to recover from their drug problems and to cease criminal behavior. The Christian County Drug Court program uses Pennyroyal Regional Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board, Inc. as the primary treatment provider, along with other secondary treatment providers such as Cumberland Hall, Sivley House, and Alliance Counseling. The main philosophy and or focus of the treatment are to address abstinence, personal responsibility, and accountability. Treatment also teaches participants how to resolve conflict, interact with peers, and how to say no to drugs. The Drug Court places a strong emphasis on recovery and lifestyle change. Data from the Monthly Statistics Reports suggest that Juvenile Drug Court participants are receiving fairly intensive treatment services. Analyses combining group, individual, and family/support sessions (summarized in Figure 2) showed that the

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation  
fewest number ( $\underline{n}$  =53) of treatment sessions were provided in March of 2002, and the greatest number of sessions ( $\underline{n}$  =103) were given in August of 2001.

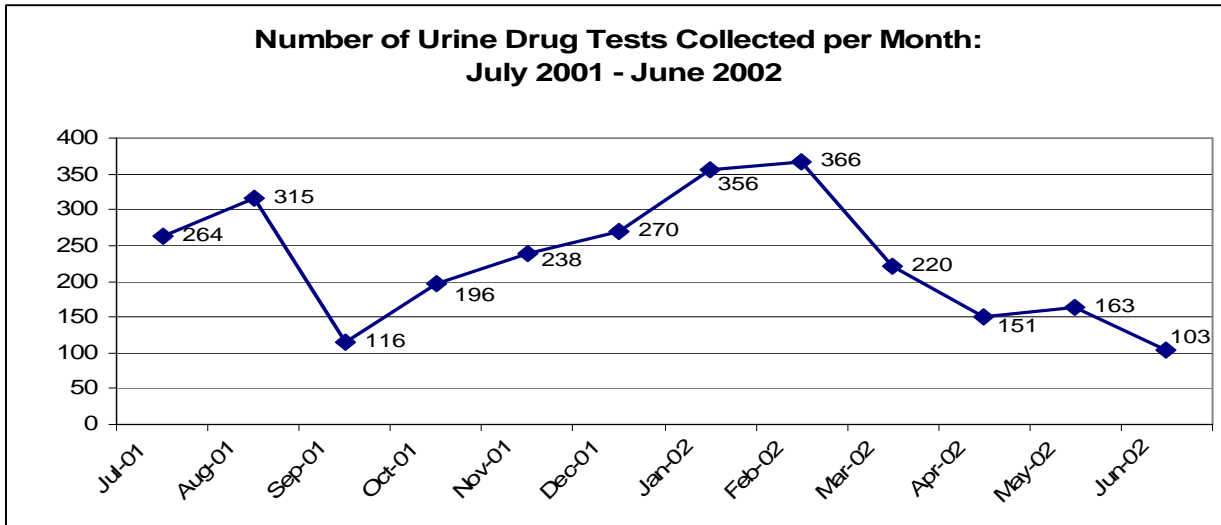
**Figure 2.**



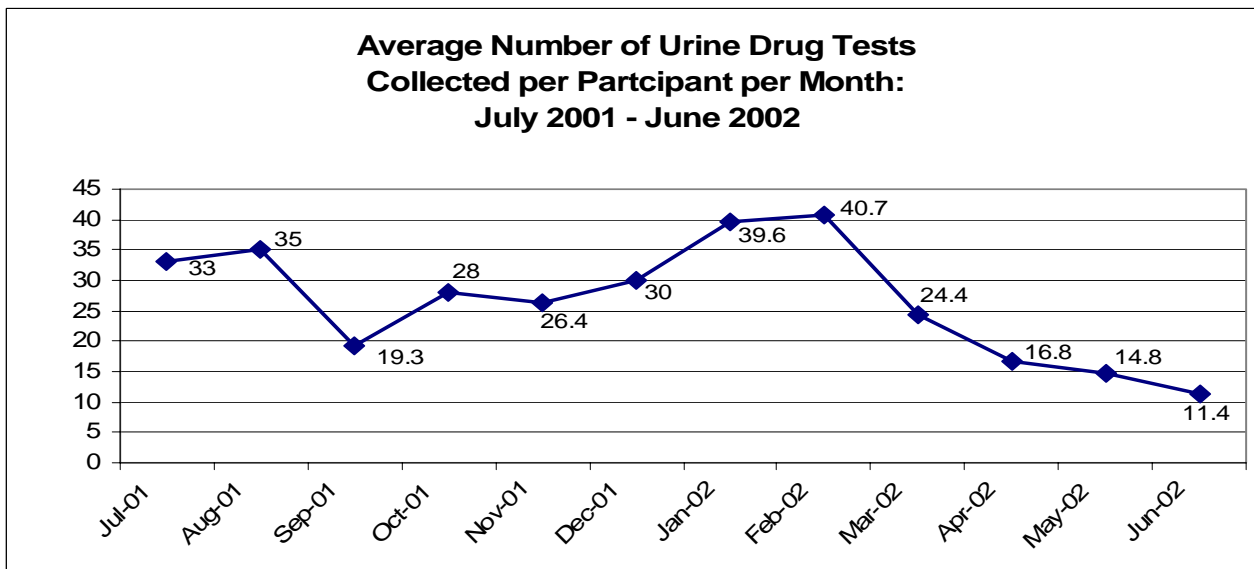
**Supervision.** Treatment and supervision are two of the essential features of the Juvenile Drug Court. The combination of these two aspects of Drug Court intervention has been repeatedly shown to be effective for offenders in criminal justice-based treatment (Nurco, Hanlon, Bateman, & Kinlock, 1995). The offender supervision component of the Drug Courts is reflected in the fifth, “Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing” and seventh “Ongoing judicial interaction with each Drug Court participant is essential” key elements of Drug Courts described in Table 1 (see page 16). Observation of a court session by researchers from the University of Kentucky showed that the Judge paid careful attention to urine drug test results, and reviewed these with participants during the court session. Data from the Monthly Statistical Reports showed that the juveniles in the Drug Court appeared to be well-supervised. Urine supervision was frequently used, with a total of 2758 urines collected (an average of 229 urine screens were conducted each month). As shown in Figure 3, the fewest ( $\underline{n}$  = 103) urine screens were collected in June of 2002, and the most ( $\underline{n}$  = 366) urines were collected in February 2002. While urine analysis are a significant way to look at overall supervision level, it should be noted that urine-screening requirements decrease as participants are promoted to higher phases, and the participants’

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation phase was not considered in these analyses. Thus, the number of urines per participant described in the graphs below underestimates the intensity of supervision provided.

**Figure 3.**



**Figure 4.**



**Sanctions and Rewards.** The Drug Court program has a sanction algorithm which dictates which sanctions will be given for each infraction (see table 4). However, there are situation in which the program deviates from the fixed sanction, therefore the sanctions are not set in stone. The entire Drug Court team has input into sanctions, however the Judge will make the final determination of which

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation sanction will be used. Dirty urines, missing work, not completing community service, not completing assignments, being late to Drug Court sessions, and non-compliance with the Drug Court program a prompt the use of a sanction. Sanctions include detention (which varies depending on the severity of the act), phase demotion, additional drug screens, additional treatment, placement in residential treatment, and termination from the program.

Participants gain rewards by being compliant with the program rules and showing significant progress in treatment goals. Rewards are promoted by clean drug screens, standard compliance with Drug Court rules, phase promotions, school awards, and extra initiative. Rewards that are typically used for the participants' progress are phase promotion, acknowledgment of participant of the month, gift certificates, and the participants will earn more respect from the Judge as well as the entire Drug Court Team.

**Table 5. Christian County Drug Court Sanctions List**

1.	1 <sup>st</sup> Missed/Positive Screen:	4-8 hours community service
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Missed/Positive Screen:	Detention: one weekend
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Missed/Positive Screen:	Detention: one week
	4 or More Missed/Positive Screens:	Detention: 10 Days
	<b>Note:</b> Positive Screens may substitute Detention for Treatment	
2.	1 <sup>st</sup> Missed Group/AA/NA/Meeting:	Make up with another group or 5 hours community service.
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Missed Group/AA/NA Meeting:	Make up with another group AND 5-10 hours community service.
	3 or more missed Group/AA/NA/Meetings:	Detention
3.	Failure to Complete assignments:	Extra assignments and reading. 2 Hours community service
	<b>Note:</b> If assignments are not turned in during court, participant has until 4:00 pm (on the same day) to bring them to the Drug Court Office	
4.	Failure to complete ordered community service:	Additional hours of community service or detention with work release to perform community service.
5.	Failure to obtain or remain in Drug Court approved housing:	Cooperate with Drug Court staff in locating approved housing. Temporary living arrangements at an approved shelter or halfway house.

**Table 5. Continued**

6.	Loss of job	Given 1-2 weeks to find a new job. Community service until a job is found. If in Phase II or III, possible demotion of phase.
7.	Turning self in late to jail:	Extra days in custody.
8.	New offenses while in Drug Court:	Judge review on a case by case basis.
9.	Failure to appear for court or jail:	Warrant Issued.
10.	Tampering with Urine Screen:	Possible Termination
11	Absconding from Drug Court:	Warrant Issued

**Community Service.** Community service is used mostly as a sanction fro the participants in the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court. Those participants who do not attend school year round must either have a job or they will be required to do community service hours. Participants may be required to do community service at the Animal Shelter, Pride Incorporated, Day Treatment, or the school system. Community services helps encourage the youth to be productive members in their society.

**Family Involvement.** Family involvement is an integral part of the Christian County Drug Court program. Family members must cooperate with the Drug Court program rules. If they chose not to cooperate, the Drug Court Judge may sanction them. Parental sanctions range from fines to confinement in the Christian County Detention Center.

**Logic Model of the Drug Court Program.** The logic model is one method for describing a program in a standardized manner (Harrell, 1996). The Logic model of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court (see figure 2) was completed during a research-led focus group with team members. The *target population* for this program is drug-involved youth between the ages of 15 and 17 years old. The staff members also indicated that they do not accept kids with violent offenses, and status offenders. The Drug Court does not accept a juvenile with a history of drug trafficking. The staff indicated that a potential participant must have transportation in order to meet all program requirements.

## Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court has access to a variety of *available resources* whose roles are to provide positive interventions for drug-involved youths and their families. The Drug Court uses Pennyroyal Behavioral Health as their primary source for substance and mental health treatment. Additional resources are also available to the Christian County Drug Court. Staff indicated the Day Treatment Program, Alliance Center and Cumberland Hall as important resources for the program. Staff also indicated the public school system as a resource, and JAP which is a program in which participant get help in order to obtain a GED and a job. The Drug court also uses Hopkinsville Community College as a resource for vocational training. The Christian County Drug Court also receives donations from community businesses. Wal-Mart donates gift cards, and various other community members donate tickets to shows or games. The Department of Juvenile Justice DJJ is an agency that the Drug Court uses as a referral resource.

Staff identified many *participant background characteristics* of the Christian County Drug Court participants. The majority of the target population has experienced minimal supervision in the home, and neglect. Staff members said that “one usually will not find a strong support system within the family.” Team members indicated that a history of substance abuse is common within the family of the Drug Court participants. Staffs identified the participants as having a negative attitude throughout the start of the program. Staff said that “the majority of our participants are street smart, because most juveniles can’t get into the drug world without an appropriate level of street smarts.” Staff said that the participants in the program come from various socio-economic levels and they have “all types of kids in the program, but if anything the Drug Court lacks participants from the upper middle class.” Gang activity was indicated as a participant background characteristic which “causes friction between participants from different gangs who have to associate with one another in order to meet all the Drug Court requirements.”

The Christian County Drug Court utilizes a variety of *treatment activities*. Random drug and alcohol testing is one of the most important treatment activity within the Christian County Drug Court. The participants are also required to regularly appear in court in front of the Judge. Other treatment

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation activities include various types of therapy including group, individual, and family counseling. The participants are required to attend AA/NA meetings, and participate in physical activity. The Drug Court plans mandatory recreational activities for the participants which include “fun thing like bowling, pizza parties, and haunted houses; the more recreational activities we do with the participants the better they seem to do in the program.” The Drug Court presents tokens of sobriety to each participant as a treatment activity. Staff indicated that “the coin doesn’t work for everyone, but for some of the participants they are of huge importance.”

The *initial goals* of the Christian County Drug Court are for the participants to develop into “a well rounded productive individual.” The team hopes to “introduce the participants to new cultural things in order to help them develop into a well rounded individual.” The Drug Court team has the participants “help with the planning of activities in order to teach them responsibility and time management and aid them in their journey to become productive members in the community.” The team also indicated having no school absences, curfew violations, and general violation of program rules as initial goals for each participant. The team hopes to “teach the kids that every action has a consequence either positive or negative.”

The Christian County Drug Court team indicated *other factors* which influence their Juvenile Drug Court. Staff said that there is a lack of support from the family members of the participants and living arrangements for the participants are not always positive. The team members indicated the need to build stronger ties between the Drug Court and the public and educate the community about the program in a positive manner. The staff expressed concern for the denial of the drug problems among the community and said that “the community tries to push the drug problem on the back burner; they know it is happening but they don’t want to admit it.” The also indicated the new drug trends such as OxyContin and Ecstasy as a factor which is of concern in their program.

The *long term outcomes or overall objective* of the Christian County Drug Court are for the participants to remain drug free, and provide them with the ability to maintain abstinence in the future.

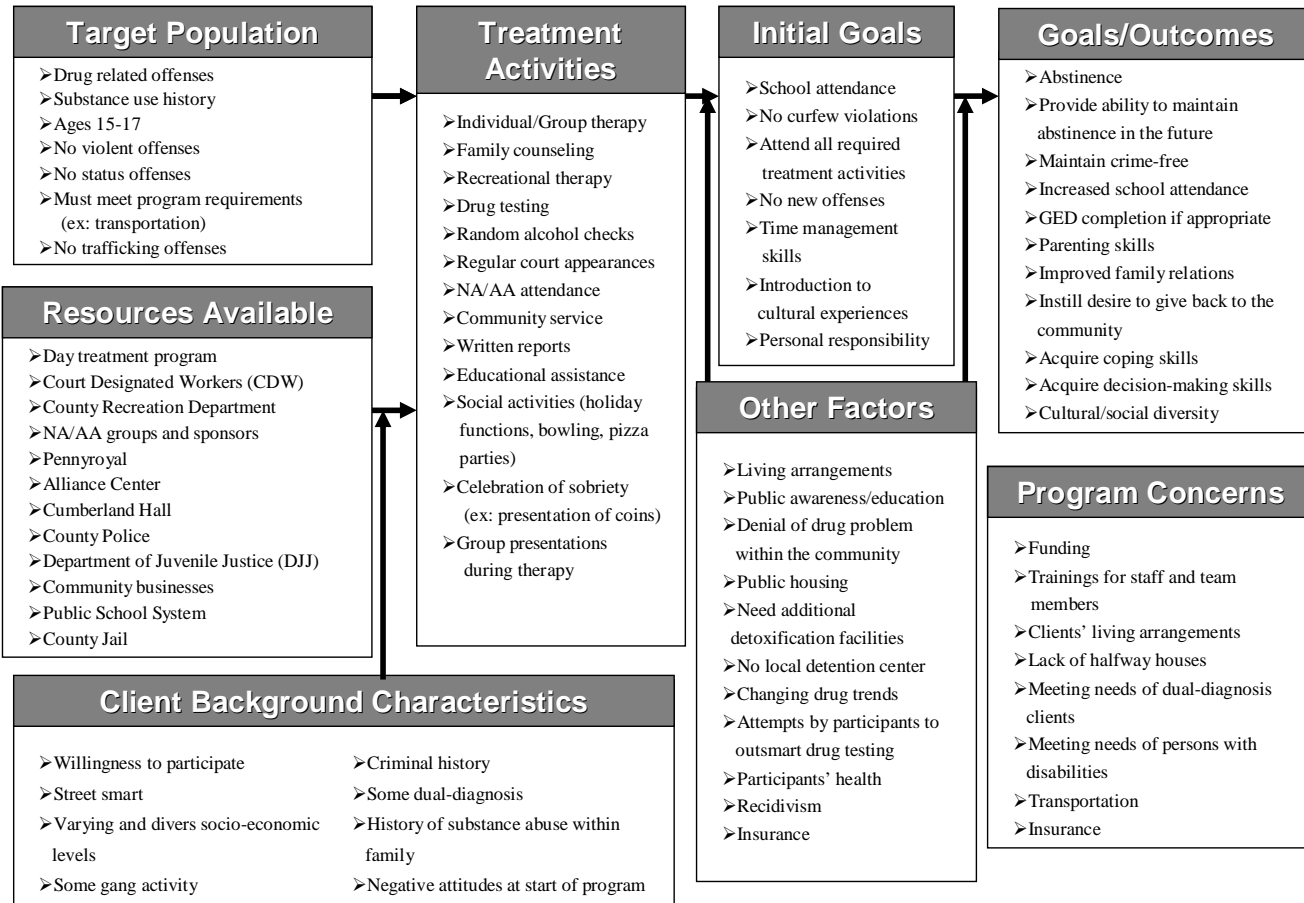
## Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation

The team teaches the participants “how it feels to do good deeds, and how living life without drugs and alcohol feels.” The Drug Court also hopes to increase school attendance, improve family relationships, and provide parenting skills for the participants with children. The team wishes to build coping and decision making skills among the participants, and reduce recidivism rates of youthful offenders in the community.

The Christian County Drug Court team expressed different concerns they had with their program. One of these *program concerns* is funding in order to keep the Drug Court in operation. The team also hopes to increase their ability to meet the needs of potential participants with dual-diagnosis and disabilities. The staff said that “sometimes it is hard to meet all the needs of the participant’s mental and substance abuse problems, and additional resources are needed.” The staff members indicated the importance of additional trainings for the team members. The Drug Court also hopes to eliminate the transportation problem within the community in result to “many of good potential participants being rejected from participation in the program due to the lack of public transportation within the community.”



**Figure 6. Logic Model:**



**FINDINGS: DURING PROGRAM IMPACT AND OUTCOMES**

The primary emphasis of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court is to help its participants to learn to live drug-free and crime-free lives. Participants are held accountable for their negative behaviors through therapeutic sanctions and rewards for their success. The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program showed a positive influence on helping the participants involved during this timeframe to maintain in school, stay drug-free and offense free. Program compliance rates were assessed by examining how often participants received sanctions. Non-compliance implies poor participant performance, but should not necessarily be viewed as a negative outcome for the program, because Drug Courts function as long-term intensive behavior modification programs directed at extinguishing antisocial behavior and promoting prosocial behavior. The imposition of a sanction reflects both a negative (at the level of the individual) and a positive therapeutic action (at the level of the program).

**Retention in Drug Court**

Keeping participants in the Drug Court program is an essential and crucial element. If the participant is removed from the program, the consequences are evident. They usually do not continue to receive treatment, thus reducing the chance that they will have positive outcomes. Nevertheless, not everyone can be allowed to have indefinitely long stays in the program. Some participants need to be “terminated” to restore a therapeutic atmosphere, and provide an example to the remaining participants that they will be held accountable for criminal and deviant behavior, thus enforcing social and internal control. During the timeframe covered by the current report (July 2001-June 2002) five of the participants were terminated from the program. Three of these participants were terminated due to failure to comply, one absconded, and one was terminated due to a new offense. During the timeframe covered by this report one participant was observed to successfully graduate from the Christian Juvenile Drug Court program. A large body of research in the substance abuse treatment field and in the Drug Courts shows that program graduates perform significantly better than those who do not finish a program.

### **Recidivism**

Recidivism (often defined as rearrests) is a fundamental outcome indicator used to judge the effectiveness of criminal justice based programs. Therefore, one of the primary performance measures for the Christian Juvenile Drug Court is the number of participants who are arrested for new crimes while they are under the program's supervision. Only 5 of these participants were rearrested for a new crime during the timeframe of this report. One of the participants was rearrested for trafficking cocaine which is a felony crime. One participant was arrested for felony fleeing and evading charges. One of the participants was arrested for a violent EPO, one for TBUT, and one participant was arrested for Alcohol intoxication, and possession by a minor.

### **Drug Use**

Much of the resources of Christian County Juvenile Drug Court are focused on reducing the use of alcohol and other illicit drugs among its participants. Drug Court staff provide recovery oriented therapy to their participants and employ frequent urine testing for illicit drugs to determine participant progress and reveal relapses. During the timeframe covered by this report there were a total of 31 positive urine screens. A total of 2758 urine analyses were conducted during the timeframe of the report. Five of the urine analyses were positive for cocaine, three for methamphetamines, 12 for marijuana, three for benzopiazidnes, four for alcohol, two for a tampered test, and two for other drugs.

### **Education**

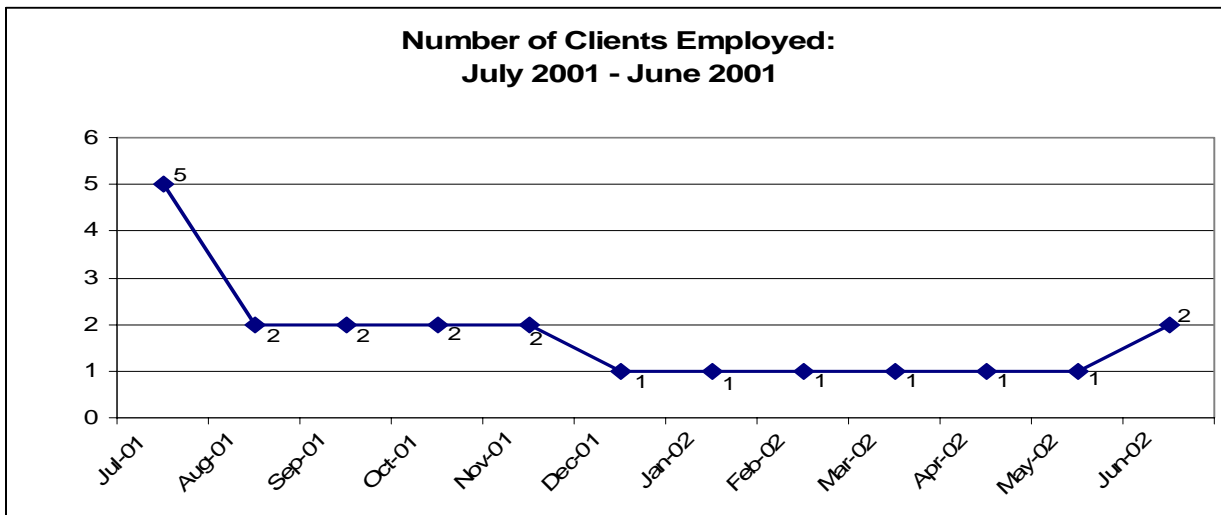
Education and "getting an education" is strongly emphasized by the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court. The majority of its participants remained in school during the program (including alternative schools like Day Treatment that combine education and therapy). Observation by researchers of a Drug Court session during this study showed that the Drug Court Judge paid careful attention to how the participants were doing in school. By paying special attention to the educational achievement of its participants, the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court has a great potential for reducing the high school dropout rate among its participants. By doing so, this would continue to benefit both the participant and

Christian County Juvenile Drug Court Implementation Evaluation society in the long-run because educational achievement is positively and linearly related to lifetime earnings from employment. Better-educated people earn more money and can be more productive members of society than those with low educational achievement.

**Employment**

Employment problems are a reliable predictor of early dropout from treatment among adults in community-based substance abuse treatment programs. Employment is required of every Drug Court participant unless they are a full time student. Figure 6 summarizes participant employment data from the Monthly Statistical Reports.

**Figure 6.**



**Sanctions**

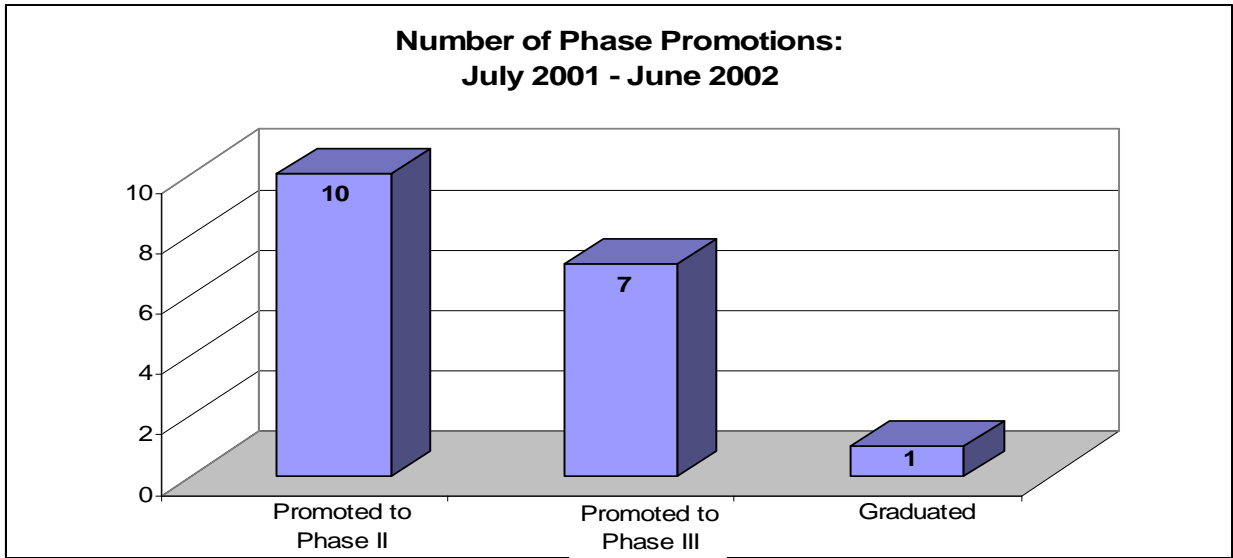
Drug Court programs are essentially intensive behavior modification programs, and as a result sanctions may be viewed as a positive output of the program directed at encouraging prosocial behavior and holding participants accountable for negative behaviors. At the level of the individual, sanctions imply that the participant has been non-compliant with program rules, and thus need to be corrected. Review of program records indicated that sanctions were generally used in a consistent manner following specific behavioral problems. The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program does have a fixed sanction algorithm, but this algorithm is not set in stone and sanctions are individualized when necessary.

A detailed list of sanctions can be seen in Table 4. Incarceration was the most commonly received sanction. Twenty-five of the total sanctions given were jail time varying in length. Community service was given as a sanction sixteen times, one participant was sent into inpatient treatment, one participant was demoted to a lower phase, and one was terminated from the program.

**Phase Promotions**

A promotion to a higher phase indicates that the participant is performing successfully in the program. Therefore, examining the number of phase promotions is a valuable during-treatment performance measure as a result of providing direct behavioral measures of participants' remaining compliant with treatment plans and program rules. As shown in Figure 5, analysis of data from the monthly statistics showed that 18 phase promotions were given during the timeframe covered by the report. Ten promotions to Phase II, and 7 promotions to Phase III were given. One participant graduated from the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program throughout the indicated time.

**Figure 7.**



## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The Christian County Juvenile Drug Court is firmly grounded in the 16 Key Strategies that define effective Drug Courts nationwide. It provides recovery-oriented services and intensive supervision to juveniles with drug abuse problems. A dedicated team of professionals representing key stakeholders in the problems created by drug-involved juveniles work together closely to help these individuals to begin their recovery, improve social functioning, and quit committing crimes. The Christian County Drug Court has matured beyond its planning phase, and is transitioning into a fully implemented cohesive program. In conclusion the Christian Juvenile Drug Court is in full compliance with the 16 Key Strategies outlined for implementing effective Drug Court programs. Specifically:

### **Strategy #1. Collaborative Planning – Engage all stakeholders in creating an interdisciplinary, coordinated and systemic approach to working with youth and their families.**

Findings from staff/team interviews and from the participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team members have formed a cohesive unit that involved community-based stakeholders during the planning and implementation stages of the Drug Court process. The Drug Court planning team includes representatives from various local agencies who work together to develop policies and procedures regarding Drug Court operations. The planning team and the policies that are written ensure program collaboration, participant accountability, and effective program evaluation.

### **Strategy #2. Teamwork – Develop and maintain an interdisciplinary, non-adversarial work team.**

Findings from the focus group and from the participant observation showed that members of the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team work efficiently together and collaborate when making decisions about participants. Observations and interviews by University of Kentucky researchers indicated that prosecutors, defense attorneys, and treatment professionals on the team communicate well with one another, therefore maximizing the efficacy of the program. The opinions of all team members are equally respected, thus ensuring the promotion of public safety and protection of each participant's rights.

### **Strategy #3. Clearly Defined Target Population and Eligibility Criteria – Define a target population and eligibility criteria that are aligned with the program's goals and objectives.**

Findings from the focus group and from staff/team interviews showed that the target population and eligibility criteria established by the Drug Court team are appropriate and well-defined. Team members have utilized data regarding various aspects of the community as well as assessed local resources in order to correctly identify juveniles who might benefit from the program. Eligibility criteria have been established and incorporated into a written set of guidelines so that each potential participant may be effectively screened. In this way, the Drug Court team is able to consistently target and screen possible candidates and in turn monitor the ever-changing needs of the participants, the Drug Court process, and community stakeholders.

**Strategy #4. Judicial Involvement and Supervision – Schedule frequent judicial reviews and be sensitive to the effect that court proceedings can have on youth and their families.**

Findings from the participant observation and subsequent interviews showed that judicial involvement and supervision is highly regarded in the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program. During court sessions the Judge relates well to each participant and takes an obvious interest in their lives. Between court sessions the Judge stays in contact with staff and team members to remain updated on participants' progress. The judge provides a well-balanced atmosphere of legal supervision and personal relationship with the participants.

**Strategy #5. Monitoring and Evaluation – Establish a system for program monitoring and evaluation to maintain quality of service, assess program impact, and contribute to knowledge in the field.**

Findings from staff/team interviews and from the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug court team effectively monitors and evaluates the program. The Drug Court team has contracted with the Center on Drug and Alcohol Research at the University of Kentucky to perform an independent, external evaluation.

**Strategy #6. Community Partnerships – Build partnerships with community organizations to expand the range of opportunities available to youth and their families.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and from the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has forged partnerships with the community in order to offer as many support services as possible. Recreational opportunities, educational programs, and community service work are integrated to provide assistance for all participants. The team has successfully enlisted support from various community resources such as the Animal Shelter, the school system, and Pride, Inc.

**Strategy #7. Comprehensive Treatment Planning – Tailor interventions to the complex and varied needs of youth and their families.**

Findings from the participant observation, focus group, and staff interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has met the diverse needs of participants and their families. By using tools such as the initial assessment (Addiction Severity Index) and Individualized Program Plan (IPP) staff members are able to address the special needs of each participant and their family. Each participant's IPP is reviewed several times throughout the course of the program and plans are modified if necessary to best meet the needs of the participant. The effectiveness of the program is increased by this individualized treatment-based approach.

**Strategy #8. Developmentally Appropriate Services – Tailor treatment to the developmental needs of adolescents.**

Findings from the focus group, staff interviews, and the participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has based their program on developmentally appropriate methods. The program caters to the needs of the juvenile population by adapting treatment sessions to meet the significant issues that are current in the lives of the adolescents. Services such as this provide participants with opportunities and encouragement to successfully complete the program.

**Strategy #9. Gender – Appropriate Services – Design treatment to address the unique needs of each gender.**

Findings from the focus groups and staff interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has recognized the need for gender-appropriate services and has thereby initiated certain program characteristics to accommodate these differences. Inpatient treatment sessions are used to accommodate specific gender issues when necessary. By tailoring their approaches to gender-specific issues the team is able to develop appropriate relationships with each participant and deliver treatment that is beneficial to both males and females.

**Strategy #10. Cultural Competence – Create policies and procedures that are responsive to cultural differences and train personnel to be culturally competent.**

Findings from the participant observation, team interviews, and the focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team has demonstrated cultural competence by sending team members to training conferences where cultural issues are taught. Team members also make efforts to learn about the participant's background and interact with family members in order to gain an understanding of the youth's culture. These actions reflect the team's awareness of the importance of cultural issues, help strengthen relationships between the participant and the staff, and effectively address the needs of both the participant and the family.

**Strategy #11. Focus on Strengths – Maintain a focus on the strengths of youth and their families during program planning and in every interaction between the court and those it serves.**

Findings from the participant observation, focus group, and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team focuses on the individual strengths of each participant and their family throughout the duration of the Drug Court program. As part of the initial assessment (AIA), the Drug Court team includes a "Strengths Assessment" questionnaire, which helps the participant to concentrate on his/her accomplishments and successes. This approach begins the participant's program with a strength-based perspective and prepares the participant to accept a more responsible role in the community. This strengths-based approach also aides in creating bonds between the participant and his/her family and helps the family provide support to the child during the program.

**Strategy #12. Family Engagement – Recognize and engage the family as a valued partner in all components of the program.**

Findings from the focus group, participant observation, and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program recognizes the importance of family roles and support in the treatment of the juvenile participant. Members of the Drug Court team understand that family members can influence the juvenile to make important choices throughout the duration of the program. Therefore, the team makes every effort to engage the family in all components of the program. In the Christian County program parents or other family members are required to attend and participate in court sessions. Participants and their family are also required to attend family treatment sessions. The Drug Court team also uses the initial assessment and other tools to evaluate the role of each family member and the dynamics between the family and the participant. By involving the participant's family members during the Drug Court program the participant's progress is enhanced and the family relationship is strengthened.

**Strategy #13. Educational Linkages – Coordinate with the school system to ensure that each participant enrolls in and attends an educational program that is appropriate to his or her needs.**



Findings from the focus group and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program has a strong relationship with the local school system including guidance counselors and teachers. This enables them to closely monitor the participants' attendance, grades, and teacher assessments. Because team members stay in contact with school officials they can quickly address any issues that might arise in order to best meet the needs of the participant. Each participant is required to attend school or to work toward a GED. The Drug Court also works with community resources such as day treatment, continuing education, and workforce development in order to help participants with continuing educational and vocational needs.

**Strategy #14. Drug Testing – Design drug testing to be frequent, random, and observed. Document testing policies and procedures in writing.**

Findings from the focus group and staff/team interviews showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program performs frequent, random drug tests to all participants throughout the duration of the program. Participants must test negative for eight weeks before they become eligible to graduate. Participants must undergo drug testing a minimum of three times per week in Phase I, two times per week in Phase II, and once per week in Phase III. Additional tests are administered if team members think it is necessary. The first drug test is given after the initial assessment (Addiction Severity Index) is completed. The integrity of the drug tests is maintained by observing all urine drops and testing for evidence of tampering.

**Strategy #15. Goal-Oriented Incentives and Sanctions – Respond to compliance and noncompliance with incentives and sanctions that are designed to reinforce or modify the behavior of youth and their families.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and participant observation showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court program has one system for graduated sanctions that applies to all participants. These sanctions include community service, decreased curfew, detention and placement into residential treatment. Although they have specific sanctions in place, the Drug Court may adjust the sanction in order to better address the participant's non-compliant act. Incentives are also given based on clean drug tests, exceptional school performance, group leadership and positive attitudes. The Christian County Drug Court awards gift certificates, a plaque for the participant of the month, and milestone coins in order to recognize the participants' success. Sanctions and incentives are consistent and fair and are given immediately in order to help the participant understand that his or her actions lead to corresponding reactions.

**Strategy #16. Confidentiality – Establish a confidentiality policy and procedures that guard the privacy of the youth while allowing the drug court team to access key information.**

Findings from the staff/team interviews and focus group showed that the Christian County Juvenile Drug Court team members have designed policies and procedures to protect each participant and their family members while in the Drug Court program. Participant files are kept in a locked storage area and computer records are protected by passwords. Court sessions and staffing meetings are closed in order to ensure the maximum amount of privacy for the participant and his or her family members.