

# Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Adult Drug Court Outcome Evaluation

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# **Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Adult Drug Court Implementation Evaluation**

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## **PREFACE**

### **Benefits of a Drug Court Model of Treatment**

Research on both national and state levels has shown that drug courts are a beneficial addition to substance abuse treatment and criminal justice systems. Through the combined efforts of judges, public defenders, prosecutors, law enforcement agents, treatment and mental health professionals, Drug Court has become an effective intervention. Drug courts provide “closer, more comprehensive supervision and much more frequent drug testing and monitoring during the program than other forms of community supervision. More importantly, drug use and criminal behavior are substantially reduced while offenders are participating in drug court.” (Belenko, 1998; 2001)

Drug Courts have been shown to not only reduce recidivism rates but also lower state and taxpayer costs and increase client retention in substance abuse treatment. In 2003, the Center for Court Innovation released the largest statewide study on drug court programs. Results from the New York-based study showed that “the re-conviction rate among 2,135 defendants who participated in six of the state’s drug courts was, on average, 29 percent lower (13% to 47%) over three years than for the same types of offenders who did not enter the drug court” (www.ndci.org, retrieved online 1-9-06; Rempel, et al., 2003). The same study also showed that by implementing a drug court system, New York saved approximately \$254 million in incarceration costs.

Treatment retention has also been shown to be improved as a result of participation in drug court. Nationally, drug courts report retention rates between 67 and 71 percent (American University). And in 2003, Marlowe, DeMatteo, and Festinger reported that, “over two thirds of

participants who begin treatment through a drug court complete it a year or more later which represents a six-fold increase in treatment retention over most previous efforts”.

### **Drug Court in Kentucky**

In 2003, 36,551 arrests were made in Kentucky for drug violations. This figure increased by 11.6% in 2004, resulting in 40,793 drug violation arrests. In response to this and other drug-related criminal activity Kentucky instituted the first Drug Court in 1993. Since that time state government has worked to support, enhance, and advance the Drug Court system. At the time of this report, Kentucky operates 38 adult drug court programs, 12 juvenile drug courts, and 3 family drug courts. The motto for Kentucky Drug Court, “A chance...a change,” reflects the philosophy of therapeutic jurisprudence (Hora, 2002). The mission of Drug Courts in Kentucky is to create a system which strives to eliminate illicit drug use and related criminal activity while promoting recovery and reintegration into society. All adult drug courts in Kentucky adhere to the 10 Key Components described in the publication *Defining Drug Courts: The Key Components* (United States Department of Justice, 1997). These ten components were developed by the Drug Court Standards Committee to ensure that a core set of standards were defined for all drug court programs to follow. Drug Court programs in Kentucky represent a team-oriented effort that unites professionals from the criminal justice system, treatment delivery network, and members of the community who are dedicated to reducing crime and substance abuse. This combination of intensive supervision and treatment provides an atmosphere that has been shown to be effective in reducing recidivism and drug use and for improving employment rates among Kentucky drug offenders (Logan, Hiller, Minton, & Leukefeld).



**Need for the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Adult Drug Court Program**

Many of the crimes in the counties served by this program are drug or alcohol related. For example, in Henry County during 2003, a total 71 drug arrests were made. In 2004, this number was increased to 137 arrests resulting in a 93% increase in drug arrests in the county. Table 1 illustrates specific drug arrest figures. Similar increases occur in Trimble County where the number of drug arrests rose 10.9% and in Oldham County where the number of drug arrests more than tripled (Kentucky State Police, retrieved January, 2006).

These same figures have been subdivided by the Kentucky State Police into arrests based on types of charges. In 2004, 137 arrests were made for narcotic drug law offenses, 117 arrests were made for driving under the influence (DUI), 50 arrests were made for liquor law offenses, and 34 arrests were made for drunkenness. These drug related charges accounted for more than 35% of the total crimes committed in Henry County that year.

In Trimble County during 2004, approximately 48% of the total crimes committed were related to substance use. Fifty-one arrests were made for narcotic drug offenses, 48 arrests were made for driving under the influence (DUI), 21 arrests were made for liquor law offenses, and 24 arrests were made for drunkenness.

Oldham County experienced the largest increase of drug and alcohol arrests. In addition to the 27 narcotics-related offenses, six arrests were made for driving under the influence, six arrests were made for liquor laws offenses, and 3 arrests were made for drunkenness. Although these figures may seem low in comparison to other parts of state, they reflect a sizeable increase in substance-abuse related activity for Oldham County (Kentucky State Police, retrieved January, 2006).

## Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court Evaluation

Table 1

	2003	2004
Henry		
Opium or Cocaine and Their Derivatives	8	17
Marijuana	34	54
Synthetic Narcotics Which Can Cause Drug Addiction	0	5
Other Dangerous Non-Narcotic Drugs	29	61
<b>Total Drug Law Arrests</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>137</b>
Trimble		
Opium or Cocaine and Their Derivatives	1	15
Marijuana	26	25
Synthetic Narcotics Which Can Cause Drug Addiction	0	4
Other Dangerous Non-Narcotic Drugs	19	7
<b>Total Drug Law Arrests</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>
Oldham		
Opium or Cocaine and Their Derivatives	1	4
Marijuana	3	10
Synthetic Narcotics Which Can Cause Drug Addiction	0	1
Other Dangerous Non-Narcotic Drugs	2	12
<b>Total Drug Law Arrests</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>27</b>

### **Executive Summary**

This report is the result of an evaluation conducted in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Adult Drug Court program from December, 2003 through May, 2006. This evaluation utilized both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. A process evaluation was conducted to update a process evaluation conducted during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Process evaluation methodologies included administrative interviews, a focus group, staffing and court observations, and a review of participant files. The outcome research methodology included a recidivism analysis of all participants involved in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Adult Drug Court program.

Results from the process evaluation of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program identified many strengths. While this program has not yet achieved their enrollment capacity, they have demonstrated steady increases in the number of new enrollees as well as retention of active participants. The program demands consistent, steady employment from their participants, and as a result, has succeeded in collecting almost \$27,000 in fines, fees, and child support payments from its participants. Another great strength of this program is its use of creative sanctioning. Unlike other Drug Courts across the State of Kentucky, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program utilizes alternative forms of sanctions to encourage success. Finally, while the graduation rate of this program is low, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court goes to great lengths to ensure its participants are equipped to function outside of the program which has resulted in fewer graduates and a greater number of active in the latter phases.

While the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program exhibits many strengths, the program should be striving to meet the treatment capacity requirements as discussed in their initial grant application (i.e., 50 active participants). Additionally, while programmatic efforts to retain participants are admirable, important outcome indicators such as the graduation rate are adversely affected.

In summary, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program is in compliance with the 10 Key Components issued by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This program has successfully merged substance abuse treatment with criminal justice supervision and given continued support from the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts and their local community, this program could well be a model Drug Court program for the State of Kentucky.

### **OUTCOME EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology utilized for this evaluation include both process and outcome components. A process evaluation methodology was employed for this study because it has several advantages. One advantage is that it allows the program to not only document, but also later revisit initial steps to determine what aspects of the program are successful and if aspects of the program need revision. A second advantage is that, in conjunction with an outcome evaluation, it may explain why participants are successful or not successful in completing the program. Finally, process evaluations are essential for replication of future programs.

The research team identified five methods of collecting data for the process evaluation. The first component involved face to face interviews with the Program Coordinator and the Drug Court Judge. The interview instruments were designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (see Logan, Lewis, Leukefeld, & Minton, 2000). The second component in the process evaluation was a staffing/courtroom observation. The staffing/court observation allowed the research team to extract observational data regarding the interactional (exchanges between the Judge, court staff, and participants) and environmental (physical characteristics of the setting) variables of the Drug Court session. Data were coded using a protocol developed by Satel (1998), which involves coding the session on 17 specific characteristics. The third component involved reviewing the monthly statistical reports submitted by Drug Court programs to the Administrative Office of the Courts. These records allow the researchers to track case processing and case flow through the Drug Court system. The fourth component involved reviewing the program documentation of the Drug Court. These data included copies of the grant application,

handbooks provided by the Drug Court to its participants, and the policy and procedure manual for the Drug Court program. Finally, the last component in the process evaluation was a researcher led focus group of all Drug Court team members. The goal of the focus group was to synthesize a comprehensive description of program elements using a “logic model” approach.

The outcome evaluation employed research methods to examine the effects of Drug Court treatment on participants. One source of information used to assess these outcomes included during-program treatment data from participant files. Specific variables extracted from files included urinalysis data, phase promotion/demotion data, sanction/reward data, and graduation/termination data. A second source of information used to assess program outcomes were Criminal History Records obtained from CourtNet. Information extracted from CourtNet files provided recidivism data on Drug Court participants.

**Geographic Location and Context of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Drug Court.**

The main office of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Adult Drug Court program is located in LaGrange (Oldham County) which also serves as the county seat. Henry County sits in the Outer Bluegrass region of the state, covers approximately 289 square miles and in 2000 reported approximately 52 people per square mile. (Kentucky Atlas & Gazetteer). The 2000 US Census Bureau reported that the population estimate for Henry County was 15,060 residents. US Census figures also indicate that 94% of Henry County’s population were Caucasian, 3.3% were African-American, and 2.3% were Hispanic. The per capita income reported for Henry County in 1999 was \$17,846, with 13.7% of the population living below the national poverty rate. Educational data regarding the population provides that in 2000, 73.4% of the county’s

population had completed a high school degree, while 9.8% had completed a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Quick Facts, retrieved online February, 2006).

Oldham County is located in the Pennyrile and Outer Bluegrass regions of the state. Covering approximately 189 square miles, the county sits on the banks of the Ohio River across from Indiana. Statistics for 2000 reported approximately 244 people per square mile (Kentucky Atlas & Gazetteer). The 2000 US Census Bureau reported that the population estimate for Oldham County was 46,178 residents. US Census figures also indicate that 93.6% of Oldham County's population were Caucasian, 4.2% were African-American, and 1.3% were Hispanic. The per capita income reported for Oldham County in 1999 was \$25,374, with 4.1% of the population living below the national poverty rate. Educational data regarding the population provides that in 2000, 86.5% of the county's population had completed a high school degree, and 30.6% had completed a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Quick Facts, retrieved online February, 2006).

Trimble County is also located in the Outer Bluegrass regions of the state. Situated next to Oldham County on the Ohio River, the county covers approximately 149 square miles. Statistics for 2000 reported approximately 54.6 people per square mile (Kentucky Atlas & Gazetteer). The 2000 US Census Bureau reported that the population estimate for Trimble County was 8,125 residents. US Census figures also indicate that 97.9% of Trimble County's population were Caucasian, .3% were African-American, and 1.4% were Hispanic. The per capita income reported for Trimble County in 1999 was \$16,355, with 13.6% of the population living below the national poverty rate. Educational data regarding the population provides that in 2000, 70.7% of the county's population had completed a high school degree, while 7.6% had

completed a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Quick Facts, retrieved online February, 2006).

### **FINDINGS: DURING PROGRAM IMPACT AND OUTCOMES**

The findings presented in this section are comprised of information gathered from the administrative interview, focus group, monthly statistics, participant observation, and participant case files. These data were examined and are presented within the context of the 10 Key Components (Drug Court Programs Office, 1997).

#### **Key Component #1. Drug Courts integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing.**

Findings from the focus group, court session and staffing observations and staff interviews demonstrated that the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Counties Adult Drug Court has a cohesive structure that integrates drug treatment services with criminal justice supervision as evidenced by the make-up of their Drug Court team. The Drug Court team consists of a Judge, treatment coordinator, public defense and prosecution attorneys, and a court designated worker. Representatives from the local probation and parole offices, local police officers, and sheriffs are also active on the team. The family court coordinator and the Judge's assistant are also present during staffing and court sessions.

Substance abuse treatment professionals from Seven Counties Services, Inc. are active members of the Drug Court team and help ensure that participants receive the appropriate type and level of treatment. Other treatment agencies such as JADAC and Ten Broeck, both residential facilities, offer a more intense level of treatment when necessary. The Drug Court team has formed a relationship with local groups such as Creative Spirit and New Directions in Life so that participants have a variety of treatment options.

**Key Component #2. Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.**

The prosecutors and defense attorneys work together within their team to help the participants' in their recovery process. Both attorneys are committed to working with each participant in order reduce criminal involvement. Both of the Drug Court attorneys have been willing and eager to lay aside their typically adversarial roles to accept the shared responsibility of placing the participants' well-being first. Staff members are always encouraged to provide input into the discussions surrounding each participant's case with the knowledge that their opinions will be heard and considered. In this way the due process rights of the participants are ensured as well as the balanced success of the program.

**Key Component #3. Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Drug Court program.**

Since the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court was funded in October 2003, the team has strived to reach as many potential candidates as possible. Although the Drug Court has enrolled a total of 39 participants, team members are continuing to discover additional methods of targeting prospective participants and raising enrollment to meet the original goal set out in the grant of 50 participants per year.

**Referrals, eligibility, and admission procedures.**

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court team has established referral processes to admit new clients into their program. The typical avenue of referrals comes from the Prosecutor and/or Defense Attorneys informing potential candidates about the option of the Drug Court program. The program also believes that word-of-mouth about the program has spread and this has resulted in additional referrals. A future goal of this program is to conduct a misdemeanor



docket in order to reach potential participants earlier in their criminal careers and treat their substance abuse issues.

Once a referral is made to the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program, an assessment is completed by the Program Coordinator within one to two weeks. Assessments may be completed in the Drug Court office, in the home of the potential participant, or in the local jail if they are being housed there. Assessments completed on potential participants include a criminal background check, a personal interview with the Program Coordinator, and the Kentucky Addiction Severity Index (ASI) (Logan, et al., 2001). The ASI is used in order to assess the substance abuse history and treatment needs of the individual.

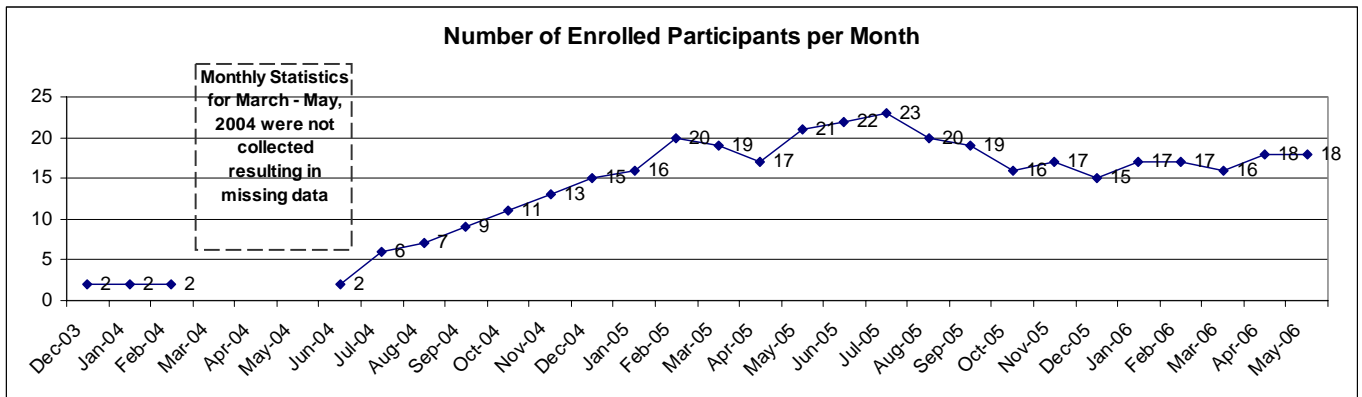
To be eligible for the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program, participants must meet certain inclusion criteria. All candidates must be felony offenders with substance abuse issues. In most cases the individuals' criminal activities are linked to substance use/abuse. In accordance with Bureau of Justice Assistance regulations, the Drug Court team immediately excludes individuals with charges of a violent nature or a previous history of violence.

Participants must reside in one of the three counties in the Drug Court program and must have access to transportation which will allow them to complete program requirements such as court sessions, therapy sessions, and AA/NA meetings. Participants with trafficking offenses are also excluded from the program; however, an individual may be considered if he/she has sold drugs solely to fund their own drug use. At this point, the Drug Court is unable to offer services which cater to the needs of participants with acute mental illnesses; therefore, potential candidates who meet the above criteria but present with severe mental health problems are excluded from the program.

**Capacity and Caseflow.**

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program has the capacity to treat up to 50 participants. During the evaluation period examined by this report (December 2003 through May 2006), there were 39 participants active in the program for at least part of the time frame. As shown in Figure 1, this program has shown some fluctuation in the number of participants, but has had consistent enrollment. At this time of this report, they are operating at 36% of their total capacity as stated in their original grant application.

**Figure 1: Number of Active Participants per Month**



The following table describes the demographic characteristics of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court participants to date. Approximately 80% of participants are male and 80% of participants are Caucasian. Almost 40% of participants have been between the ages of 19 and 24 years of age. Additionally, approximately 72% of participants have a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education or higher.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants at Intake**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Total (N = 39)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	31
Female	8
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White/Caucasian	31
Black or African-American	6
American Indian	1
Bi-racial	1
<b>Age at Drug Court Entry</b>	
17-24	15
25-29	9
30-34	5
35-39	1
40 and older	9
<b>Education Level</b>	
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	17
College or University (2 <sup>nd</sup> year completed)	3
College or University (3 <sup>rd</sup> year completed)	1
Bachelor's Degree	1
Voc/Tech Program, but no diploma	6

Examination of the participants drug use data showed that the participants in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program have used a myriad of substances. Approximately 97% report ever using alcohol and marijuana, 82% report ever use cocaine, 77% report ever

using barbiturates, 74% report ever using crack cocaine, and 69% report ever using hallucinogens, opiates, and using multiple substances. Table 3 below shows these results.

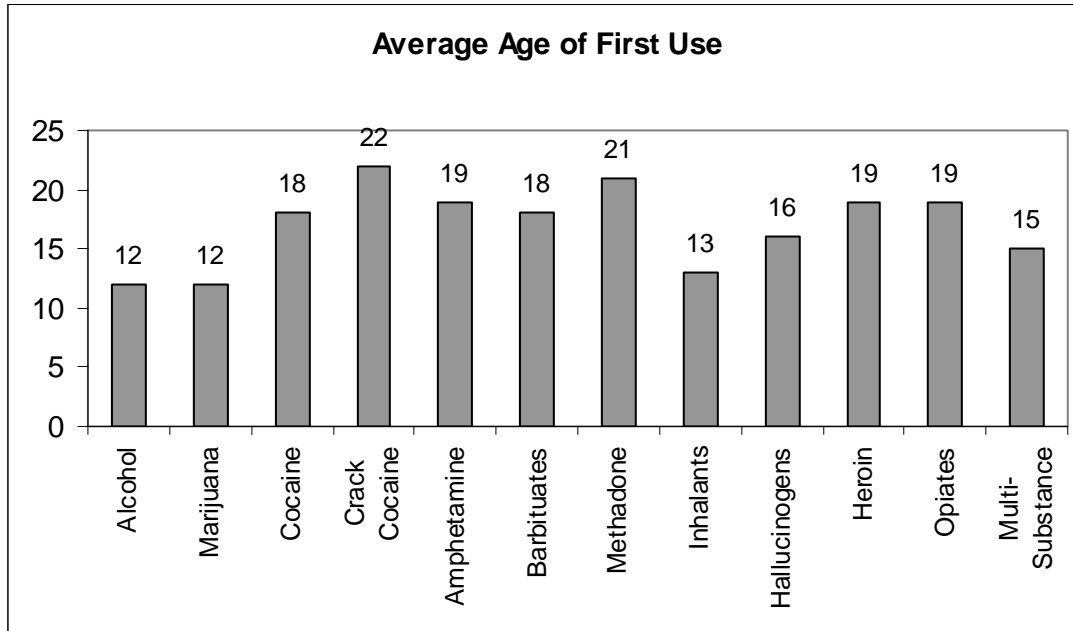
**Table 3: Substance Use Characteristics of Drug Court Participants**

Characteristic	(N = 39)
<b>Substance Use History</b>	
Ever Used Alcohol	38
Ever Used Marijuana	38
Ever Used Cocaine	32
Ever Used Crack Cocaine	29
Ever Used Amphetamines/Methamphetamine	24
Ever Used Barbiturates	30
Ever Used Methadone	11
Ever Used Inhalants	12
Ever Used Hallucinogens	27
Ever Used Heroin	8
Ever Used Opiates (other than heroin)	26
Ever Used Multi-Substances (more than one at a time)	26

Another question asked of participants at intake is at what age they remember first using various substances. This gives the Drug Court team an idea of the severity and longevity of their potential participant's substance abuse problems. Data from the participants' files shows that during the early teenage years (between ages 12 and 16), participants began using alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, hallucinogens, and multiple substances. During later teenage years (between the ages of 17 and 19) participants began using barbiturates, opiates and amphetamines/methamphetamines. Participants report using crack cocaine and methadone in

their early 20's. Figure 2 below shows the average age of first use reported by participants at intake per substance.

**Figure 2: Average Age of First Use Reported at Intake**



At intake, participants are asked about their recent drug use (i.e., the past 30 days).

According to this data, the majority of participants entering the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug are still using substances upon program entry. The table below shows these results.

**Table 4: Recent Substance Use Reported at Intake**

Recent Substance Use (prior 30 days)	Number of	
	Persons	Percent
Used Alcohol	24	61.5
Used Marijuana	26	66.7
Used Cocaine	16	41.0
Used Crack Cocaine	17	43.6
Used Amphetamine/methamphetamines	10	25.6
Used Barbiturates	13	33.3
Used Methadone	5	12.8
Used Inhalants	1	2.6
Used Hallucinogens	5	12.8
Used Heroin	2	5.1
Used Opiates (other than heroin)	17	43.6
Multiple Substances	12	30.8

**Referring Offenses to Drug Court.** As can be seen from the substance use data reported by participants at intake, participants being accepted into the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program are habitual substance users/abusers. However, under half (48%) of the participants who are referred to Drug Court on a single offense, are referred on a substance related offense such as possession of controlled substance (N = 3), trafficking of controlled substance (N = 6), and possession of forged prescription (N = 2). For participants who are referred on more than one offense, the number of referring substance-related offenses increases.

**Key Component #4. Drug Courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.**

In order to properly assess the treatment needs of each participant, the treatment coordinator completes an Individual Program Plan (IPP) at the outset of the participant's

involvement in the Drug Court program. Although substance abuse treatment is comprised of certain basic components, each participant's IPP is individualized to fit their own specific treatment needs. As participants are beginning individual and/or group therapy sessions, they meet with the treatment coordinator on several occasions to assist in developing their IPP. During these sessions, the treatment coordinator and participant discuss each treatment phase as well as any personal goals which the individual may wish to achieve. The IPP is re-evaluated and modified at each phase change and during the phases if necessary. The treatment coordinator refers to the IPP approximately once every two weeks to ensure that the participant is adhering to the prescribed plan of action. Both the treatment coordinator and the participant are involved in the development, evaluation, and modification of the IPP.

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court has created a partnership with Seven Counties Services, Inc. to provide participants with a blend of treatment options, including intensive out patient, individual, and family therapy sessions. The Drug Court also works with JADAC, a residential substance-abuse treatment facility based in Louisville, Kentucky and New Beginnings, which provides anger management and domestic violence programs. Inpatient services may be necessary when and if the participant is unable to maintain abstinence or if the participant requires substantive detoxification.

Treatment sessions are goal-oriented and motivational in nature with an emphasis on substance use/abuse education. During Phase I, participants are required to attend two group sessions per week, each lasting approximately two hours. Participants are also required to attend a minimum of three AA/NA meetings per week. Phase II participants must attend no less than two group sessions per week as well as a minimum of two AA/NA meetings per week. In Phase

III of the program, participants are required to attend one group session and at least one AA/NA meeting per week.

Participants also attend individual counseling sessions at least once per week throughout all three phases of the program; however, they may choose to meet with the treatment coordinator more often. During individual treatment sessions the participant may discuss housing or employment issues, questions regarding group therapy or AA/NA meetings, homework concerns, or other relevant topics. Individual sessions are planned for an hour but may run longer depending on the needs of the participant.

During the evaluation period, the 39 participants enrolled in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program participated in a total of 2,399 treatment sessions (including individual, group, and family counseling sessions). Treatment providers report to the Drug Court treatment coordinator on a regular basis to inform them of the participants' progress. Treatment providers and the coordinator also communicate via telephone to relate each participant's progress to the team during weekly staffing sessions.

**Key Component #5. Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.**

Substance abuse treatment and supervision of participants through urine screens are two of the essential features of 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). Many of the resources of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program are focused on reducing the use of alcohol and other illicit drugs among its participants. Drug Court staff employ frequent urine testing for illicit drugs to determine participant progress and to identify relapse.

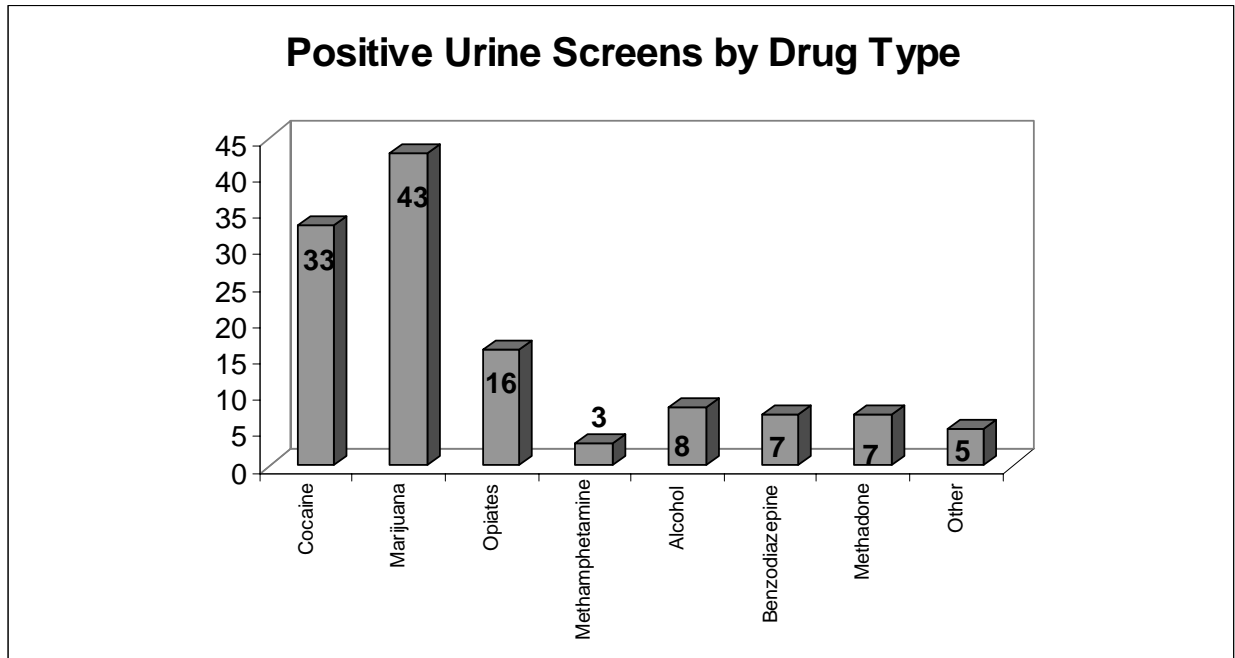


A baseline urinalysis is performed before the participant's case is officially transferred from the criminal court docket to the Drug Court docket. This first test, as well as all other urine screens, are conducted in the Drug Court office. A 10-panel screen is used and tests the participants for the following substances: marijuana, cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), benzodiazepines, methaqualone, propoxyphene, barbiturates, amphetamines, and methamphetamines. Participants are randomly tested a minimum of three times per week in Phase I, twice per week in Phase II, and once per week in Phase III. All drug tests are observed by either the treatment coordinator or another member of the Drug Court team depending on the gender of the participant.

**Positive Urine Screens:**

Review of monthly statistics found that during the evaluation period of December 2003 through May 2006, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program administered a total of 3,054 drug screens (for a total of 9806 panels). These drug screens resulted in 122 positive urine screens. Marijuana accounted for 35% of all positive drug screens followed by cocaine (27%). The figure below shows the substances for which participants tested positive.

Figure 3: Positive Urine Screens by Drug Type



**Key Component #6. A coordinated strategy governs Drug Court responses to participants’ compliance.**

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program has been developed to conform to state and national Drug Court standards. When participants enter Drug Court, they are given a handout which details the phase system for the program. This handout explains the purpose of each phase and informs the participant of the minimum requirements and treatment goals. After the participant is accepted into the Drug Court program, they are given a copy of the Kentucky Drug Courts Participant Handbook and an Agreement of Participation. The treatment coordinator meets with each individual to explain the Drug Court requirements and discuss any concerns the participant may wish to address.

**Phase Structure.** Like all Kentucky Drug Courts, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program is divided into three distinct phases, each with a separate set of goals, procedures, and strategies for reaching these goals. A general overview of these phases is presented in Appendix A.

Phase I is approximately three months in length and involves intensive outpatient treatment. If the participant requires a higher level of treatment he/she is referred to a residential treatment facility. Phase I of the program is a stabilization period. According to the Drug Court coordinator, the participant is “oriented to the Drug Court program, receives a handbook, and is given the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns” (personal communication). Upon enrollment in the program, participants are required to cease all substance use. In addition to the treatment components discussed in Key Component #4, participants are also required to attend court sessions once per week in Phase I. Participants are also required to meet with the treatment coordinator once per week as well as their probation officer (if applicable) three times per week. It is also in this first phase that participants are required to obtain an AA/NA sponsor.

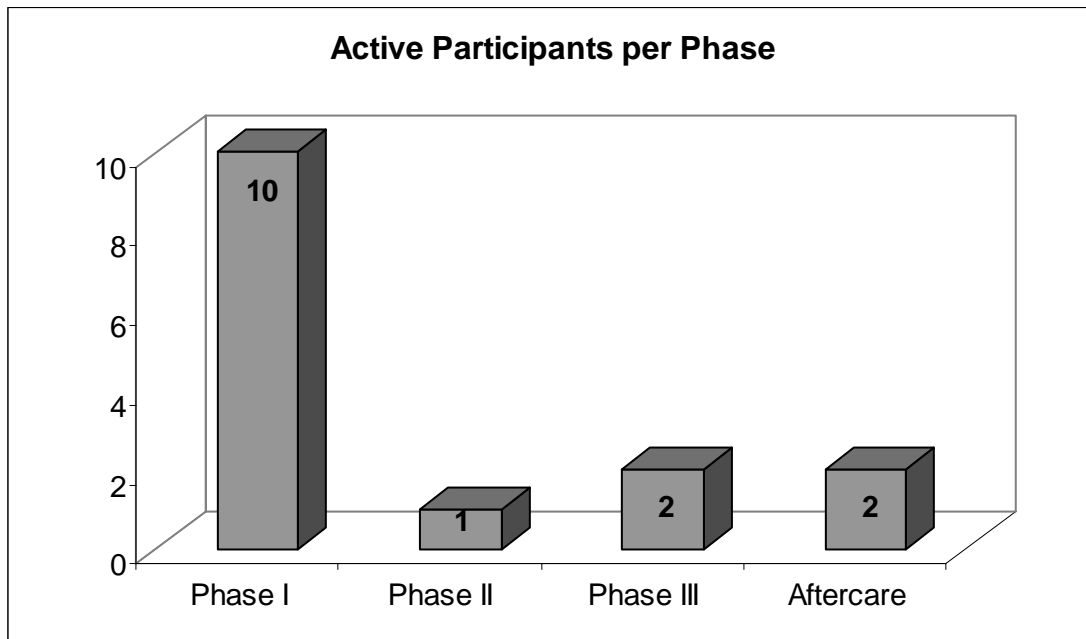
In Phase II the focus is on relapse prevention. Education is the main goal of this phase and the participant is encouraged to understand “the process of change.” Phase II lasts approximately four to six months. As in Phase I, participants are required to remain compliant with the rules and regulations set forth in the Drug Court handbook. Participants who have progressed to Phase II must attend court sessions once every two weeks, meet with the treatment coordinator at least once every two weeks, and meet with their probation officer (if applicable) one to two times each week.

Phase III of the program teaches the participant how to apply the skills he/she has developed in the previous phases. The estimated length of stay in this phase is approximately four months. During Phase III, the participant is instructed to take responsibility for his/her actions and recovery. Participants in this final phase of the program must attend court sessions once every three weeks. Meetings with the treatment coordinator and probation office (if applicable) are also reduced. Before completing this phase and graduating, each participant must

complete an exit interview and an exit calendar. It is during this phase that the participant will develop an aftercare plan that will help to ensure his/her recovery progress after completion of the Drug Court program.

At the time of this evaluation, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program had a total of 15 active participants. Participant files indicate that they have 10 participants in Phase I, one participant in Phase II, two participants in Phase III, and two participants in Aftercare. The figure below shows these results.

**Figure 4: Active Participants per Phase**



**Rewards and Sanctions**

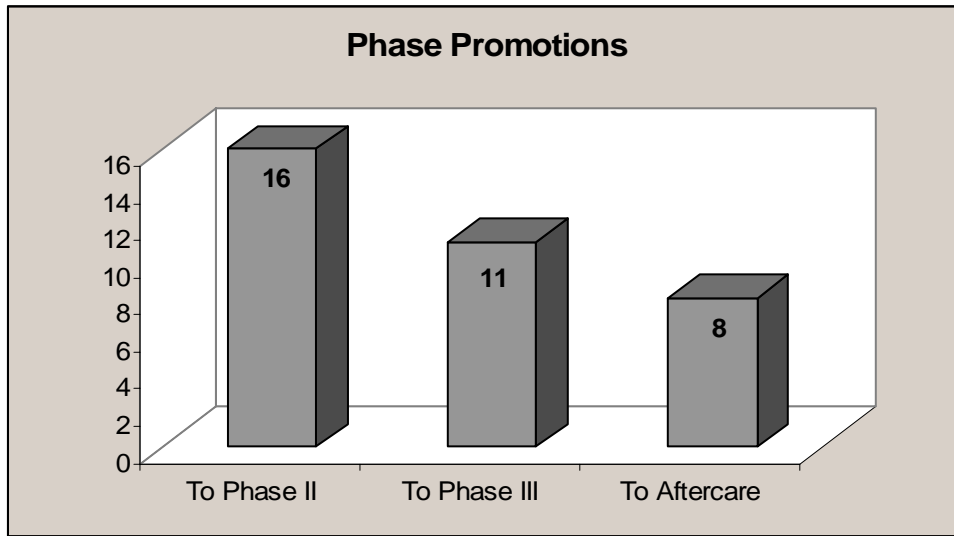
A system of rewards and sanctions are used by the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program to acknowledge both when a participant succeeds, as well as when they've failed to meet the requirements of the program. Rewards and incentives are provided when a participant shows conformity to program rules and continues to achieve treatment goals. Participants are

likewise sanctioned when they fail to act in a way that is compliant with program and treatment standards.

**Rewards.** In keeping with state and national standards, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court maintains a system of rewards based on positive actions and achievements. Participants who remain compliant with program rules and regulations will receive various forms of recognition from program staff. Rewards typically given to clients who successfully progress through the program include extended curfew, travel passes, and tickets to sports activities. The participant may also receive verbal recognition from the Judge and members of the Drug Court team as well as applause from other participants during court sessions. Although rewards are used in a consistent and predictable manner, certain situations may arise that warrant reward. The team members discuss these on a case-by-case basis.

After reaching the goals set forth by each phase and completing the required amount of treatment, a participant will be promoted to the next phase. Promotion to a higher phase is a valuable during-program performance measure that demonstrates participants compliance with treatment and program requirements. Monthly statistics show that a total of eight participants have been promoted to Aftercare, while only two participants have graduated from the program. Discussions with the Program Coordinator indicate that while eight participants have reached the aftercare phase, six of these eight participants were demoted to an earlier phase upon reaching aftercare for program violations. As shown in Figure 5, a total of 35 phase promotions have been given during the reporting period of December 2003 through May 2006.

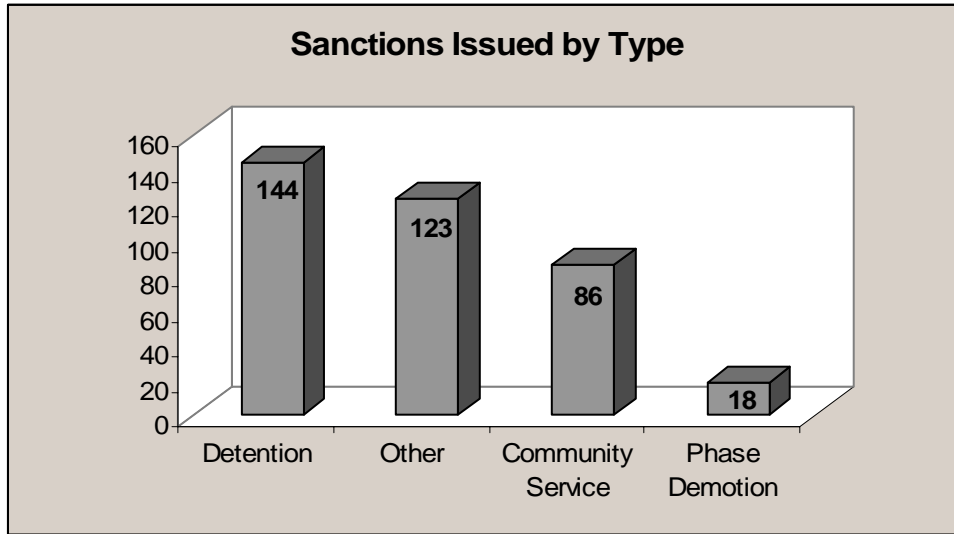
**Figure 5 : Phase Promotions**



**Sanctions.** Sanctions, like rewards, are used in a timely and consistent manner. The Drug Court team has developed a graduated schedule of sanctions so that individuals are made aware of the sanctioning process from the time they begin the program (Appendix B). In this way the team can remain consistent when conferring sanctions. Likewise, participants are less likely to question the fairness of any sanction in particular given this sanctioning schedule. Although the entire team is included when determining a particular sanction, the Judge retains the right to finalize the decision. Sanctions can range from writing or reading assignments to as much as 30 days in jail. Participants receive sanctions for failing to appear in court or at required treatment sessions, testing positive for substance use, committing new crimes, or failing to comply with Drug Court rules and regulations. Participants can also be demoted from their current phase if the team considers this a necessary course of action. During the reporting period, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program issued a total of 371 sanctions to participants. Incarceration was the most utilized sanction (39%); however, this Drug Court program also utilized creative sanctioning in 33% of the sanctions issued. These creative sanctions included home incarceration, writing assignments, making up missed treatment session, home

incarceration, daily contact with Drug Court personnel, increase curfew restrictions, ending work release privileges, and assigning formal apologies. Two sanctions used less often included community service (23%) and phase demotion (5%). The figure below shows the sanctions used by type.

**Figure 6 :Sanctions Issued by Type**



**Key Component #7. Ongoing judicial interaction with each Drug Court participant is essential.**

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court team is committed to cultivating an encouraging, yet supervisory, relationship between the judge and the participants. When the Judge relates to the participant in a supportive manner, as opposed to the adversarial relationship that the participant might expect, the participant is more likely to succeed in the program. “Drug Courts require judges to step beyond their traditionally independent and objective arbiter roles and develop new expertise” (DCPO, 1997). The Drug Court team in Henry, Oldham, and Trimble Counties support this idea and consistently depend on judicial interaction to reinforce the program’s supervision.

The Judge in this Drug Court helped to establish the program in this community and is committed to its success. By providing an intense level of supervision and a source of accountability, the Judge develops a relationship with each participant that aids in his/her recovery. By attending all staffing meetings and inquiring into the participants' lives, the judge monitors the participants' progress. The Judge speaks with the treatment coordinator on a regular basis and also makes himself available to all other team members.

**Key Component # 8. Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement or program goals and gauge effectiveness.**

An independent evaluation by the University of Kentucky Center on Drug and Alcohol Research has been ongoing since the inception of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court. This outcome report is a result of the current evaluation period, December, 2003 through May, 2006, and includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Additionally data are gathered from the CourtNet database in order to monitor any new criminal activity. This report is submitted per Bureau of Justice Assistance requirements which state each federally- funded Drug Court must obtain an externally-conducted process evaluation.

One piece of this process evaluation is a researcher-led focus group consisting of the Drug Court team members. The focus group follows a Logic Model approach (adopted from Harrell, 1996) which allows the Drug Court to participate in its own program development and evaluation. The researcher asks the treatment team to brainstorm and identify various key components of their program and then allows them the opportunity to re-visit these components later in the evaluation to examine which components have changed or remained static, which methods did and did not succeed, and what obstacles they felt the program needed to overcome in the future. In this way evaluation is an integral part of every new program's development process and is essential to program sustainability.



The end result of this focus group is a one-page graphic representation of important elements of the team's mission. The team was asked to identify their target population, discuss the short- and long-term goals for participants, therapeutic activities, community resources available to the program, characteristics of their participants, factors that influenced their activities, and concerns regarding program operations.

## **Focus Group**

### **Target Population**

The Drug Court team began the focus group by describing the target population of the program. Although the target population was established during training sessions prior to the official start of the program, the criteria have been refined to better serve the population it strives to serve.

Candidates for the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court must be residents of the 12<sup>th</sup> judicial circuit. Candidates are also required to meet chemical dependency criteria as measured by a thorough assessment administered by team members prior to the candidates acceptance into the program. Team members stated that even if the candidate denies having a substance abuse problem they will be assessed, drug tested, and strongly encouraged to enter the program.

Violent offenders are restricted from program admittance; however the team will consider candidates with assault IV or wanton endangerment charge on a case-by-case basis. Offenders who have been charged with trafficking are not admitted to the program unless the candidate has been assessed as having a substance abuse problem and is trafficking drugs in order to support his/her own habit.

## **Goals/Outcomes**

As the treatment component of the Drug Court program is crucial, each participant is expected to have at least a six month period of sobriety prior to graduating. Participants are also required to be established in an AA or NA program and have obtained a sponsor. Participants are encouraged to take initiative in group meetings in order to show their investment in the treatment process. Accepting responsibility is an important part of the program and participants are expected to demonstrate their achievement of this goal by consistently paying any and all fines or fees. Participants are also required to obtain stable, court-approved housing. In addition, team members encourage participants to obtain a drivers' license if they do not have one currently. Throughout the Drug Court program, all participants without a high school education are required to be working toward a GED so that it will be completed prior to graduation from Drug Court. Participants who have graduated from high school or had a GED prior to program entry are encouraged to continue their education by attending either college classes or vocational training. Obtaining full-time employment is an important goal for participants to achieve. Team members stated that not only will a full-time job increase the self-confidence of the participant it will benefit the community on various levels. Participants are also expected to become involved in social activities which do not include substances. Not only is this a condition of Drug Court but also an important treatment component. The Drug Court team also encourages graduating members of the program to mentor newer participants.

### **Short-term Goals**

In order for participants to successfully achieve personal and program-level goals, they must first achieve reasonable short-term goals. All participants are required to cease any drug use and provide negative urine screens during drug tests. Participants must also become involved in group therapy as well as attend AA/NA meetings. Team members also strongly encourage participants to create a support base during their treatment process. This may come from meetings, family and friends, or self-help groups in the community. Participants are also required to abstain from any criminal behavior. This requirement has changed somewhat from the previous focus group in which “no new charges” was an initial goal. Team members want to stress to participants that any criminal behavior is negative. If a participant enters into the program without a job he/she is expected to obtain employment. Participants are also expected to obtain stable, court approved housing. Other short-term goals include following all program phase requirements and the introduction of structure into everyday life.

### **Treatment Activities**

The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court offers both required and optional modes of treatment based on the program’s phase requirements and the individual needs of the participant. Upon entering the program, all participants must attend weekly group therapy sessions. Individual therapy is provided at the participants request or when the Drug Court team feels that individual sessions are necessary. Additional in-house supervision is provided by the treatment coordinator and the case specialist. Lifeskills groups are also required of all active Drug Court participants. In addition to mandatory group sessions, participants are also able to enroll in budgeting and financial groups, gender-specific groups and self-help groups. When a more

intensive level of treatment is necessary, participants are referred to residential treatment programs. Participants also must remain in regular contact with their probation officer. Daily journal writing assignments are requirements of the program as well as workbook assignments which target criminal behavior and substance abuse. Each participant completes a recovery self-assessment on a monthly basis in which the individual reviews his/her length of sobriety, steps made toward achieving goals, and possible relapse triggers. Team members also stated that psychiatric evaluations are also provided if applicable.

### **Resources Available**

Drug Court programs across the state often rely on community resources to supply valuable services to participants. The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court has continued to establish and maintain partnerships with numerous community organizations in an attempt to provide participants with a vast array of benefits.

The program works closely with Seven Counties Services, Inc. in order to provide group and individual counseling services. A treatment professional employed with Seven Counties is a valuable member of the team and is actively involved in team staffing and court sessions. Other treatment oriented resources include community AA and NA meetings as well as residential facilities such as 3<sup>rd</sup> Step House and Renaissance House. Participants can also attend self-help classes offered by private agencies within the community.

Since the beginning of the program the Drug Court team has successfully partnered with the jail system and its staff. Law enforcement participation has also increased, according to team members. Police officers are available for curfew checks and are present during court sessions. The police department is also a valuable source of information regarding active participants as

well as potential candidates. The Drug Court program also receives support from the public defender and probation offices. A member of each of these offices volunteers their time to Drug Court and are valuable members of the team. Other team members including the judge, treatment coordinator, case manager, and school liaison.

In terms of health care, the local health department offers a free health clinic to Drug Court participants. The Jefferson Community and Technical College is also available for participants who wish to continue their education or take advantage of social activities which do not include substances.

The team has also partnered with vocational rehabilitation services within the area as well as local businesses who are willing to employ Drug Court participants. Team members stated that local churches are eager to support the program and are an excellent source of community service options.

### **Participant Background Characteristics**

Team members were asked to describe characteristics of participants who enroll in the Drug Court program. Although the program is open to men and women of all ages, the majority of participants are white males. The team stated that they endeavor to reach minorities; however, it should be noted that, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, an estimated 95% of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble population is white. Therefore, the composition of Drug Court participants is consistent with current population trends.

Team members reported that each of the three counties are vastly different, which is reflected in the participants enrolled in Drug Court. The socioeconomic status of participants ranges from low to high, as do individual ages. Most participants enter the program with a tenth to twelfth grade education level and approximately half are unemployed.

Many candidates have used a myriad of licit and illicit substances; however team members report a rise in methamphetamine and prescription drug use among referrals. Substance abuse is also highly prevalent among the parents and spouses of participants. Team members stated that most families of participants have a history with the juvenile system as do the participants themselves. They also state that the Drug Court is “getting them [participants] later in the drug abuse process.”

### **Other Factors**

The Drug Court team next discussed additional factors which may affect the success of the program and/or the participants enrolled. Team members mentioned positive changes since the start of the program such as an increase in community awareness and positive publicity about the program.

Staff also reported, however, that although community support has increased, employers are still hesitant to hire individuals enrolled in Drug Court who have felony convictions. Employers are also concerned that participants may need to leave work in order to attend Drug Court related obligations such as drug testing, court sessions, and group treatment sessions.

Other factors which concern the Drug Court team is the family’s control over, and influence on, the participant in the program. Team members noted that family members who still use drugs can be a major stumbling block in the success of the participant.

The team also mentioned that participants often discover that it is difficult to overcome the stigma of a substance abuse problem. Although, as mentioned before, community support has risen, a bias against individuals who have been known for their substance use and criminal behavior often remains.

## **Program Concerns**

As with many Drug Court programs across the state, transportation is an issue for participants. Many smaller counties do not have a public transportation system. Even if public transportation is available in the county, participants who live in rural areas are often outside the bus route. This causes problems for many participants who lack a means of transportation, especially participants who have lost their license due to a DUI conviction.

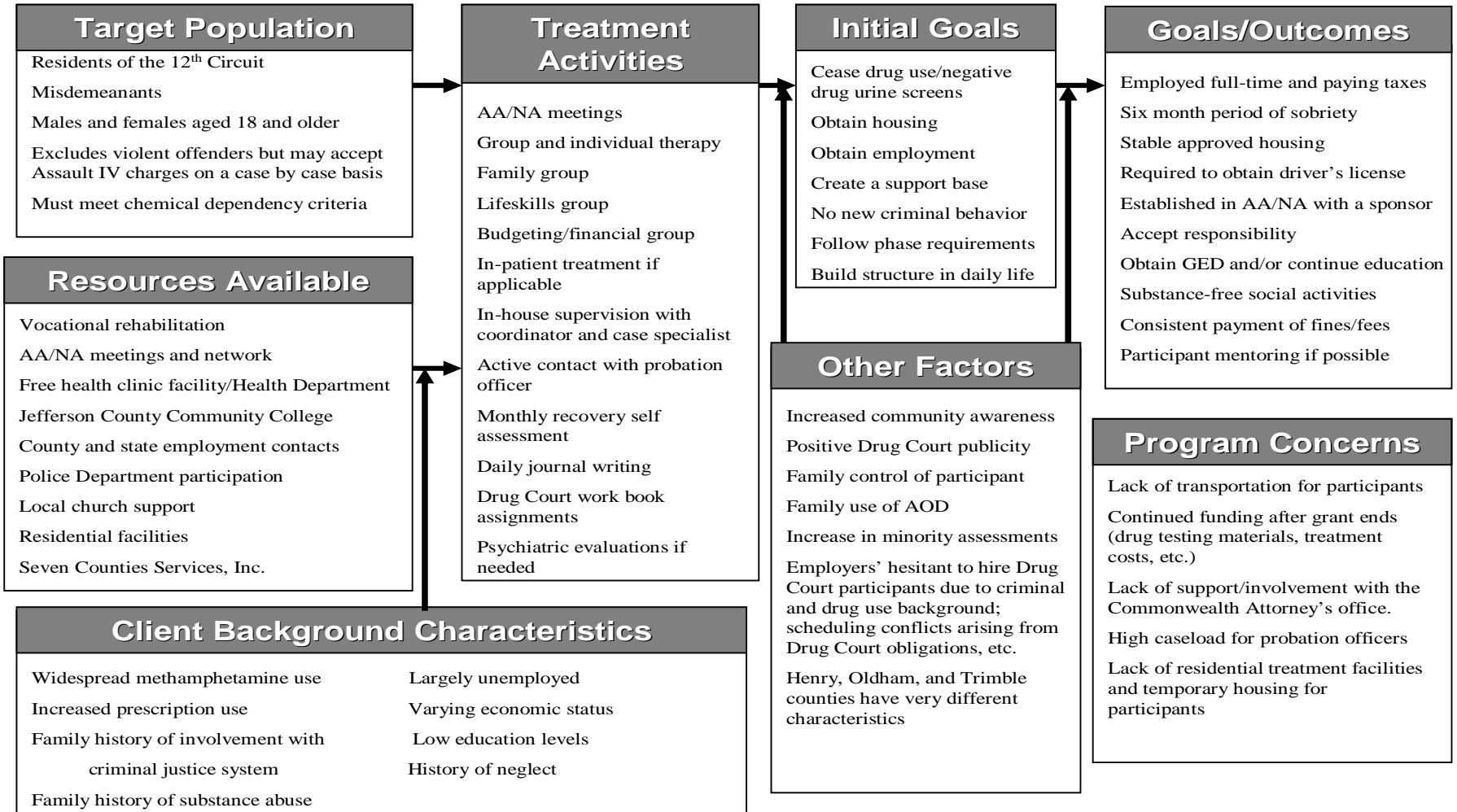
Another concern for team members is additional funding. Team members are worried about the future of the Drug Court program after the initial funding period is over. The purchase of drug testing materials is critical to a successful program as is sufficient funds for group and individual treatment. Drug Court team members are also concerned that without a concrete source of money they will be unable to continue to pay the full-time staff members necessary to manage the program and monitor participants.

The Drug Court program has experienced a setback in terms of staffing since the beginning of the program. The team has, until recently, enjoyed a successful relationship with the Commonwealth Attorney's office. Unfortunately, due to a staff change in the Commonwealth Attorney's office, there is no longer a dedicated professional willing to work consistently with the program. Team members voiced their concern with the noticeable decrease in the number of referrals originating from that office and with the overall lack of involvement. As the Drug Court staff takes the team approach seriously, they are concerned that this absence will impair the functioning and subsequent success of the program.





**Figure\*\*. Logic Model:**



**During Program Process Indicators and Outcomes.**

As with all Kentucky Drug Courts, the primary focus of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court is to help participants achieve abstinence and cease criminal activities. In order to achieve these goals, the Drug Court team has combined substance abuse treatment and intense supervision to effectively serve the needs of all participants. Three indicators which provide insight into the progress achieved by the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court are program retention, employment status during treatment, and recidivism.

**Retention in Drug Court.** Length of retention in Drug Court, similar to other substance abuse treatment programs, has been correlated with more successful long-term outcomes for participants (Peters, Hawes, and Hunt, 2001; see related substance abuse literature including Zhang, Friedmann, and Gerstein, 2003 and Simpson, Joe, and Rowan-Szal, 1997). Research shows that participants who remain in outpatient treatment programs for a minimum of three months receive some therapeutic benefit (Banks & Gottredson, 2003; Joe, Simpson, & Broome, 1998; Hubbard, Craddock, Flynn, Anderson, & Ethridge, 1997). The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court team is committed to not only engaging participants in the program but also retaining them until graduation. At the time of this report, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program has graduated two participants, which corresponds to a graduation rate of 9%. Both participants graduated in February, 2006. Data from participant files show that both graduates remained in the program for approximately 20 months prior to graduating.

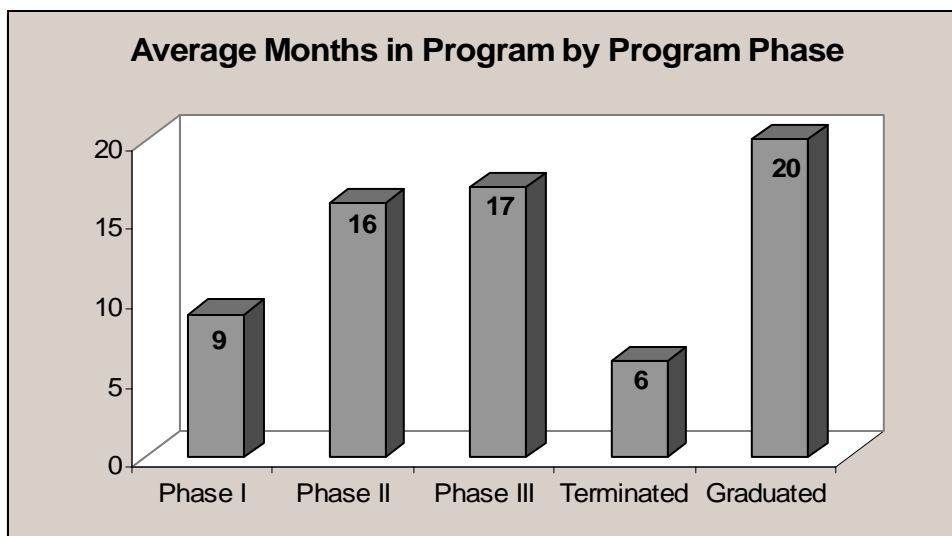
According to the program files, current active participants are receiving recommended therapeutic levels of intervention. To date, participants in Phase I have been active for an average of nine months (range is 1 to 11 months), the participant in Phase II has been active for

16 months, and participants in Phase III have been active for an average of 17 months (range is 12 to 23 months).

**Termination.** As of May, 2006, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program has terminated a total of 20 participants from their program. Ten participants were discharged for fleeing, six for failing to comply with program rules, three received new charges, and one participant was administratively discharged.

Even participants who are terminated from the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program receive a high level of attempted intervention before they are ultimately terminated from the program. Data extracted from participant files show that terminated participants remained in the program an average of six months (range was 1 to 11 months). In fact, only one participant out of the 20 participants that were terminated from the program received less than three months of treatment before being terminated from the program. The figure below shows the average number months in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program by Phase.

**Figure 8: Average Months in Program by Phase**



**Employment.** Employment problems are a reliable predictor of early dropout from treatment among adults in community-based substance abuse treatment programs (Platt, 1995). The participants in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court are required to obtain and maintain employment throughout the length of their stay in the program. A participant who is enrolled in school is allowed to work on a part-time basis; however, all other individuals not seeking to further their education must obtain a full-time job.

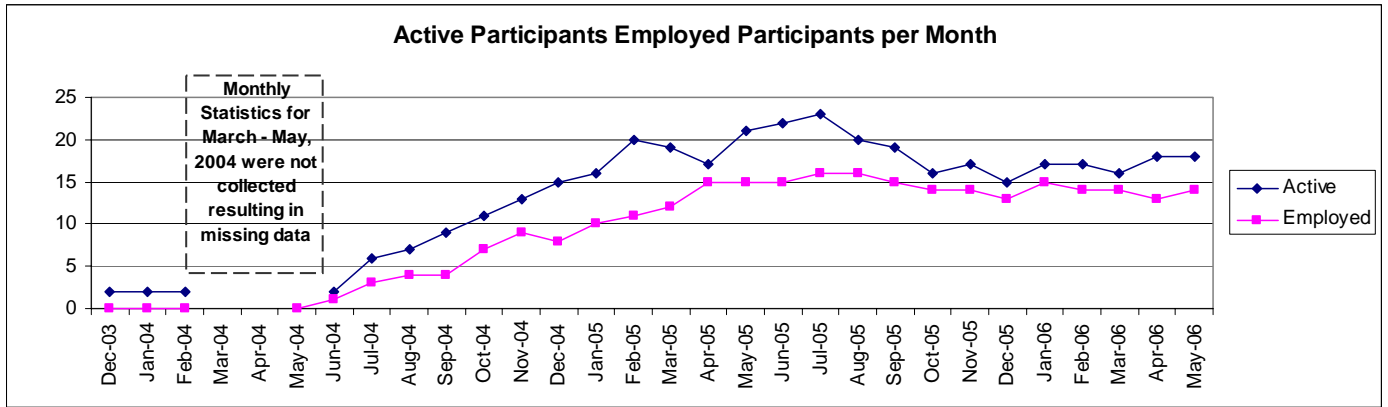
Participants are required to be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must maintain this employment status in order to progress to Phase II of the program. Team members report that, at times, a participant's employment schedule has interfered with court sessions and treatment meetings, but that all parties have worked together to see that all requirements are successfully fulfilled. Adjustment is required on both sides; while the participant is obligated to comply with all Drug Court requirements, the treatment coordinator and the rest of the team tries to accommodate the participants' schedule as much as possible.

Participant's employment is verified by the treatment coordinator every two weeks. This is accomplished via phone calls to the employer, pay stubs, and/or site visits. In fact, monthly statistics show that during the reporting period, a total of 425 employment verifications were made. In the case that a participant has trouble finding a job, he/she is referred to an employment office or a vocational rehabilitation center. The Drug Court team also continues to network within the community in order to partner with businesses that are willing to offer jobs to Drug Court participants.

In the case that a participant does not obtain or fails to maintain employment, he/she is required to perform community service work. As of May 2006, 14 of the 18 active participants (78%) were employed full-time. Several participants were enrolled in GED classes (n = 5), and

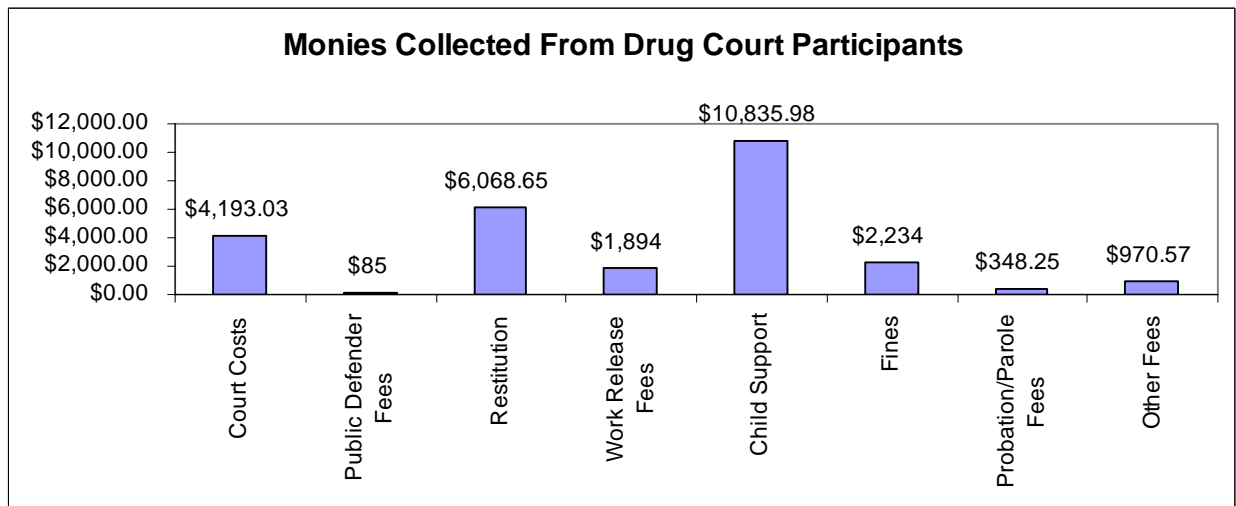
one participant was enrolled in vocational training. As can be seen from the figure below, participants enrolled in the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program obtain and maintain employment throughout their involvement in the program.

**Figure 9: Number of Active Participants Employed per Month**



Because participants are expected to obtain and maintain employment throughout their participation in the Drug Court program, participants are able to make payment towards various fees and fines they owe through continued payed employment. As of the May, 2006, the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program has collected a total of \$26,629.48 from program participants. The following figure shows amounts collected towards various fines.

**Figure 10 : Monies Paid from Drug Court Participants Towards Fines**



**Recidivism:**

More than a third of participants were charged with a felony offense during their tenure in Drug Court (38.5%) and slightly more than half (23.1%) were convicted. The most common felony charges were parole violations. Misdemeanor offenses were less prevalent, with only 17.9% of the participants charged and 15.4% convicted. Of the 21 participants for whom one year recidivism data were available, six were charged and four convicted of felony offenses. Two of the eight participants for whom two year recidivism data were available had been charged. One former client was charged with a felony offense in which the disposition is unknown and the other client was convicted of a misdemeanor offense.

**Key Component # 9. Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Drug Court planning, implementation, and operations**

Each member of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court team understands the importance of continuing education regarding Drug Court operations. Several members of the team attended the national Drug Court trainings provided by the Drug Court Planning Initiative (DCPI). The Judge and the treatment coordinator also attended the national DCPI Drug Court conference held in Milwaukee in June, 2004. Team members plan on attending future trainings, including the treatment coordinator who intends to take part in the DCPI national coordinator training workshop. By continuing their education, team members hope to increase their knowledge of substance use/abuse, Drug Court procedures, and general treatment principals which will aid them in developing a cohesive, interdisciplinary, and successful Drug Court program.

**Key Component # 10. Forging partnerships among Drug Courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Drug Court effectiveness.**

A diverse group of professionals have been involved with the Drug Court since the early planning stages. Members from the Public Defenders office, a judge from the 12<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, family court representatives, and treatment professionals have long been committed to establishing a successful program in this area. The team also includes members of the probation and parole office, sheriff's office, treatment providers, and Commonwealth Attorney's office. This combination of diverse professions and interests help ensure that the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court represents all facets of the judicial and treatment systems.

During the focus group, team members reported that developing relationships with area businesses and agencies has long been a priority. The team has demonstrated this belief by working to forge links with both public and private organizations. The local police department is a critical component of the Drug Court team and provides valuable services such as site visits, curfew checks, and participation in staffing and court sessions. The sheriff's department also brings a wealth of information to the team by providing insight into the community, the participants, and possible Drug Court candidates. Links with employment services and vocational rehabilitation programs have been established by the Drug Court team to assist participants obtain part- and full-time employment. Adult education programs have been enlisted to help participants complete their high-school education, GED, or further their education by enrolling in vocational or college classes. Community services agencies such as Goodwill and the Red Cross have proven to be valuable resources when participants need clothing, food, or monetary assistance. The Drug Court team has also joined with Seven Counties Services, Inc. to provide participants with individual, group, and other treatment options. Relationships with

residential facilities such as JADAC and Ten Broeck have been formed for participants who need a more intensive level of substance abuse treatment.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

A diverse group of professionals from Henry, Oldham and Trimble Counties have joined together to establish a cohesive and dedicated Drug Court program. The Drug Court has changed and progressed since its creation. A wider range of sanctions has been developed in order to appropriately handle infractions and acts of non-compliance, and the addition of a treatment coordinator has allowed the Drug Court team to provide more supervision and accountability for the participants. Finally, community resources have increased to include numerous public and private organizations interested in assisting Drug Court participants.

### **Strengths.**

Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court has many strengths that are unique to their multi-county program. One of the greatest strengths of this court is its use of creative sanctioning. Many Drug Court programs rely heavily on incarceration as a sanction in their Drug Court programs. While the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court does use incarceration as a sanction, they consistently utilize other sanctioning modalities as well. A great premise of the Drug Court program is to remove substance abusing offenders from the penal system, yet many Drug Courts around the State still utilize the penal system for the majority of their sanctioning purposes. The Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program utilizes writing assignments, home incarceration, increased curfew restrictions and if the sanction is for missing treatment sessions, making up or adding to missed treatment sessions in lieu of incarceration.



Another great strength of this program is the high employment rate among participants. Through employment is mandated, this Drug Court program was able to find employment and collect almost \$27,000 in fees, fines, and child support payments from participants. This program is teaching participants the necessity of steady, gainful employment and the responsibility of repaying debts.

Finally, this program holds their participants to strict standards of behavior and treatment obligations. While the graduation rate of the Henry/Oldham/Trimble Drug Court program is low, this Drug Court goes to great lengths to ensure that participants are equipped to function outside of the court prior to graduating from the program. Any program violation is followed swiftly by a sanction, and sometimes this may result in demotion to a lower phase, or not being phased up by the treatment team as quickly as anticipated. Consequently, the number of days participants spend in treatment in this program often exceeds those reported in the literature for other outpatient treatment programs and has led to the low graduation rate.

### **Recommendations.**

1. Continue operation of Drug Court Program in accordance with the ten Key Components.
2. Develop methods to increase participant enrollment in order to reach target goal established in the original grant application.
3. Continue to develop relationships with area businesses and local community service agencies in order to provide participants with a variety of employment, education, and treatment options.
4. Strive to increase the graduation rate of the program without hindering the established therapeutic standards.

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