

Introduction

In October 2002, the Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded a grant to the **National Center for State Courts** to provide technical assistance services to state-level agencies (i.e., administrative offices of the courts, alcohol and drug abuse agencies) to:

1. Enhance the leadership of statewide drug court efforts
2. Improve coordination and collaboration between the drug court agencies
3. Increase the likelihood of the institutionalization of drug courts into the mainstream of court operations

The **National Center for State Courts** is providing technical assistance services to state administrative offices of courts (AOCs) and state alcohol and drug abuse agencies (AODs) that include:

1. On-site technical assistance
2. Off-site technical assistance (e.g., facilitates peer-to-peer consultation via e-mail and conference calls)
3. A series of topical publications on integrating drug courts into mainstream court operations

This Bulletin is the fourth in the series of publications.



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Crafting A Plan: Sustaining Indiana's Drug Courts

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State and local funding shortages are forcing states to face the prospect of closing or limiting drug court services. The Indiana Judicial Center responded to the funding threat by asking the National Center for State Courts for technical assistance in developing a drug court sustainability plan. A result of that contact was a workshop of judicial, executive, and legislative branch representatives who collaborated to identify feasible sources of drug court funding.

Early on, it was apparent that effective strategic planning for drug court sustainability is not linear. Rather, the process is a complex and multi-task process that considers immediate needs and long-range goals at the same time. National Center for State Courts' consultants working with Indiana Judicial Center (IJC) staff mapped a multifaceted process for obtaining needed support and funding of the state's drug courts during a two-day planning session. Foremost among the session's results was the collaboration and commitment of the assembled drug court stakeholders to design and implement the sustainability plan. Officials from Indiana's Department of Correction, State Budget Agency, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Public Defender Council, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, and the Legislative Services Agency joined with IJC staff and Indiana drug court judges to craft a comprehensive plan for sustaining and expanding the state's drug courts.

Before approaching funding agencies, the group recommended that IJC determine: (1) how much money was needed to maintain and to expand Indiana's drug courts; (2) how many DOC-bound drug offenders and incarcerated offenders could be diverted to drug courts; and (3) what state and national research data on drug court benefits were available to educate drug court stakeholders, legislators, executive branch agency heads, the judiciary, and the public.

The group developed both a short-term and a long-term sustainability plan. A comprehensive list of potential governmental and private funding sources was developed. Short-term activities include (1) demonstrating the cost benefits of diverting drug offenders from incarceration; (2) exploring the possibility of a small alcohol tax increase to help fund drug courts; (3) exploring the potential use of tobacco settlement funds; (4) applying for additional Byrne grant funding for implementation and maintenance of drug courts; and (5) exploring possible use of the Addictions Services fund and other federal, state, local, and private sources of funding.

The long-term plan includes (1) examining sources of federal funding coming to Indiana for treatment of addicted offenders; (2) determining who is in charge of allocated and potential state funding sources for addicted offenders; (3) applying to the Bureau of Justice to fund needed drug court infrastructure (statewide management information system and state evaluations); (4) pooling community resources by establishing multi-jurisdictional drug courts and regional criminal justice assessment centers; and (5) establishing a state-level drug court advisory commission. Workgroup participants were assigned tasks to accomplish the sustainability plan. One of the principal lessons of this planning effort is that broadening the discussion to include all perspectives can result in identifying unforeseen opportunities and new partners. That should spell good news for the future of Indiana's drug courts.

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