

Recidivism Data 2013  
Michigan Drug and Alcohol Courts

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) calculates recidivism rates as one measure of the effectiveness of problem-solving courts. In general, graduates of these programs are less likely to be re-convicted of a new offense in the two years and four years following graduation than similar defendants who did not participate in a program.

This 7-page report summarizes the recidivism rates for each type of problem-solving court. For more statistics, see the annual Michigan Problem-Solving Courts Report at: <http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/Publications/Reports/PSCAnnualReport.pdf>

The SCAO defines recidivism broadly and narrowly under two different definitions:

1. Recidivism is defined as **any new conviction** within the categories of violent offenses; controlled substance use or possession; controlled substance manufacturing or distribution; other drug offenses; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol first offense; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol second offense; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol third offense; other alcohol offenses; property offenses; breaking and entering or home invasion; nonviolent sex offenses; juvenile status offenses, including incorrigible, runaway, truancy, or curfew violations; neglect and abuse civil; and neglect and abuse criminal. This definition excludes traffic offenses and offenses that fall outside the above categories.

2. Recidivism is defined as any **new drug or alcohol conviction**, including controlled substance use or possession; controlled substance manufacturing or distribution; other drug offenses; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol first offense; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol second offense; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol third offense; and other alcohol offenses.

In order to calculate recidivism rates, specific time frames were selected. This report is based on new convictions under both definitions occurring within two years and within four years of admission.<sup>1</sup> In order for recidivism to be evaluated over the two-year period, the drug court participant had to have been admitted into drug court at least two years prior to the time of this evaluation, and their comparison member had to have had their case opened in the case management system at least two years prior to this evaluation. Similarly, when evaluating over the four-year period, only those matched pairs where the drug court participant had been admitted into a drug court program at least four years prior to the time of this evaluation and their comparison member had their case opened in the case management system at least four years prior to this evaluation were eligible for evaluation.

Lastly, a drug court participant is defined as an individual who has been admitted to and successfully completed the requirements of a drug court program within the state of Michigan.

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<sup>1</sup> For comparison group members, the time frame is calculated from the date that the court case matching them to a drug court participant was opened in the court's case management system.

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Drug court programs within this evaluation include drug courts operating in circuit courts, drug courts operating in district courts, sobriety courts, and juvenile drug courts. Family dependency treatment courts were excluded due to the limited number of participants (N = 5) that were paired with comparison group members using the above methodology. The analyses that follow include 5,090 total pairs of drug court participants and comparison group members in the two years postadmission analyses and 3,835 total pairs of drug court and comparison participants in the four years postadmission analyses. For a further detailed description of the methodology, please visit <http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/admin/op/problem-solving-courts/Documents/RecidivismExplanation.pdf>.

***Any New Conviction Within Two Years of Admission***

Two years after admission to any type of drug court, 7 percent of drug court participants were convicted of a new offense. In contrast, 15 percent of comparison group members were convicted of a new offense within two years. Drug court participants had less than half the recidivism rate of comparison group members and this difference was statistically significant.<sup>2</sup>

The recidivism rate varied according to the type of drug court participants completed. Figure 1 illustrates the recidivism rates by drug court type. The differences in recidivism rates for each court type were statistically significant for adult circuit, adult district, and sobriety courts.

Two years after admission to a sobriety court, four percent of participants had been convicted of a new offense, and 12 percent of comparison members had been convicted of a new offense. The recidivism rates for sobriety court graduates were three times lower than their comparison counterparts.<sup>3</sup>

Adult drug court programs in district and circuit courts had similar impacts on recidivism. In adult district drug court programs, six percent of drug court participants had a new conviction within two years of admission. Among the comparison group members, 12 percent had a new conviction within two years. Adult district drug court graduates' recidivism rates were half of their comparison group members.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, adult circuit drug court graduates' recidivism rates were nine percent and their comparison member counterparts' recidivism rates were 17 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Juvenile drug court participants did not compare as favorably to their comparison participant pairs as drug court participants in other types of drug courts. After two years, 24 percent of juvenile drug court participants had been convicted of a new offense. In contrast, 27

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<sup>2</sup> t (1, 5089) = 12.380, p < 0.001

<sup>3</sup> t (1, 2734) = 11.524, p < 0.001

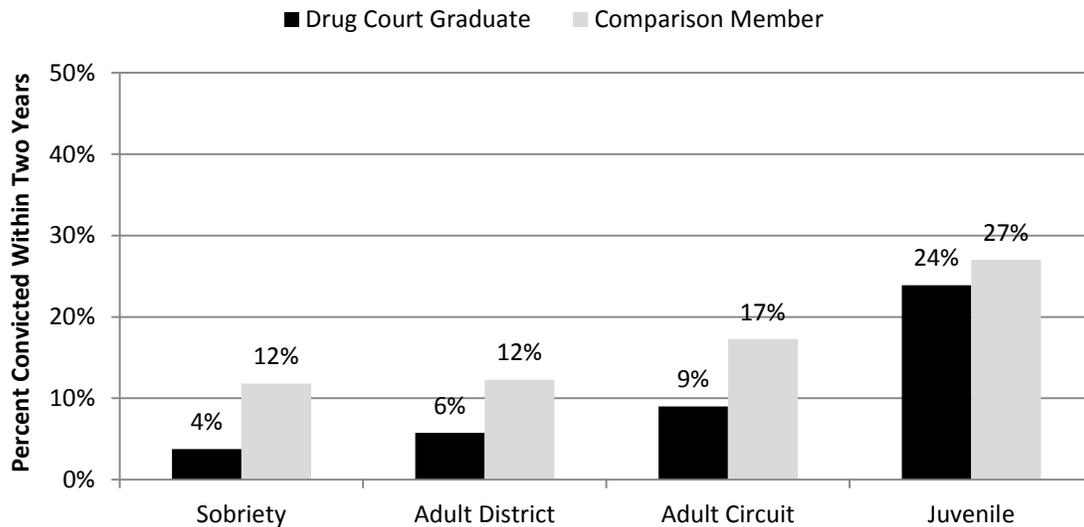
<sup>4</sup> t (1, 609) = 4.050, p < 0.001

<sup>5</sup> t (1, 1196) = 6.151, p < 0.001

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percent of the comparison group members had been convicted of a new offense within two years. Although juvenile drug court participants had a lower recidivism rate than comparison members, the difference between the groups was not statistically significant.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1**  
**Any New Conviction Within Two Years of Admission**



***Any New Conviction Within Four Years of Admission***

Four years after admission to any type of drug court, drug court graduates had a recidivism rate of 16 percent, while the comparison group members' recidivism rate was 23 percent, and this difference was statistically significant.<sup>7</sup>

The recidivism rate varied according to the type of drug court. Figure 2 illustrates the recidivism rates by drug court type. Participants in sobriety court programs evidenced the largest reductions in recidivism compared to the comparison group members. Four years after admission to sobriety court, 10 percent of participants had been convicted of a new offense, and 18 percent of their comparison group members were convicted of a new offense in the same time period. This difference between the groups was statistically significant.<sup>8</sup>

Adult district drug court participants showed a five percentage point decrease in recidivism with 13 percent of adult circuit drug court participants being convicted within four

<sup>6</sup>  $t(1, 547) = 1.200, p > 0.05$

<sup>7</sup>  $t(1, 3834) = 7.367, p < 0.001$

<sup>8</sup>  $t(1, 2057) = 8.358, p < 0.001$

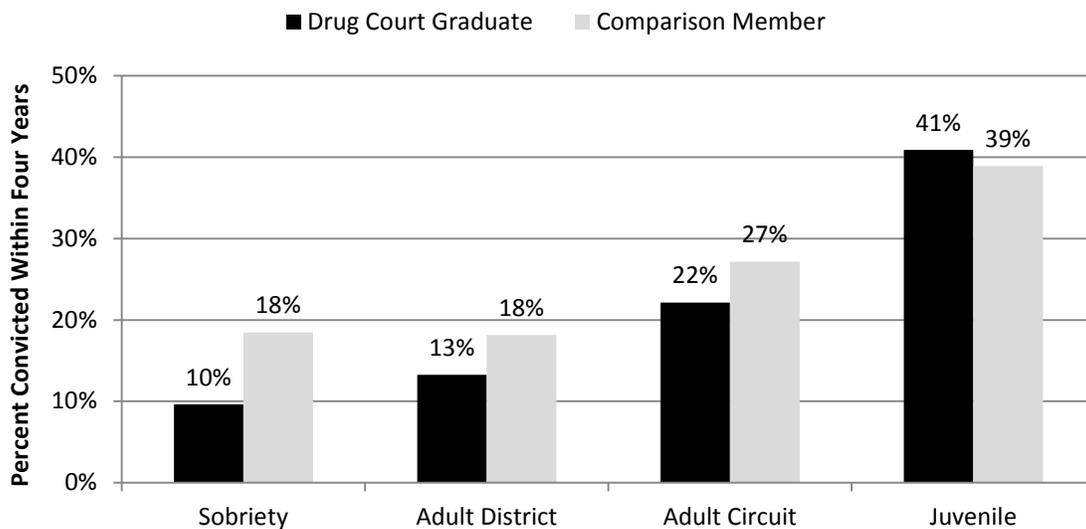
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years in comparison to 18 percent of the comparison group members. The difference was statistically significant.<sup>9</sup>

Of the adult circuit drug court program participants, 22 percent were reconvicted within four years. In contrast, 27 percent of the comparison group members were reconvicted in the same time frame, and this difference was statistically significant.<sup>10</sup>

Four years after admission, 41 percent of juvenile drug court participants had been reconvicted of a new offense, while 39 percent of the comparison group members recidivated within four years. The difference in recidivism rates was not statistically significant.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 2**  
**Any New Conviction Within Four Years of Admission**



***New Drug or Alcohol Conviction Within Two Years of Admission***

As discussed previously, two definitions of recidivism were used to analyze the data in this report. This section of the report utilizes a narrow definition of recidivism that limits new convictions to drug or alcohol offenses. Two years after admission to any type of drug court, six percent of drug court participants had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense. In contrast, 11 percent of comparison group members were convicted of a new drug or alcohol

<sup>9</sup>  $t(1, 489) = 2.181, p < 0.05$

<sup>10</sup>  $t(1, 880) = 2.459, p < 0.05$

<sup>11</sup>  $t(1, 405) = 0.632, p > 0.05$

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offense within two years. Drug court participants had nearly half the recidivism rate of comparison group members, and this difference was statistically significant.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 3 illustrates the recidivism rates by drug court type. Sobriety court participants showed the most impressive reduction in recidivism compared to the comparison group members, with nearly three and a half times fewer sobriety court participants recidivating. Two years after admission to a sobriety court, three percent of drug court participants had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense. However, 10 percent of their comparison group members were convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense in the same time period. As would be expected, the difference between the groups was statistically significant.<sup>13</sup>

Adult district drug court participants also showed an impressive reduction in recidivism by being reconvicted half the number of times than the comparison group members. Drug court participants in adult district courts recidivated five percent of the time with an alcohol or drug offense within two years, where comparison members recidivated 10 percent of the time with a new alcohol or drug offense within two years. The difference between the two groups was statistically significant.<sup>14</sup>

Participants in adult circuit drug court programs also showed large reductions in recidivism compared to the comparison group members. In adult circuit drug court programs, six percent of drug court participants had a new drug or alcohol conviction within two years of admission. Among the comparison group members, 11 percent had a new drug or alcohol conviction within two years. The difference in recidivism between adult circuit drug court participants and the comparison group members was statistically significant.<sup>15</sup>

After two years, 18 percent of juvenile drug court participants had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense. In contrast, 20 percent of the comparison group members had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense within two years. Because recidivism rates were nearly identical between the groups, the percentages were not significantly different.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>  $t(1, 5089) = 10.875, p < 0.001$

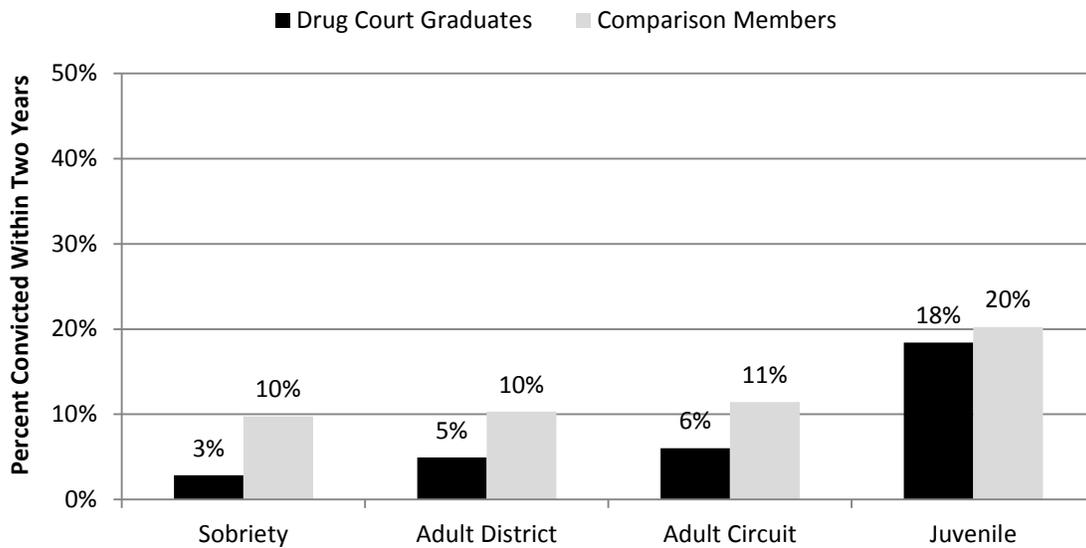
<sup>13</sup>  $t(1, 2734) = 10.875, p < 0.001$

<sup>14</sup>  $t(1, 609) = 3.615, p < 0.001$

<sup>15</sup>  $t(1, 1196) = 4.624, p < 0.001$

<sup>16</sup>  $t(1, 547) = 0.785, p > 0.05$

**Figure 3**  
**Drug or Alcohol Conviction Within Two Years**



***New Drug or Alcohol Conviction Within Four Years of Admission***

Four years after admission to any type of drug court, drug court graduates had a recidivism rate for an alcohol or drug offense of 13 percent, while the comparison group members' recidivism rate was 18 percent, and this difference was statistically significant.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates recidivism rates by drug court type. Sobriety court participants showed the most impressive reduction in recidivism compared to the comparison group members, with nearly two times fewer sobriety court participants recidivating. Four years after admission to sobriety court, eight percent of participants had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense. However, 15 percent of their comparison group members were convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense in the same time period. As would be expected, the difference between the groups was statistically significant.<sup>18</sup>

Adult district drug court and adult circuit drug court programs had similar impacts on recidivism, with participants in adult district drug court programs showing slightly larger reductions in recidivism compared to the comparison group. In adult district drug court programs, 12 percent of drug court participants had a new drug or alcohol conviction within four years of admission. Among the comparison group members, 16 percent had a new drug or

<sup>17</sup>  $t(1, 3,834) = 6.045, p < 0.001$

<sup>18</sup>  $t(1, 2,057) = 7.331, p < 0.001$

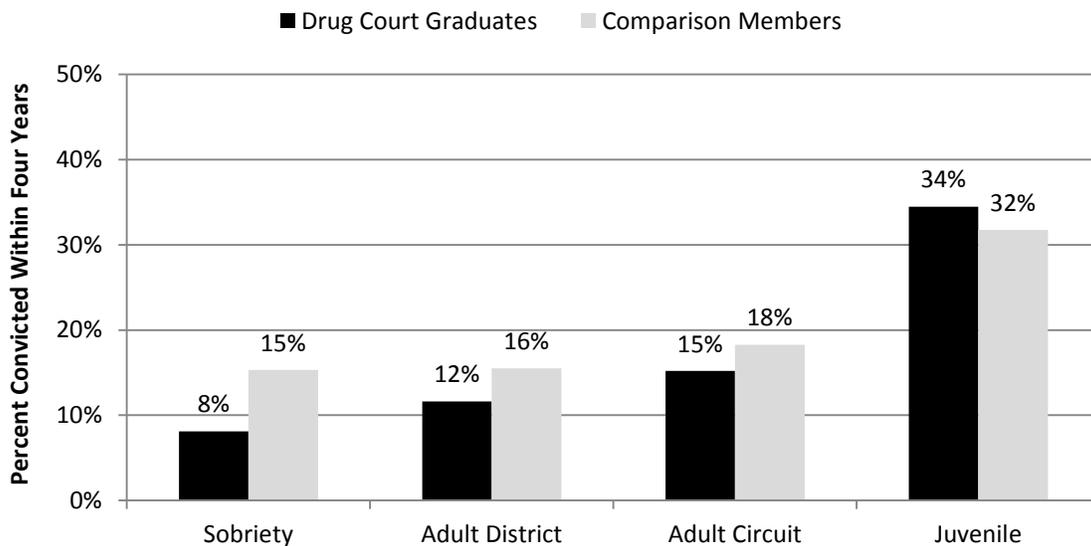
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alcohol conviction within four years. This was a statistically significant difference between the groups.<sup>19</sup>

In adult circuit drug court programs, 15 percent of drug court participants had a new drug or alcohol conviction within four years of admission. Among the comparison group members, 18 percent had a new conviction in the same time frame. This, too, was a statistically significant difference between the groups.<sup>20</sup>

After four years, 34 percent of juvenile drug court participants had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense, and 32 percent of the comparison group members had been convicted of a new drug or alcohol offense. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 4**  
**Drug or Alcohol Conviction Within Four Years**



<sup>19</sup>  $t(1, 489) = 1.841, p > 0.05$

<sup>20</sup>  $t(1, 880) = 1.699, p > 0.05$

<sup>21</sup>  $t(1, 405) = 0.907, p > 0.05$