



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Supreme Court Administrative Office gets federal grant for adult drug courts

For immediate release Thursday, September 26, 2013

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia has received a \$1.48 million, three-year federal grant to study adult drug practices and results as part of the plan to expand the programs statewide. The grant also will be used for specialized training.

The grant from United States Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs was awarded to the West Virginia Supreme Court’s Administrative Office. The grant from the 2013 Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program was made in response to an application prepared by the Court’s Division of Probation Services and the Division of Court Services, and the National Center for State Courts.

The award is one of twelve made nationwide, and it is the largest single award this year.

“Drug courts have proven to be a successful alternative to incarceration, making West Virginia communities safer, restoring families and helping graduates of the program live responsibly,” said Chief Justice Brent D. Benjamin. “Already this year we have well over 600 graduates, taxpayers have saved \$17 million, and the rate of recidivism is down.”

West Virginia has twenty operational adult drug courts in West Virginia. There also are sixteen operational juvenile drug courts.

Adult and juvenile drug courts are intensive supervision probation programs. Juvenile drug court participants are usually in the program for six to eight months. Initially, a participant meets with the drug court judge weekly and a probation officer several times per week. Juvenile drug court is intended for youths who are at risk of becoming addicted, not those who are already addicted.

Adult drug courts include those who already are addicted. Participants complete a treatment program of no less than twelve months. They are required to attend group and individual counseling, to take drug tests multiple times per week, to perform community service work, to participate in education programs, and to work on individualized rehabilitation plans as directed. They meet with probation officers frequently and see the drug court judge at least weekly.

The average annual cost incurred by the state for one adult drug court participant is approximately \$7,100 compared to \$18,000 in jail or \$25,000 in prison. About 10 percent of drug court graduates return to jail compared to 80 percent of drug offenders who have not gone through drug court programs.

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