



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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Michigan Supreme Court Releases Report on Problem-Solving Courts

LANSING, MI, May 14, 2014 – The Michigan Supreme Court today released the report: [*Michigan Problem-Solving Courts Performance and Outcomes 2011-2013*](#). The report provides useful information including detailed caseload statistics and recidivism rates for participants in drug, sobriety, and mental health courts, among others.

“The cost of incarcerating an offender is \$50 to \$100 per day. So for every person our problem-solving courts keep out of jail, we not only help someone become a productive member of the community, we also reduce crime and save the taxpayers money,” said Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr.

Problem-solving courts are innovative courts designed to address the underlying problem that has resulted in an offender entering the criminal justice system. These problems range from drug and alcohol abuse to mental illness and include the unique challenges faced by military veterans. Trial judges throughout Michigan have stepped up to lead these courts and divert offenders into special programs designed to provide the treatment and supervision needed to solve the problem and help offenders stay out of trouble.

Measuring performance of trial courts in order to help them improve outcomes is a top priority of Michigan’s judiciary. As reflected in this report, the success of Michigan’s problem-solving courts in reducing recidivism is a notable achievement. For example,

- Two years after admission to any type of drug court, graduates had less than half the recidivism rate for an alcohol or drug offense of comparison group members.
- After two years, sobriety court participants had recidivism rates for an alcohol or drug offense that were more than three times lower than their comparison counterparts.
- Among mental health court participants, recidivism was reduced by more than 300 percent within two years. Moreover, virtually all participants improved their mental health and quality of life and more than one-third got a better job.

Drug Courts. Between October 1, 2011, and September 30, 2013, drug courts handled 8,626 cases. Of active cases, about half were in a sobriety court program and one quarter were in an adult circuit court drug program with the balance either in a district court, juvenile, or family dependency program. Adult participants used a wide variety of drugs, including heroin and methamphetamine, while nine out of ten juvenile participants identified marijuana as their drug of choice.

Mental Health Courts. During the period, there were 926 participants in mental health courts. Of those, about half entered with a misdemeanor charge and half with a felony charge. Of particular note was the finding that more than two-thirds of participants entering with a felony charge also had a co-occurring substance use disorder.

Veterans Treatment Courts. In Michigan, there were eight operational veterans treatment courts in 2013. These courts promote sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response, involving collaboration with drug and mental health courts, the Department of Veterans Affairs, volunteer mentors, and organizations that support veterans and their families.

Trial Court Services staff at the State Court Administrative Office support problem-solving courts by establishing operational standards and guidelines and through training, evaluation, monitoring, and other assistance.

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