



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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Problem-Solving Courts Cut Crime, Save Taxpayers Money, and Reduce Unemployment among Graduates, Says State Report

LANSING, MI, May 17, 2016 – Rates of recidivism and unemployment for graduates of drug, sobriety, mental health, and veterans treatment courts in Michigan continued to drop dramatically, according to a [report](#) released today by the Michigan Supreme Court. By diverting nonviolent offenders into strictly supervised treatment instead of prison, these innovative courts make communities safer and stronger while saving money for taxpayers.

“The success of problem-solving courts is one more example of how Michigan’s judiciary is data-driven and focused on outcomes,” said Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. “The data in this report make it clear that participants are much less likely to commit another crime and much more likely to find a job. That’s a win-win for Michigan.”

“These courts are solving problems and saving lives,” said Justice Joan L. Larsen, MSC’s liaison to problem-solving courts. “Each year, the news gets better and better as participants get back to work, back to their families, and back to a higher quality of life.”

Key report findings:

- Graduates of Michigan drug and mental health courts are two times less likely to commit another offense after two years.
- Graduates of Michigan sobriety courts are more than three times less likely to commit another offense after two years.
- Nearly 100 percent of mental health court graduates improved their mental health, and 97 percent improved their quality of life.
- Unemployment among adult circuit drug court graduates was slashed by 85 percent and dropped by 75 percent among sobriety court graduates.
- Unemployment among veterans treatment court graduates was cut by more than half.

Problem-solving courts improve outcomes for offenders by diverting them into special programs that provide the treatment and supervision offenders need to stay out of trouble and lead productive lives. Avoiding incarceration also generates substantial savings for taxpayers, and participants improve their employment status and overall quality of life. Michigan’s 179 problem-solving courts provide access to 97 percent of the state’s population, and Michigan is a national leader with 23 veterans treatment courts – more than any other state.

SCAO compiled data between October 1, 2013, and September 30, 2015, in “[Solving Problems, Saving Lives](#).” During this time, Michigan’s drug court and sobriety court programs discharged 5,669 participants; 762 participants were discharged from 20 adult and 2 juvenile mental health court programs; and veterans treatment court programs discharged 349 participants.

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NOTE: Visit the MSC’s [Problem-Solving Courts YouTube page](#) for videos of “Ask the Judges,” in which treatment court judges explain why these courts are so successful.