

## Summary For Courts On Interpreting Recidivism Reports

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The Accountability Court Recidivism Analysis Report is a descriptive overview of the individual courts and statewide courts by type between 2013 and 2020. This project mirrors the 2016 study but is far more comprehensive with improved data quality, twice the participants (20,500), and provides an extending tracking period (3-years). These reports describe recidivism but do not compare recidivism rates between participants and non-participants. It is possible to track recidivism over time in individual courts. However, if the court observes an uptick in recidivism over time, this does not indicate ineffectiveness. As courts mature over time, the composition of new participants reflects a higher-risk, high-need population.

Although this study does not compare participants to non-participants, the findings are encouraging. The data show that non-DUI participants look similar (demographics, prior history) to prison admissions. Such results should do not suggest that all court participants are prison diversions. It does indicate that accountability courts continue to enroll high-risk and similar participants in many aspects to non-violent prison-bound inmates. This suggests that accountability courts continue to move in the right direction. The data shows that participants who graduate 1-3 years after graduation do far better than terminated participants after discharge. Another significant finding is the improvement in data quality compared to the 2016 study. The study found that court staff is entering GCIC State Identification Numbers (SIDs) accurately along with program data. Another area of improvement concerns termination status and date of discharge.

### Demographics

The demographic section compares your site to statewide statistics by court type (i.e. adult drug), including sex, race, and age. It was impossible to isolate participants with Hispanic heritage because there is no consistent standard to capture this demographic. Therefore, race includes the other category for this reason.

There is no expectation that any specific court demographic will mirror statewide percentages. The racial composition across counties can vary, so do not interpret differences as though your court is too low or too high on any demographic, such as race and age. The same applies to court-specific demographics.

### The Offense at Court Admission

As part of the field data collection effort, courts enter the offense at admission. If your specific percentage is too low/too high, it probably means there are missing data for offense type, which varies by court. This is one metric that we hope to standardize in the future.

### Admissions by Year

The Council is Accountability Courts (CACJ) understands that admission statistics may under-count actual participation starts. During the six years since implementation, courts relied on different data collection platforms until the implementation of Integrated Management Solutions Connexis Cloud & Five Point

Solutions ACCM/CaseWorX. These recidivism data only reflect cases where there is a match between CACJ data and George Crime and Information Center (GCIC). This matching requirement may account for any discrepancy for lower enrollments than your program administrators collect. Missing records or duplicate participants may also explain some differences. Migrating legacy records to new systems always presents data quality issues.

### **Prior Criminal History**

Fortunately, 95% of the courts entered GCIC State Identification Numbers (SID) which allowed for matching to GCIC criminal history records. For those with a SID, analysis could be done to determine the percentage with prior arrests by offense type.

### **Recidivism Analysis**

The recidivism analysis required a participant's SID and is organized around arrests between persons that were terminated and those that graduated. Participants are tracked at three intervals: 12-months, 24-months, and 36-months by program exit type. Please exercise caution if you compare recidivism data for other jurisdictions, including statewide statistics. Inter-county or inter-state comparisons of recidivism rates are highly suspect. Offender characteristics (risk) across courts play a role depending on community norms, prosecutorial standards, and court type. Mental health courts may exhibit higher recidivism rates. Additionally, mature accountability courts with an established treatment infrastructure may accept higher risk & higher need offenders than start-up courts. Formal evaluations with a scientifically established comparison group are the only way to establish program effectiveness. If you see a zero (0) recidivism rate, this represents new courts whose participants have not completed the program or have not been on the street very long.

On the individual court reports, recidivism is also shown for persons arrested after the start of the program. This tally includes all participants that were arrested during their tenure in the program and/or after they exited the program. This data is simply shown to indicate the types of offenses for which individual court participants are most often arrested once coming into contact with the court program.

### **Inconsistent Findings**

You may find instances where the statistics do not mirror your experience or internal court records. This is likely a direct result of missing documents or missing data on key fields. For example, one court administrator reported a much lower felony arrest rate. However, the court tracked re-bookings into the county jail while this analysis includes all statewide GCIC arrests.