



What Works: Best Practices in Adult Drug Courts.  
*New Findings From the Latest Research*

*Shannon Carey, PhD*  
**Beyond the Bench**  
 San Francisco, CA  
 December 16, 2011




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### The Research

- In the past 15 years NPC has completed over 150 drug court evaluations and research studies nationally
- Adult, Juvenile, DWI/DUI, Reentry and Family Treatment Drug Courts
- Including California, Guam, Idaho, Indiana, Florida, Michigan, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Nevada, Oregon and Vermont

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### What We Already Know

#### Recidivism

- Drug Courts reduce recidivism
- Recidivism is decreased up to 14 years after participation
- Average reduction is about 18%
- Some courts more than 60%




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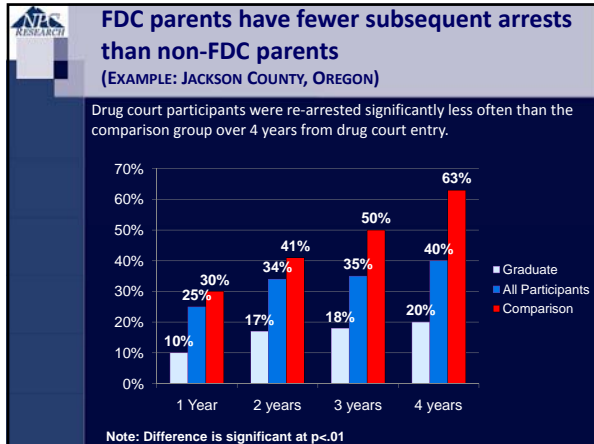
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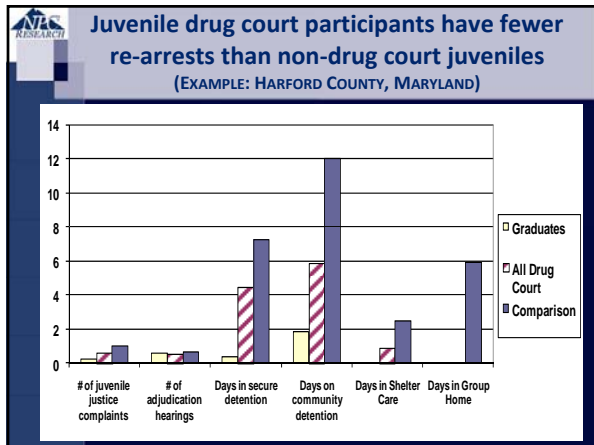
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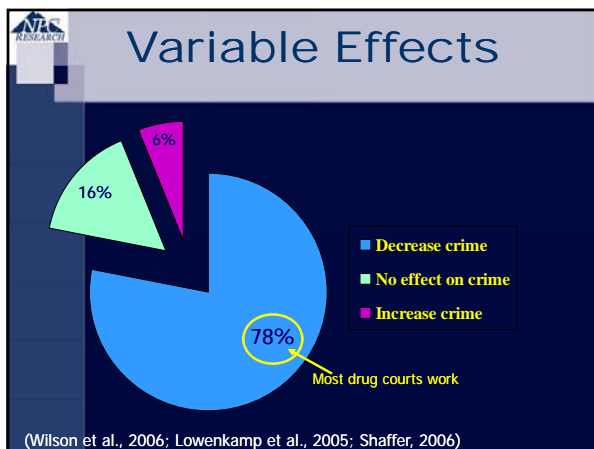
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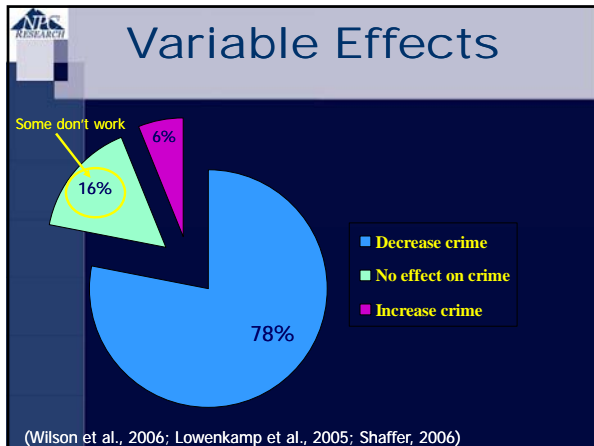
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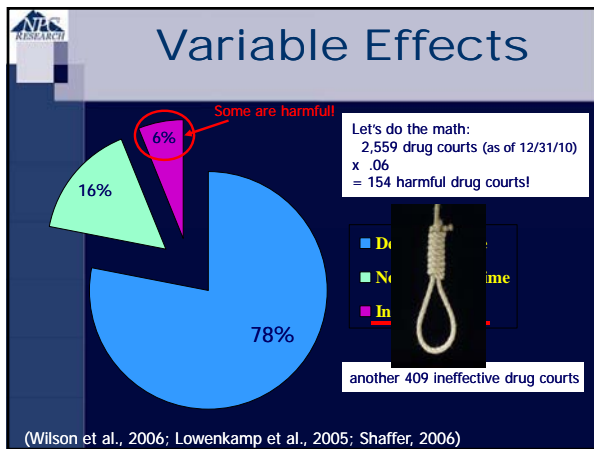
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**What is Working?**

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 **What is Working?**

- *Looked at 101 drug courts around the nation (detailed process studies/10 KC)*
- *69 included recidivism and cost evaluations*
- *Many of the sites are in California (see slide at end of presentation)*
- *In total, this study included 32,719 individuals (16,317 drug court participants and 16,402 comparison group members).*

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 **What is Working?**

- *Trying to make the 10KC understandable in a much more specific way – through specific practices*
- *What are the best drug courts doing?*

Found over 50 practices that were related to significantly lower recidivism or lower costs or both

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 **What is Working?**

**Drug Court Top 10**

- *Top 10 Best Practices for Reducing Recidivism*
- *Top 10 Best Practices for Reducing Cost (Increasing Cost Savings)*

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

**10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations**

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**10. Drug Courts that used program evaluations to make modifications in drug court operations had 85% greater reductions in recidivism**

The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations

Response	N	% reductions in # of rearrests
Yes	21	0.37
No	13	0.20

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

**10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations**

**9. Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team**

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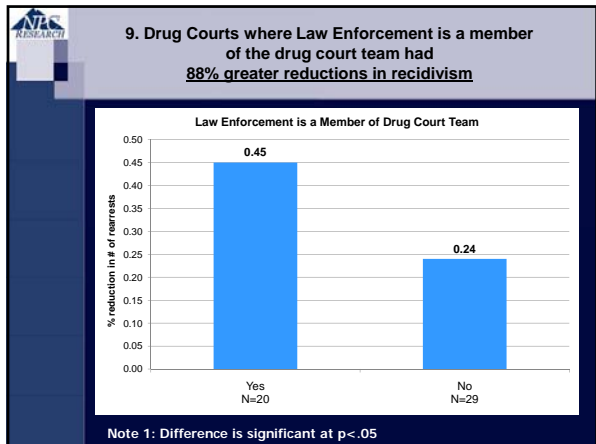
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- Drug Court Top 10 \*Recidivism\***
10. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
  9. *Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
  8. *Drug Court allows non-drug charges*

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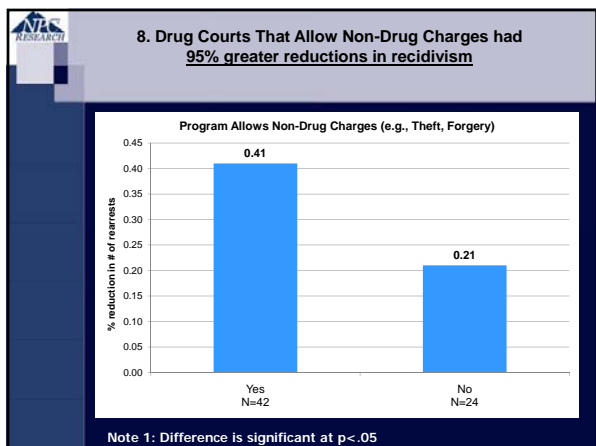
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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

10. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
9. *Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
8. *Drug Court allows non-drug charges*
7. *A representative from treatment attends court sessions*

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**7. Drug Courts Where a Treatment Representative Attends Court Hearings had 100% greater reductions in recidivism**

Response	N	% reduction in # of rearrests
Yes	57	0.38
No	10	0.19

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

10. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
9. *Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
8. *Drug Court allows non-drug charges*
7. *A representative from treatment attends court sessions*
6. *Review of the data/program stats has led to modifications in drug court operations*

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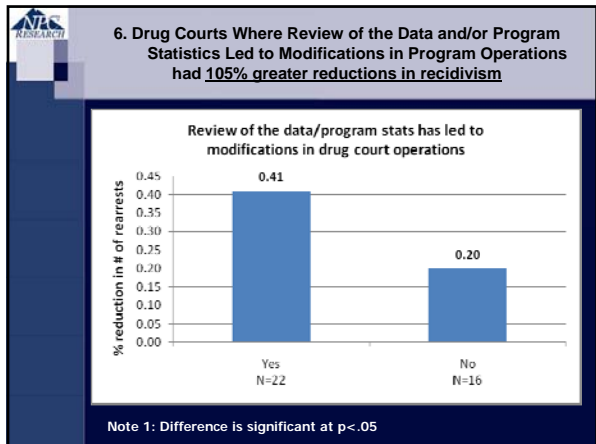
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**Drug Court Top 10  
\*Recidivism\***

**5. A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)**

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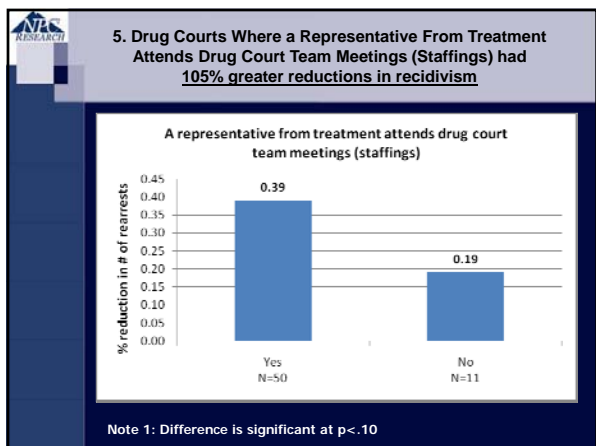
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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*

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4. Drug Courts Where Treatment Communicates with the Court via Email had **119% greater reductions in recidivism**

Response	N	% reduction in # of rearrests
Yes	31	0.46
No	14	0.21

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Recidivism\*

5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*

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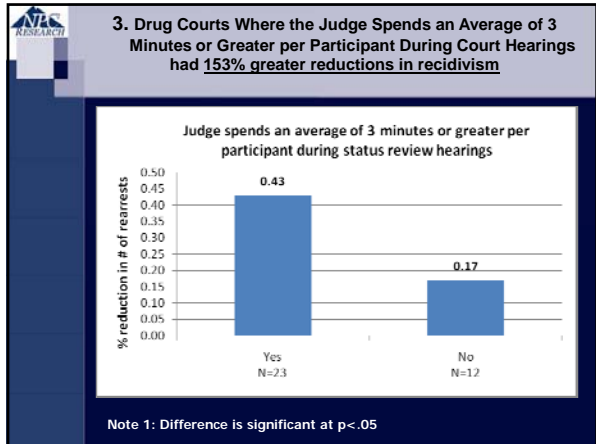
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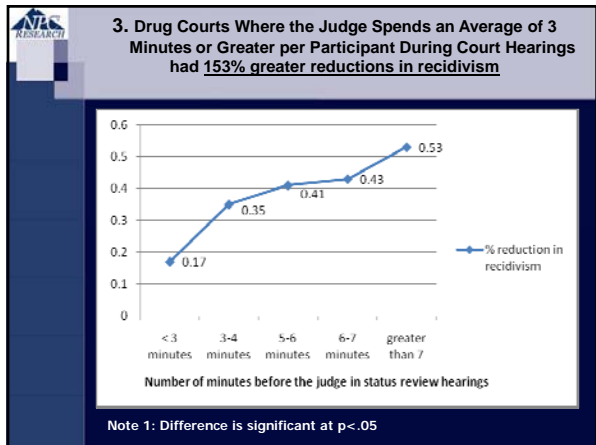
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- Drug Court Top 10 \*Recidivism\***
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
  4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
  3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
  2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation*

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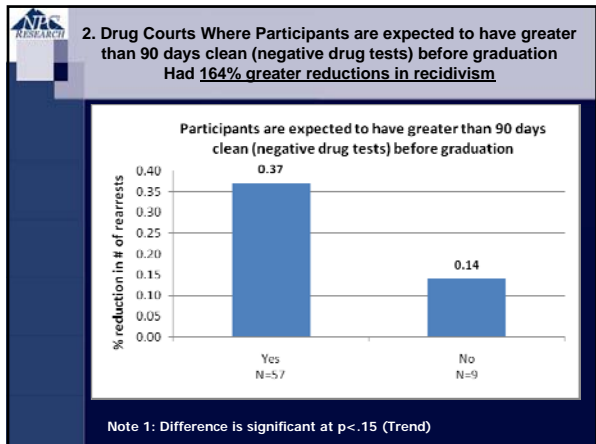
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- Drug Court Top 10 \*Recidivism\***
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
  4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
  3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
  2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation*
  1. *Program caseload (number of active participants) is less than 125*

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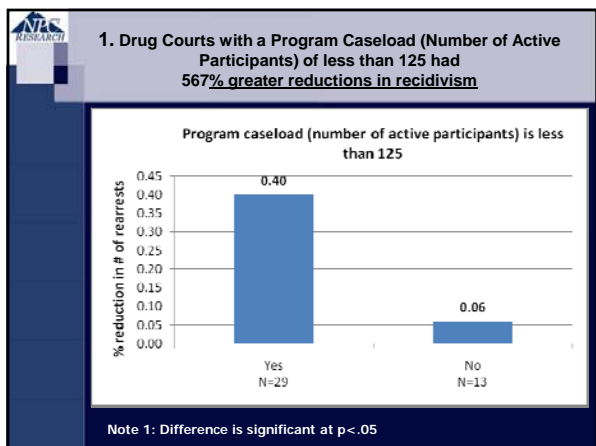
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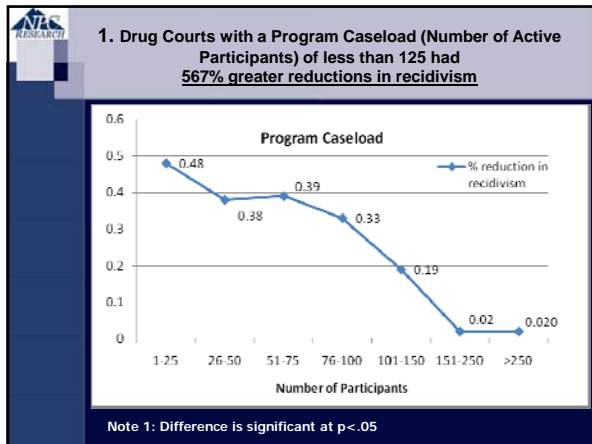
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**Drug Court Top 10  
\*Cost Savings\***

**10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions**

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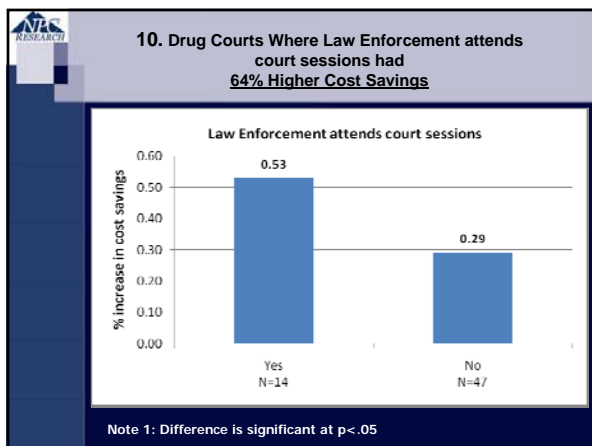
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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions

9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week

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**9. Drug Courts Where Drug Tests are Collected at Least Two Times per Week In the First Phase had 68% Higher Cost Savings**

In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week

Response	N	% increase in cost savings
Yes	53	0.29
No	12	0.18

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions

9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week

8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less

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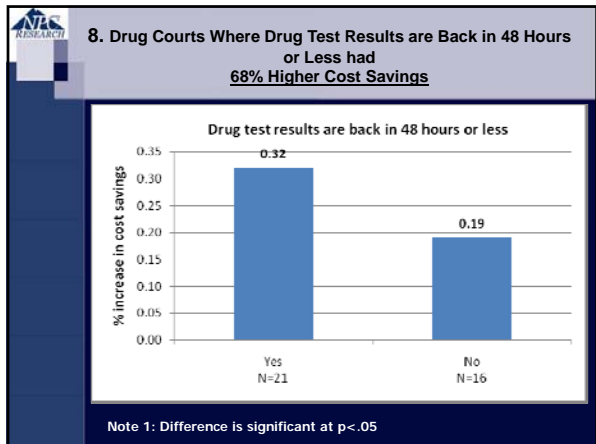
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- Drug Court Top 10 \*Cost Savings\***
10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions
  9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week
  8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less
  7. Team members are given a copy of the guidelines for sanctions

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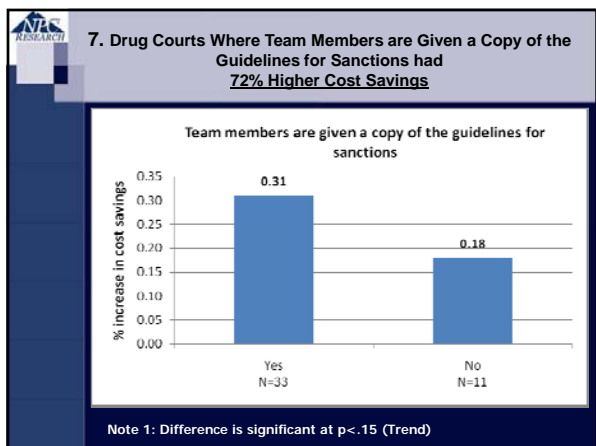
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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions
9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week
8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less
7. Team members are given a copy of the guidelines for sanctions
6. A representative from treatment attends court sessions

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**6. Drug Courts Where a Representative from Treatment Attends Court Sessions had 81% Higher Cost Savings**

A Representative from Treatment Attends Court Sessions

Response	N	% Increase in Cost Savings
Yes	55	0.29
No	9	0.16

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

5. In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school

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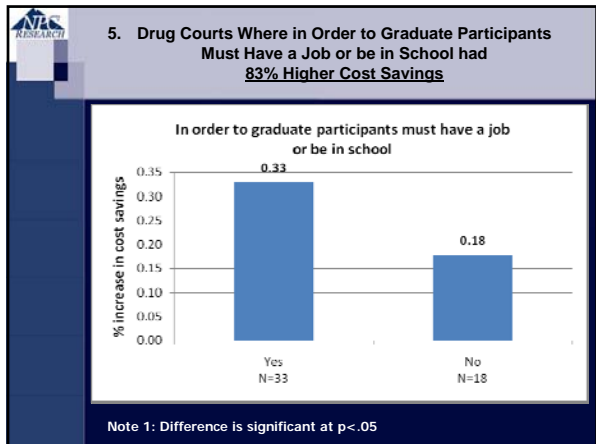
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- 
- Drug Court Top 10 \*Cost Savings\***
- In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
  - The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*

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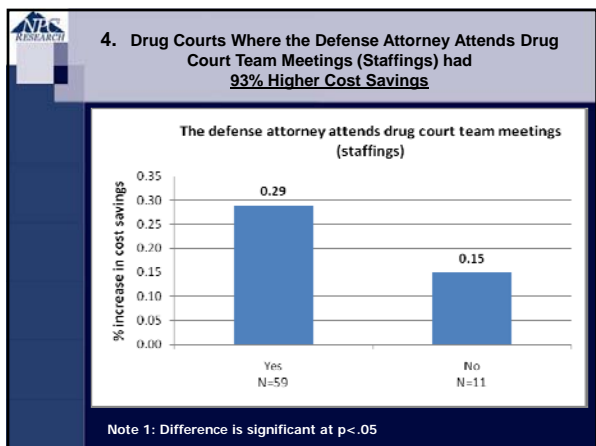
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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
3. *Sanctions are imposed immediately after non-compliant behavior (e.g., in advance of a client's regularly scheduled court hearing)*

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**3. Drug Courts Where Sanctions Are Imposed Immediately After Non-compliant Behavior had 100% Higher Cost Savings**

Response	N	% increase in cost savings
Yes	36	0.28
No	17	0.14

Note 1: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

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**Drug Court Top 10**  
\*Cost Savings\*

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
3. *Sanctions are imposed immediately after non-compliant behavior (e.g., in advance of a client's regularly scheduled court hearing)*
2. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*

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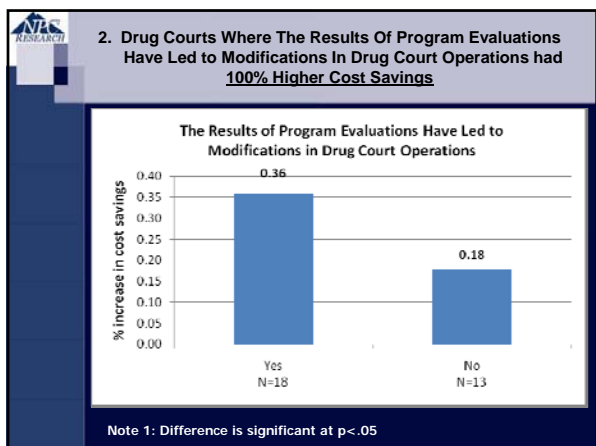
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- Drug Court Top 10  
\*Cost Savings\***
5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
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  1. *Review of the data and stats has led to modifications in drug court operations*

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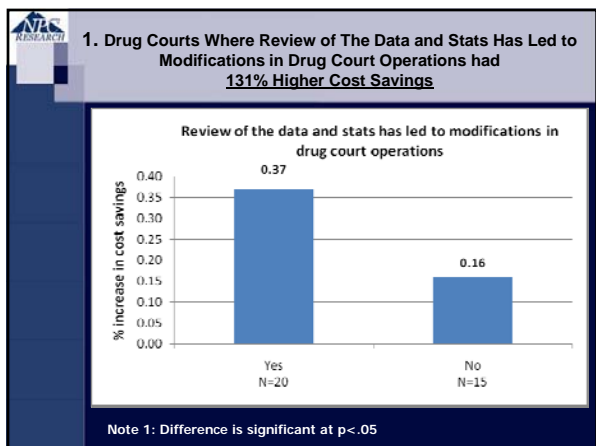
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**Themes in the Top 10**

- *Collaboration and team involvement*
- *Law Enforcement engagement*
- *Drug testing*
- *Data and Evaluation*

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**\*One last practice of particular interest**  
**Courts that use jail greater than 6 days actually have worse (higher) recidivism**

Percent decrease in recidivism between courts that use differing amounts of jail sanction time

Typical length of a jail sanction	Percent Difference in recidivism
1 day	10%
2 days	20%
3-6 days	15%
1 week	-40%
2 weeks	-50%
> 2 weeks	-140%

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**Summary:**

Handout: Latest list of best practices

Download handout online at [www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com)

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**The 25 CA Sites Studied**

- Butte County
- Fresno County
- Los Angeles County (Central)
- Los Angeles County (El Monte)
- Merced County
- Monterey County
- Nevada County
- Orange County (Laguna Niguel)
- Orange County (West)
- Orange County (Santa Ana)
- Sacramento County
- San Bernardino County Central
- San Bernardino County Joshua Tree
- San Bernardino County Redlands
- San Diego East County
- San Francisco County Prop 36 Court
- San Francisco County
- San Joaquin County (Phase II)
- San Joaquin County (Phase III)
- San Mateo County North
- San Mateo County South
- Santa Clara County
- Stanislaus County
- Tuolumne County
- Yuba County



Drug Court Cost Study  
Participating Counties

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**Coming Up**

*Article coming out in Drug Court Review early 2012*

*Presentation and handout on our Web site at*  
[www.mpcresearch.com](http://www.mpcresearch.com)

*Look under "What's New" or "Conference Presentations"*

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**Conclusion:**




**Before DC**                      **After DC**

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## Contact Information

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[carev@npcresearch.com](mailto:carev@npcresearch.com)

To learn more about NPC or more about drug court evaluations including cost-benefit evaluations see:  
[www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com)

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## Questions?

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the judges, coordinators and staff at numerous drug courts who welcomed us to their program, answered our un-ending questions and helped us find and collect mountains of data!

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