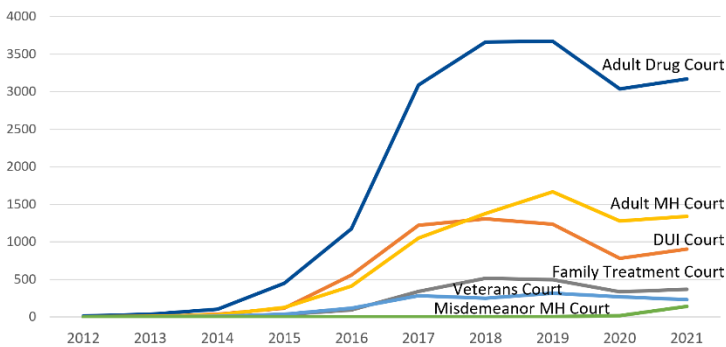


**2022 CACJ Recidivism Study
 Executive Summary**
 January 18, 2023

As accountability courts have expanded to cover all Georgia judicial circuits, it's become increasingly important to understand enrollment trends, as well as the effectiveness of these courts in terms of recidivism. This brief reviews two studies that were done to explore these issues and provides a summary of findings.

Two seismic events in the past 10 years have impacted the entire criminal justice system. The first of these involve widespread efforts to reform the criminal justice system at the national, state, and local levels. The second has been the global COVID-19 pandemic, which with few exceptions temporarily shuttered the courts and treatment services that form the backbone of accountability courts. Both events had great potential to impact accountability court enrollments. As evident in the chart, enrollment in adult drug courts continued to grow through calendar year 2018, leveled off until 2019, dropped in 2020, and rebounded in 2021. The same trend was observed in DUI court, while admissions to adult mental health courts continued to grow through 2020. Enrollment in veterans courts and family treatment courts have remained flat or in slight decline since 2017 and 2018, respectively.

**Specific Court Enrollment by Year
 2012 - 2021**



While with few exceptions the courts have demonstrated a rebound in enrollment numbers in 2021, as of the close of 2021 they still had not achieved the number of

enrollments observed in 2019, the year immediately preceding the pandemic. While the enrollment numbers for 2022 were not available at the time of this study, the enrollment numbers through 2021 suggest that criminal justice reform efforts in Georgia have not had the same impact on enrollments as have been observed in other states. Georgia did witness a decline in enrollments in 2020, which are almost certainly the result of the global pandemic. Rebounding enrollments in 2021 suggest that this was a temporary decline rather than a delayed impact of criminal justice reform efforts in Georgia.

The current re-
 cidivism study replicates and significantly extends both the sample size and follow-up period from previous recidivism stud-

Three-year Felony Rearrest Rates

Court Type	Court Participants	Matched Comparison Group
Adult Drug Court	28.3%	39.5%
Adult Mental Health Court	24.3%	55.5%
Veterans Court	16.3%	36.5%
DUI Court	6.9%	7.4%

ies of accountability courts in Georgia. Propensity Score Matching (a sophisticated and widely recognized statistical method that matches subjects on a variety of characteristics) was used in the current study of 28,400 accountability court participants between calendar year January 2012 and March 2019 and were followed for up to three years. Findings for adult drug courts, adult mental health courts, and veterans courts demonstrated that the impacts of court participation on reducing recidivism extend over at least three years and result in reductions in both felony arrests and arrests for violations of probation. Findings for DUI courts are tentative due to challenges finding appropriate matches within the comparison group of probationers.

Taken together, the results of these studies indicate that Georgia's accountability court population seems to be rebounding from a pandemic-related decline, although numbers have not yet matched those that immediately preceded the pandemic. The results of a recidivism study of over 20,000 accountability court participants finds that participation in adult drug court, adult mental health court, and veterans courts are associated with meaningful reductions in recidivism compared to a well-matched sample drawn from contemporary probation caseloads.