

# Looking Back, Looking Forward

Painting the picture of CACJ's first ten years & next ten years



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1970s “Nothing Works”  
movement to a shift that  
“Some Things Work”

**Longer prison sentences =  
Increased recidivism**

# Therapeutic Jurisprudence

The law is a social force  
that can **positively**  
contribute to a person's  
well-being



Accountability courts are  
therapeutic jurisprudence  
in action

“Business as usual” wasn’t working

Accountability courts aim  
to address underlying  
criminogenic needs

# Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR)

**Risk Principle:** Match  
program intensity to  
risk level

# Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR)

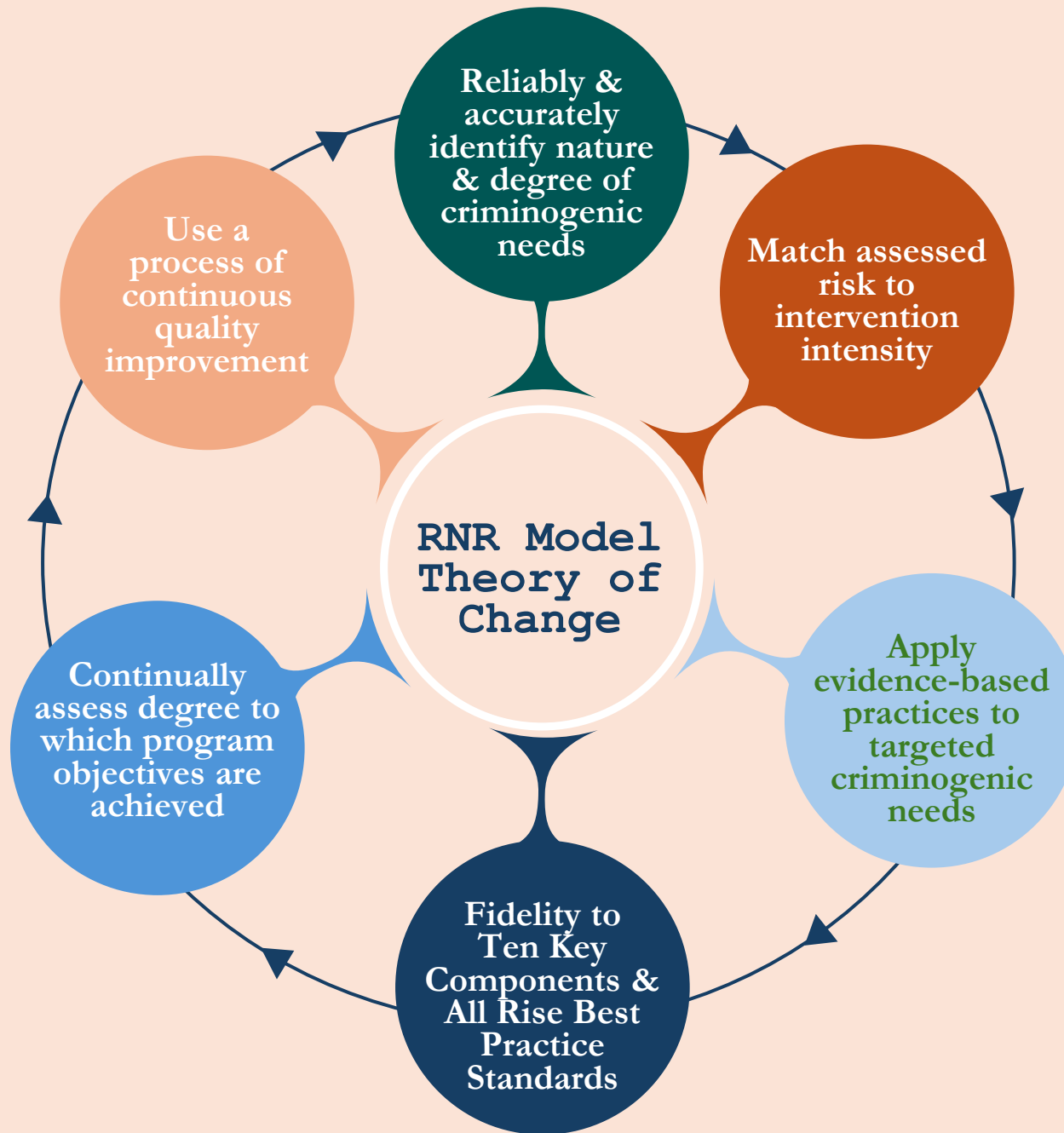
**Need Principle:** Target  
criminogenic needs  
driving criminal  
behavior

# Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR)

**Responsivity Principle:**  
Match CBT interventions  
to learning style/needs



The success of accountability  
courts is based on RNR  
Theory of Change



Therapeutic Jurisprudence is  
the **WHY** & RNR model is  
the **HOW** for accountability  
courts

# History of Accountability Courts in the US





First Drug Court launched  
in **1989** in Miami-Dade  
County, FL

**1994** Crime Act authorized  
drug courts federally;  
NADCP (All Rise) is founded





Effective use of EBPs  
brought success, leading  
to expansion to new  
populations



# Radical departure from “business as usual”

Multidisciplinary,  
collaborative teams

Treatment plans to meet  
individual needs

# Historical Timeline – Accountability Courts in the US

1980s

1989: 1st drug court established in Miami-Dade County (FL)

1990s

1992: First women's drug court established in Kalamazoo (MI)

1993: First community court established in Brooklyn (NY)

1994: NADCP (now known as All Rise) is founded

1995: The Drug Court Program Office established within DOJ

1995: First DUI court established in Dona Ana (NM)

1995: First juvenile drug court established in Visalia (CA)

1995: First Family Dependency Treatment Court established in Reno (NV)

1996: First felony DV court established in Brooklyn (NY)

1997: First tribal healing and wellness court established in Fort Hall (ID)

1998: First mental health court established in Broward County (FL)

1998: National Drug Court Institute founded

# Historical Timeline – Accountability Courts in the US

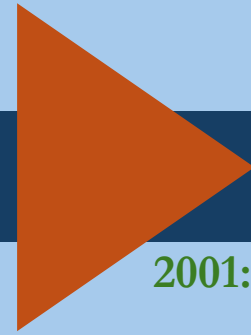
## 2000s

- 2001:** First juvenile mental health court established in Santa Clara County (CA)
- 2004:** First Veterans Treatment Court established in Anchorage (AL)
- 2010:** NADCP issues a unanimous declaration directing drug courts to assess and address racial/ethnic disparities
- 2013:** Volume I of Best Practice Standards is released
- 2015:** Volume II of Best Practice Standards is released
- 2017:** First opioid intervention court established in Buffalo (NY)
- 2019:** NADCP published the Equity and Inclusion toolkit American University published the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Assessment Tool

# Historical Timeline – Accountability Courts in Georgia

## 1990s

- 1994:** Georgia's first adult felony drug court was established in Macon
- 1997:** Georgia's second adult felony drug court was established in Fulton Co.
- 1997:** The state's first Adult Mental Health Court was established in Fulton Co.
- 1998:** Glynn/Camden Counties Drug Court began operating, with federal and local funding



## 2000s

- 2001:** The state's first DUI court was established in Athens-Clarke Co.
- 2003:** The state's first Family Dependency Treatment Court was established in Fulton Co.
- 2009:** There were 28 accountability courts operating in Georgia, serving 75 Georgia counties
- 2010:** The first VTC in Georgia was established in Muscogee Co.
- 2011:** Governor Nathan Deal initiates criminal justice reform efforts, including expanding accountability courts
- 2012:** (January) Governor Nathan Deal in his state-of-the-state address recommended that, as part of his criminal justice reform efforts, \$10 million dollars be allocated to establish new accountability courts; In response, the Georgia Legislature created the Georgia Accountability Court Program that same year.



# Historical Timeline – CACJ

**2015**

CACJ established per HB 328

At inception, Georgia had 113 operational accountability courts

**Adult Drug Courts**

**Veterans Treatment Courts**

**Adult Mental Health Courts**

**DUI Courts**

**Family Dependency Treatment Courts**

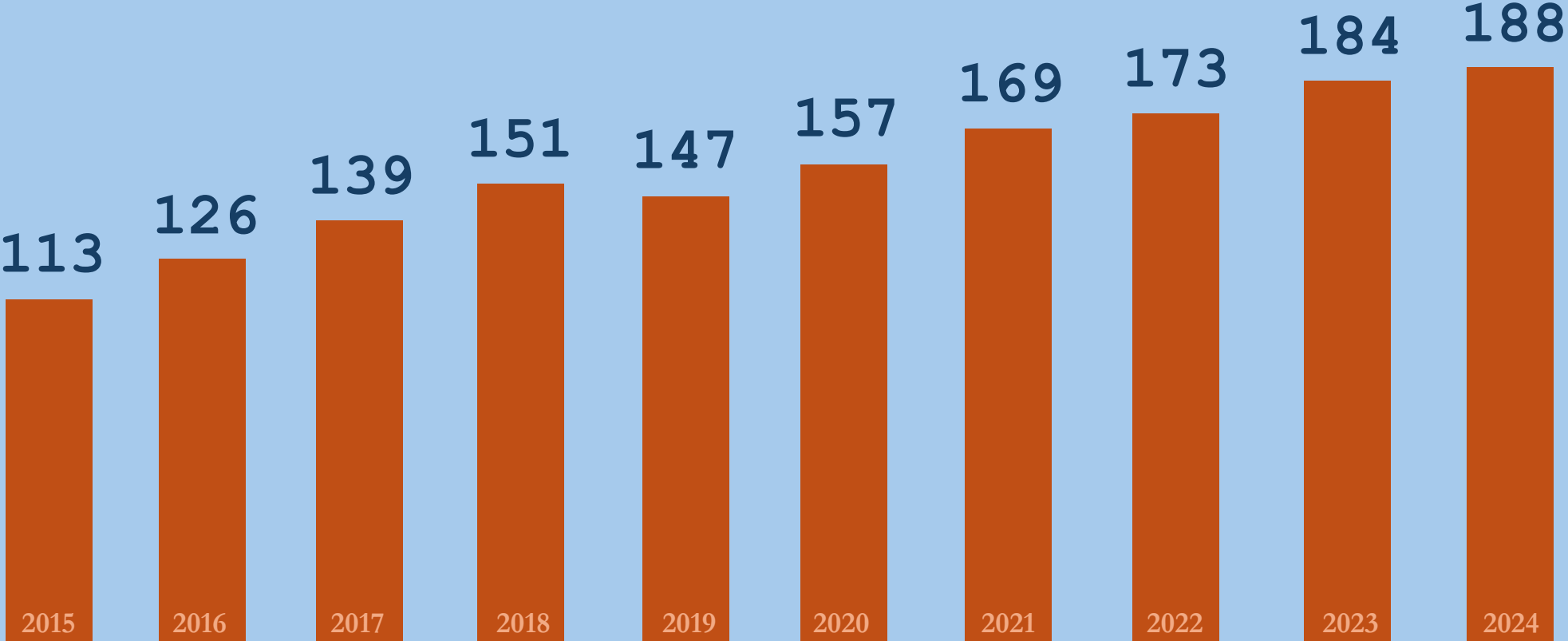
**Juvenile Drug Courts**

**Juvenile Mental Health Courts**

**2024**

Juvenile courts subsumed under the purview of CACJ

# Growth of Georgia Accountability Courts



# CACJ Responsibilities

Provide critical infrastructure

Advocate before the Georgia legislature

Peer study

Use of validated risk assessments to ensure courts serve appropriate populations

Recognizing excellence through awards & recognitions

Judicial leadership & expertise through council members & subcommittees

Training events & the annual conference

Fidelity monitoring

Data support: statewide data systems, quarterly reporting, research, recidivism studies

CACJ is the envy other states!

# Summary from “Painting the Current Picture”

“More research has been published on drug courts and other problem-solving courts than virtually all other criminal justice programs combined. Hundreds of studies prove beyond a reasonable doubt that adult drug courts, DUI courts, family drug courts, and mental health courts improve justice system outcomes and can return net financial benefits to taxpayers.”

*(Marlowe, et al., 2016, p. 32)*

**ARS conducted four statewide  
recidivism studies for CACJ –  
2016, 2017, 2019, 2022**



# 2017 Recidivism Study

With few exceptions – less arrests  
(misdemeanor & felony) at 6, 12, &  
18 months for accountability court  
participants vs. non-participants

# 2022 Recidivism Study

With few exceptions – **less arrests**  
(misdemeanor, felony & community  
supervision violation) at 24 & 36  
months for accountability court  
participants vs. non-participants

# Carl Vinson Institute Study

One program graduate  
= \$22,129 savings

2017 statewide graduates  
= \$37.7 million savings

# DRUG COURTS WORK!

Reduce recidivism & positively  
impact participants in Georgia  
and across the US





F<sub>4</sub>

U<sub>1</sub>

T<sub>1</sub>

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Prevalence  
of  
cooccurring  
disorders

Advancements  
in  
neuroscience



New  
medications



Impacts of  
trauma



Data-driven  
growth



Convergence  
of courts



No Perfect  
court - can  
always  
improve

Trauma: The  
Tie that  
Binds

# What do we need to do better?

Ensure courts  
represent population  
(diversity)

Expand reach so  
more who need them  
have access

Scale courts using an  
evidence-based  
approach

Court growth mirrors  
community needs

Build support in  
judicial & larger  
community

Add therapeutic  
justice and  
accountability courts  
to law school  
curricula

Incorporate TJ, RNR,  
and collaborative  
criminal justice  
processing into  
graduate school  
curricula



The key to the desired outcomes ...



Fidelity



What will  
CACJ look  
like in 2035?

In their own words, CACJ staff share  
their vision for the future ...



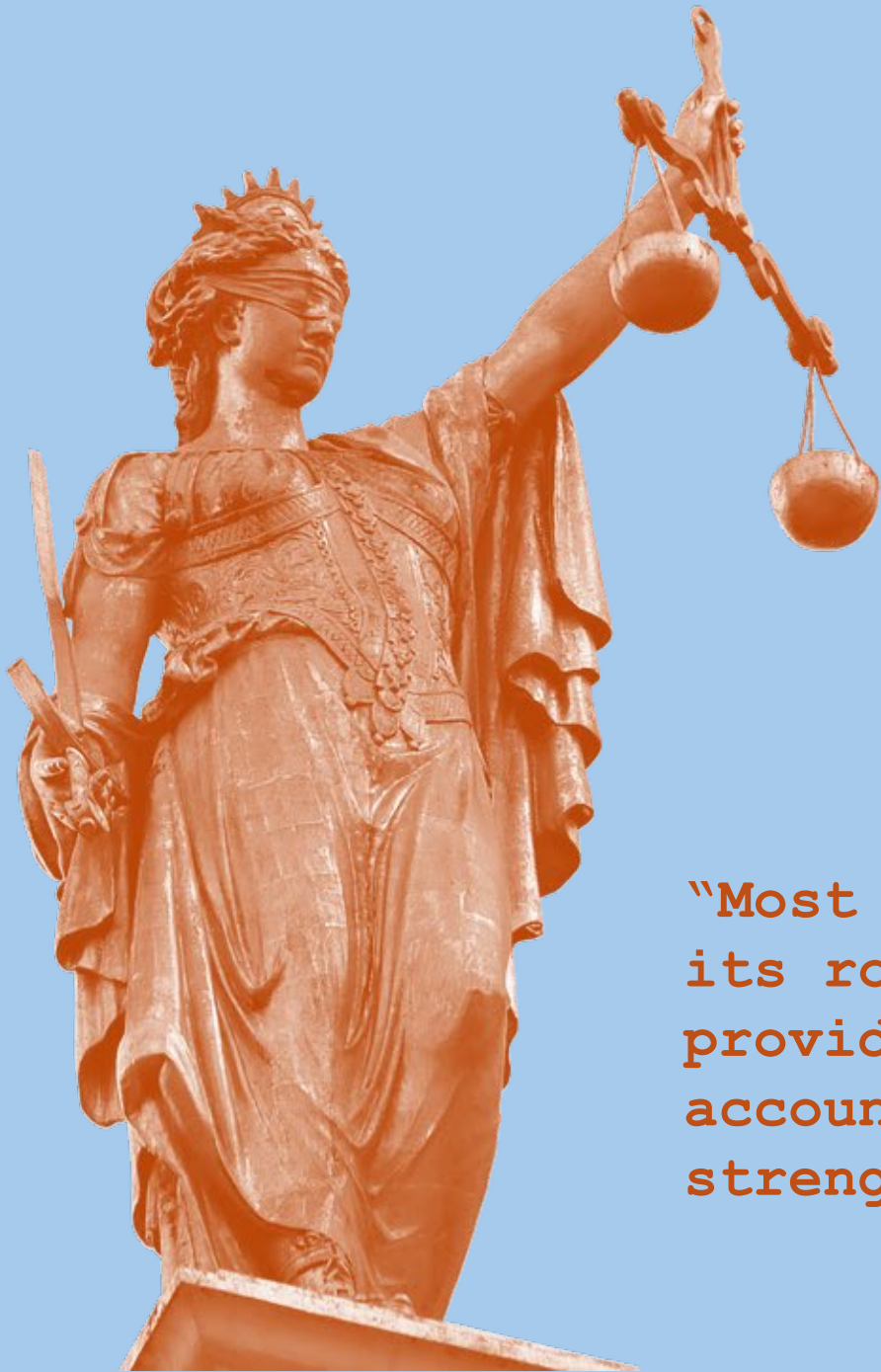
National leader & trusted resource in the administration of accountability courts – one that has meaningfully expanded access to justice & recovery for individuals across Georgia.

Serve more participants by expanding our reach, improving infrastructure, & supporting local courts through training, data-driven practices, & sustainable funding models.

Our mission will continue to guide us as we strengthen a unified framework that ensures quality, consistency, & fairness across all accountability court programs.

Active in helping to shape state & national conversations around criminal justice reform, particularly in alternatives to incarceration.

**“Ultimately we want to ensure that every eligible individual in need of support through an accountability court has access to one – no matter where they live.”**



In another 10 years, I believe CACJ will be recognized as a national leader in advancing accountability court standards, innovation, & impact.

Our certification and peer review processes will be even more data-driven, efficient, and collaborative, setting the benchmark for other states to follow.

“Most importantly, CACJ will continue to expand its role as a trusted partner to judges, treatment providers, & communities, helping Georgia’s accountability courts transform more lives & strengthen public safety for decades to come.”



CACJ should expect to show improved operations that includes increased efficiency and increased cost-effectiveness. I would also expect to see improved community engagement where community members are aware of the accountability courts throughout the state.

The CACJ will continue to strive for a framework where all Georgians have equitable access to treatment court programs. We will continue to empower courts to expand their capacity and enhance service delivery for participants. The CACJ Annual Training Conference will become known as the state's premier event for treatment court professionals—where we foster connection, learning, and growth across the treatment court community.



Continue to support judges & accountability courts with exceptional customer service.

Provide exceptional technical assistance based on new research & updated standards.

Continue to be responsive to new ideas & shifts in the field.

Trauma-informed treatment will continue to grow in importance & be central to the services offered.

Our data collection efforts will continue to improve, and we will be more able to make data informed decisions based on what's happening in our programs.

MAT will continue to be promoted and embraced as courts work to further shift from punishment to wellness.

We'll probably be offering new guidance around artificial intelligence, too!



Georgia's accountability courts will continue to strive to produce positive participant outcomes by following evidence-based best practices.

With all of your work, we will build an even stronger accountability system, one that is defined by integrity, innovation, & impact.



# My view of CACJ in 2035 ...

Continues to be a model -  
envy of the nation

National Model

More people exhibiting the  
diversity of our communities  
will participate in the courts  
statewide

Diversity

More complete understanding  
of who benefits most from  
these courts

Understanding

Data

More comprehensive statewide  
data for research to learn what  
works best & how we can improve

We'll need a bigger room -  
World Congress Center or  
equivalent!

Growth!



What do YOU  
think CACJ  
will look  
like in 2035?

What is your vision for the future of  
accountability courts in Georgia?



# Contact Information

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