

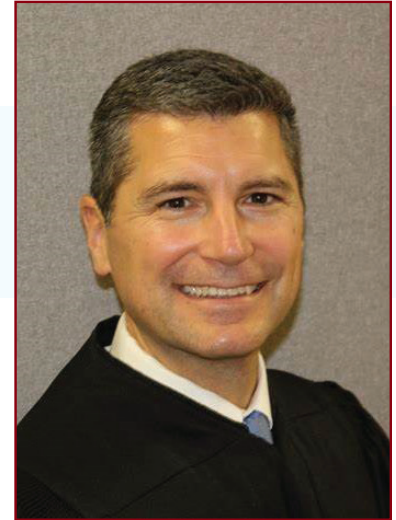
ANNUAL

COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES

REPORT

2023

A message from the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR



Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as Chair of the Council of Accountability Court Judges for FY2023. The hard work of the CACJ staff and the treatment court professionals statewide continues to produce impressive results that save lives, make the state of Georgia safer, and have a positive economic impact exceeding the investment.

Each year, I am amazed at the work accomplished by the CACJ and the talented staff. This year, CACJ staff supported 184 accountability courts across the State that served 7,464 participants. Staff provided these courts with resources, training, site visits, and technical assistance to support court operations. Through the Peer Review and Certification processes, CACJ verified that programs meet the required high State standards and that courts implemented national best practices. CACJ also partnered with American University and the Center for Justice Innovation to undergo the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Assessment to help ensure that all qualifying Georgians have access to an accountability court regardless of geographic location or economic status.

This year, CACJ created three special committees to address important issues facing accountability courts. One special committee focused on Treatment Services in order to provide education and guidance to courts on how to ensure the quality of treatment services, how to draft agreements with treatment agencies, and how to avoid predatory practices or substandard providers. Another special committee focused on Juvenile Drug and Mental Health Treatment Courts. A third special committee began developing a Family Treatment Court Benchbook to guide those courts. It will be the first benchbook of this type in the country.

The tireless work of the staff and CACJ members can be seen by the consistent reduction in recidivism by any participant regardless of whether they complete the program. For FY23, the economic benefit of accountability court graduates exceeds \$40 million.

As a result of the work of the CACJ, participants are healthier, more productive, and present for their families. The State of Georgia as a whole is safer. These results confirm that CACJ is succeeding in pursuing its vision of “Making accountability courts work for all Georgians.”

Our courts would not thrive without support from the Governor’s Office and Georgia’s General Assembly. CACJ remains grateful for their continued support.

On behalf of the accountability court community, thank you.



The Honorable Charles E. Auslander
CACJ Executive Committee Chair

Overview of CACJ/Accountability Courts

What is an accountability court?

Accountability courts, also known as treatment courts, are judicially operated diversion programs that serve individuals with diagnosed substance use disorders and/or behavioral or mental health disorders. It is often the result of their substance use and undiagnosed/untreated mental health disorders that cause them to commit non-violent crimes that land them in the judicial system. Rather than sitting in jail going untreated and then released to possibly reoffend, accountability courts provide these individuals with the services they so badly need.

The core of the accountability court model is a powerful combination of intense supervision of participants, frequent and random drug screens, and individualized, evidence-based treatment. Participants are supervised by the court, and their cases are staffed regularly, often weekly, by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of representatives of the prosecutor's office, a defense attorney, law enforcement, probation, a case manager, a treatment provider, and a program coordinator.

Participants who fail to adhere to the program's requirements are sanctioned, which requires them to be accountable to the court for rule violations. Participants meet regularly with program personnel and attend court as they progress through treatment, allowing the court to keep a close eye on their progress and provide individualized support throughout their recovery. As they advance in treatment, participants achieve sobriety, obtain employment, resolve other legal issues such as child custody matters or traffic infractions, and begin to rebuild their lives and give back to their communities. Their risk of overdose and death goes down dramatically as they move through the program. This model has been proven across the country to reduce recidivism or the likelihood the individuals will commit new crimes, to keep communities safer, and, most importantly, to save lives.

In addition to benefiting participants, their families, and reducing recidivism, accountability courts also benefit the court system by diverting cases from a jury trial calendar to an alternative solution. Jury trials are costly and time-consuming, so reducing the number of cases headed toward jury trial reduces dockets and saves courts time and resources.

What is the Council of Accountability Court Judges?

The Council of Accountability Court Judges was created in 2015 as part of the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians, formed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2011.

The Council is charged with furthering the development of Georgia's accountability courts under the guidance and expertise of the judges presiding over the important work being performed by the programs every day. The Council itself is evidence of our state's commitment to serving non-violent offenders in a manner that saves taxpayer money, upholds public safety, and results in the betterment of communities.

CACJ's Mission

To provide a unified framework that promotes and improves the quality, accessibility, and administration of Accountability Courts.

CACJ's Vision

Making accountability courts work for all Georgians.

In Georgia, accountability court programs are locally operated by county governments with the support and oversight of CACJ. Created by OCGA § 15-1-18, CACJ is composed of all the judges that preside over an accountability court. CACJ operates through an Executive Committee and several standing committees, including the following:

Funding | Standards & Certification | Training | Legislation | Nominations | Data & Research

CACJ's judicial leadership is authorized by statute to provide support and to oversee the following types of accountability courts:

OCGA § 15-1-15	Adult Felony Drug Courts
OCGA § 15-1-16	Mental Health Courts
OCGA § 15-1-17	Veterans Treatment Courts
OCGA § 15-1-19	DUI Courts (operating Under the Influence division)
OCGA § 15-11-70	Family Treatment Courts

For these types of courts, CACJ is tasked with developing state standards based on nationally recognized, research-based best practices and to ensure that local, county-operated court programs are working in accordance with state standards via a certification and peer review system. Courts that become certified are eligible to apply for state grant

funding in a competitive grant process overseen by the judges serving on CACJ's Funding Committee. A competitive grant process keeps programs lean and ensures that state funds are used efficiently to benefit not only participants but also their families and communities, all while keeping the public safe and reducing recidivism. Additionally, CACJ can provide a competitive grant opportunity, some training opportunities, and limited resources for juvenile drug and juvenile mental health courts.

There are other types of court diversion programs, such as parental accountability courts and domestic violence courts. However, the accountability court types listed above are the only ones under CACJ's purview.

Adult Felony Drug Courts, Mental Health Courts, and Veterans Treatment Courts typically operate as prison diversion programs in the Superior Courts across the state. These programs treat non-violent offenders who suffer from substance use disorders or behavioral health disorders and who would otherwise be sentenced to prison by supervising them in the community with intense oversight, frequent drug screens, and individualized treatment services. DUI Courts are most typically operated in State Courts, and they provide additional supervision and substance use disorder treatment to high-risk DUI offenders. Finally, Family Treatment Courts are operated in Juvenile Courts, and they work to reunite families by providing services to individuals facing termination of their parental rights in deprivation proceedings.

CACJ staff, under the direction of the standing committees and the Executive Committee, provide training, technical assistance, and oversight to the different local accountability court programs, managing a robust training calendar and menu of technical assistance offerings. Staff also review certification applications, ensure that state standards are kept up to date with current research and best practices, and implement and coordinate the peer review process.

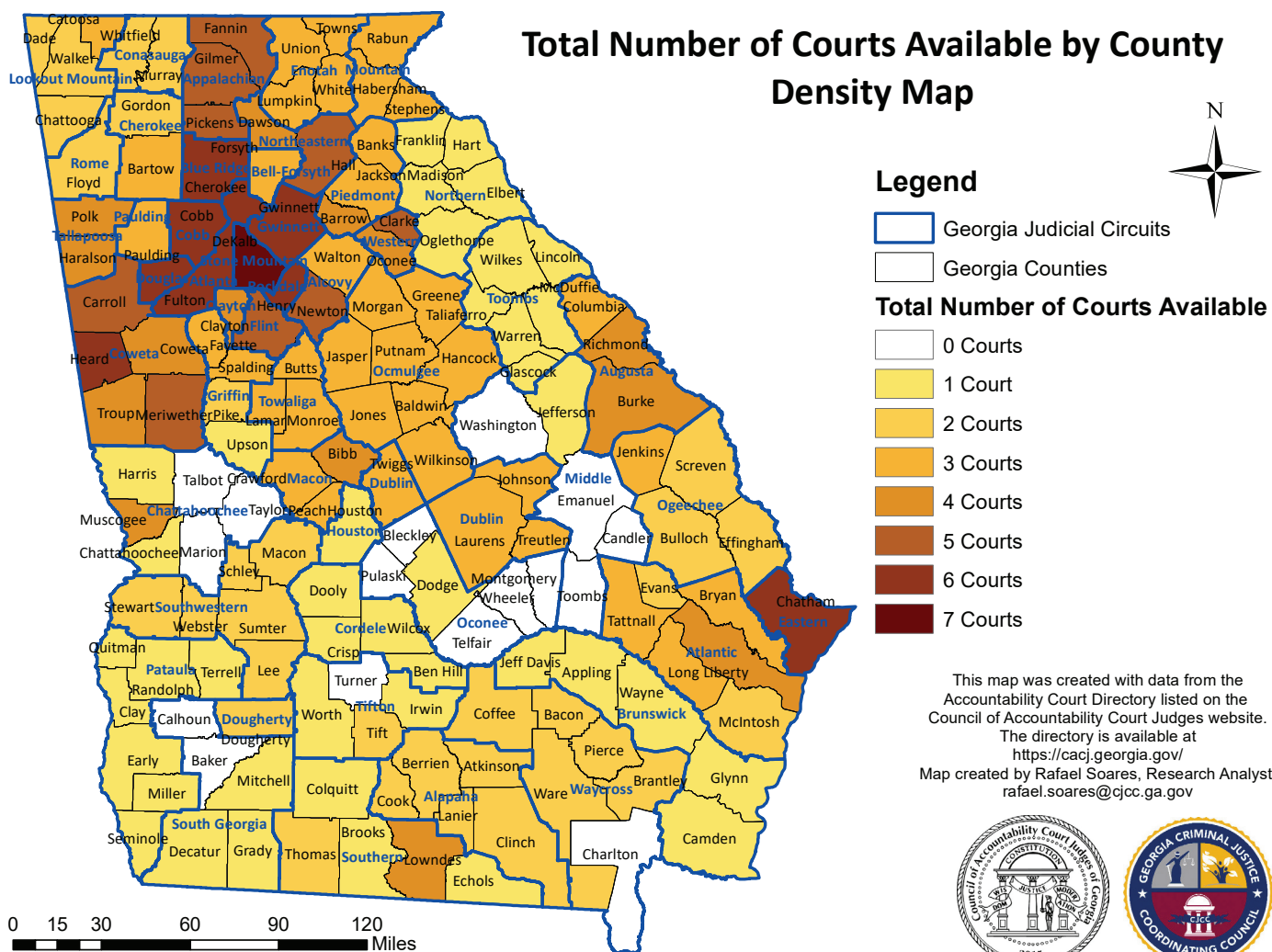
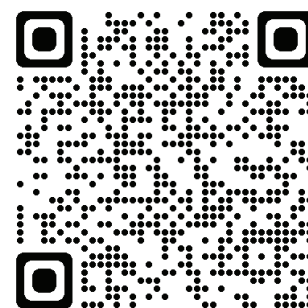
Accountability courts work. Accountability court participants who graduate successfully have significantly lower rearrest rates than those who are terminated. Accountability courts accept moderate and high-risk offenders who, as a group, have far higher recidivism rates than low-risk offenders. For example, a study conducted as part of the Georgia Prisoner Reentry Initiative found that "moderate/high risk prisoners have a 60 percent to 81 percent recidivism rate, defined as committing a new felony within three years of their release". By contrast, only 22 percent of adult Drug Court graduates and 18 percent of adult Mental Health Court graduates were rearrested within three years during the study period. These results prove that accountability courts work to help Georgia's residents battle substance use disorders and manage mental health disorders while keeping Georgians safe from crime.

In FY23, 1,614 Georgians graduated from a state-certified or state-funded accountability court. Courts served 7,464 participants through Georgia's 50 judicial circuits. In FY23, 184 accountability courts and/or tracks were operating, including one new implementation court - the Augusta Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court.

Georgia's Accountability Courts: Changing Lives

The purpose of this video is to highlight the inspiring work that Georgia's accountability courts perform every day. By viewing the video, interested parties, stakeholders, and the public will learn about the accountability court model and how these courts save lives, positively impact communities, and save taxpayer money.

Scan for video:



Financial Impact

Savings Associated with Accountability Courts

In FY23, 7,464 participants were served in an accountability court. The average cost per participant is \$4,344, resulting in an average savings of \$18,770 per adult participant when comparing diversion savings to traditional incarceration costs. These savings result in \$5.33 saved per dollar invested in adult accountability courts.

Just as importantly, each adult graduate produces \$25,921 in economic benefits to the state. In FY23, 1,614 adult participants graduated from an accountability court resulting in an estimated \$41 million positive economic impact to the state of Georgia.

Participants Served

In FY23, accountability courts accepted 2,890 new participants, 269 more than was accepted in FY22. Since FY2013, over 34,000 participants were served in Georgia's accountability courts.

Drug Test Administration

Drug testing is a standard supervision method across all accountability court types. In FY23, the negative test rate was 93% with almost 425,000 total drug tests administered.

Employment

Employment at graduation is a key objective of program participation. Sixty-nine percent of FY23 graduates were employed at the time of graduation, which contributes greatly to the economic impact to Georgia, as well as the participant's recovery.

Family Reunification

Family reunification is an important outcome of accountability courts, especially dependency cases in Family Treatment Courts. In FY23, 65 families were reunified, and 31 drug-free babies were born to female participants. With consideration of delivery and medical costs, averaged to be \$63,200, this results in savings of roughly \$1.9 million.

Economic Impact

For the 1,565 adult program graduates in FY23, the total estimated benefits of accountability court programs to state and local governments and to society are substantial:

\$18.70 million in total estimated benefits

\$1.67 million in reduced adjudication, incarceration, and probation costs

\$1.68 million collected in program fees paid by graduates

\$1.68 million in healthcare benefits from private health insurance and avoided costs associated with babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

\$1.47 million in state income taxes paid

\$1.21 million in community service work

\$3.11 million in foster care costs avoided

\$13.43 million in crime victimization costs avoided through decreased recidivism

The Institute of Government surveyed 374 adult accountability court program participants in 37 accountability court programs of all types to determine the benefits of taking part in the programs for their families and their communities. Program coordinators were instructed to ask recent program graduates and participants nearing graduation to complete the survey. Using the survey results, the research team was able to estimate the economic benefits of those who have successfully completed the programs. The Institute research team also reviewed the literature on accountability courts to determine how much these programs cost and to identify additional benefits to society. From the information gathered, the researchers estimated the benefits of one accountability court program graduate to be \$25,921. Georgia's adult accountability court programs graduated 1,565 persons in FY23. For those 1,565 program graduates, the total estimated benefit is \$41 million.

Citation: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia (forthcoming). The estimated economic impacts of accountability court programs in Georgia: 2022 update.

Funding Committee

Role of the Funding Committee

The Funding Committee administers all the grants and funds on behalf of CACJ, as well as the budget and payroll for Council staff and operations.

All CACJ funds granted to locally operated accountability courts are awarded via a competitive grant process. Most funds are distributed via the Fiscal Year Operating Grant, which is designed to provide courts with the core of their operating expenses. The grant requires local counties to provide a 12 percent match for funds awarded. Other funds are awarded through an Enhancement and Innovation Grant, Emergency Operating Grant, and other smaller grants that may be made available as the budget permits. Grants for law enforcement and transportation have been made, as well. More information about all the grant types, as well as a more detailed description of the grant-making process, can be found in Article 4 of the CACJ Rules.

In FY23, the Funding Committee reviewed Fiscal Year Operating Grant applications from all of Georgia's 184 county-operated accountability court programs and/or tracks.

The Committee awarded \$28,760,968 in Fiscal Year Operating Grants, \$456,392 in Enhancement and Innovation Grants, \$448,062 in Emergency Grants, \$300,091 in Law Enforcement Funding, and \$202,324 in Technology Grants. The funding supported full-time court coordinator positions, treatment providers, surveillance officers, case managers, and others. These positions are critical to the operations of Georgia's 184 court programs.

Fiscal Year Operating Grants in FY23

\$14,175,593 to Adult Felony Drug Courts

\$6,053,020 to Mental Health Courts

\$2,266,617 to Veterans Treatment Courts

\$1,960,740 to DUI Courts

\$3,237,839 to Family Treatment Courts

\$1,067,159 to Juvenile Drug & Mental Health Courts

Operating Grant Spotlight: Ogeechee Judicial Circuit

As the number of accountability court programs expands to provide services to eligible Georgians, CACJ continues to encourage existing programs to share assets among their circuit to best stretch each grant dollar awarded, as well as garner community support and utilize available resources. One such example of intentional and efficient circuit-wide collaboration is the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit, which consists of Bulloch, Effingham, Jenkins, and Screven Counties. They started the Bulloch County Mental Health Court in 2013 and added the Drug Court in 2018 to allow Judge Michael T. Muldrew and Judge Lovett Bennett, Jr. to expand services to all four counties. They can serve the 52 Drug Court participants and eight Mental Health Court participants through three Community Service Board (CSB) sites for treatment and track their program participation through one case management database. They have three full-time, grant-funded employees (coordinator, case manager, and lab technician) whose salaries are shared equally between a drug court grant and a mental health court grant. Additionally, their drug testing lab is housed at the CSB in Statesboro, and all participants use an app for drug testing/daily check-ins. Coordinator Karen McClain said the greatest benefit to sharing resources across the circuit is “being able to offer a wide range of treatment services to participants and being able to share salary obligations between two different programs”.

Implementation Grant Spotlight: Thomas County Accountability Court

Prior to FY23, there were two accountability courts operating in the Southern Judicial Circuit, specifically in Colquitt and Lowndes Counties. The state hospital, once housed in Thomasville, closed and left a critical void in mental health treatment in Thomas County and the surrounding areas, as well as a jail overwhelmed with individuals who would probably not be incarcerated if not for their mental health issues. Recognizing a need and having a vision to offer services to Georgians in every county within their purview, the Southern Judicial Circuit made application to expand the accountability court model to Thomas County. Judge James L. Prine held initial meetings with stakeholders in September 2021, and by January 2022 the Thomas County Accountability Court (TCAC) was up and running with the full support of the County Commissioners, Sheriff’s Office, the Day Reporting Center (DRC), and other interested parties. They were able to service all localities within their judicial circuit, have one budget to share all program costs, and utilize existing personnel to keep costs low. Additionally, the TCAC partnered with the local DRC for services such as drug testing, supervision, and substance abuse classes. Through this effort, the TCAC held its first court session on January 25, 2022 with five participants on the calendar. Fast forward to October 2023, their current census was 32, and they celebrated their first graduation on October 3, 2023. The TCAC is a perfect example of a circuit who saw a need in their community, made application for an implementation grant, and expeditiously used those awarded funds to provide services to those in need.

Enhancement & Innovation Grants

Twenty-one grant awards were issued to the courts totaling \$456,392. Enhancement and Innovation grants provide additional funds to support existing programs that desire to expand or enhance current operations or institute innovative new programming. For example, enhancement and innovation grant funds may be used to implement a new Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, expand the number of home checks or other surveillance, purchase supplies for a new type of drug testing, or for personnel costs associated with adding an extra day of drug testing. For these grants, programs apply together as a circuit, and awards are made to a circuit as a whole.

Enhancement Grant Spotlight: Fulton County Accountability Court H.E.A.T. Curriculum Training

With funding received from CACJ through an Enhancement Grant award, Fulton County Accountability Court hosted H.E.A.T. (Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy) facilitator training for some of the State's accountability courts on May 22-24, 2023. Twenty attendees from Fulton County Accountability Court, Fulton County Recovery Treatment Court, Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court, Athens-Clarke County Accountability Court, Clayton County Veterans Court, and Hall County Drug Court were fully trained to deliver this important treatment curriculum to their participants by Darryl Turpin and Guy Wheeler, the co-principals of the Pinwheel Group and developers of H.E.A.T., a holistic, afro-centric, strength-based, trauma-informed model that emphasizes a positive and engaging approach to treatment. The manualized intervention targets African American/Black males, ages 18- 29, with involvement in the criminal justice system. The holistic approach of H.E.A.T. focuses on treating the complete person by addressing spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, environmental, and experiential factors that influence one's sense of self, behaviors, and choices. The curriculum seeks to validate life experiences and help the client address and resolve emotional and psychological issues that have shaped his self-image, behavior, and lifestyle choices. H.E.A.T. is spreading across the country as the only culturally responsive intervention of its kind.

Emergency Grants

Twenty-five grant awards were issued to the courts totaling \$448,062. Emergency grant funding is generally only available dependent on budget and on the amount de-obligated by existing courts given a fiscal year. If available, emergency grants are limited to participant treatment and drug testing needed as a result of unanticipated or unusual growth in the number of program participants.

Law Enforcement Grants

Seventeen grant awards were issued to the courts totaling \$300,091. Law enforcement grants are available to existing accountability courts and to law enforcement agencies that provide services for accountability court programs. They are available to expand law enforcement services for surveillance, courthouse security for court and staffing sessions, and for transporting participants securely, such as to treatment or between jurisdictions.

Technology Grants

Fifty-five grant awards were issued to the courts totaling \$202,324. Occasionally, additional grant funds are made available if the Council receives additional funding or an unusual amount of funds are de-obligated early in the fiscal year. The Funding Committee will determine the grant funding cycle for these occasional or one-time grants, as well as the purpose of the grant and any funding criteria. For FY23, courts were able to make application to receive funding to satisfy some of their program's technology needs.

Grants Received by CACJ

CACJ not only awards grants but also seeks grant opportunities from federal, state, and other sources. In FY23, CACJ was awarded the following grants:

Bureau of Justice Assistance Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Adult Discretionary Grant

In 2019, in partnership with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), CACJ was awarded \$2million in a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) federal grant over four years. It helped to fund case management services, surveillance, and medically assisted treatment (MAT). The grant also includes funds for an MAT statewide coordinator position. This position has helped educate accountability courts on best practices for utilizing MAT and has provided technical assistance when needed. Research shows that a combination of medicine and therapy can successfully treat substance use disorders, and, for some people struggling with addiction, MAT is a powerful tool to help sustain recovery and reduce recidivism. MAT is also used to prevent or reduce opioid overdose. This funding source is set to end on September 30, 2023. CACJ submitted a state fiscal year 2024 budget request through the Judicial Council to continue the valuable work of the MAT statewide coordinator position beyond the grant. Further, the continuation of this position will support CACJ's ability to help ensure accountability court compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) by confirming courts are not prohibiting or limiting the use of lawfully prescribed medication to treat program participants diagnosed with an opioid use disorder.

BJA FY19 Adult Discretionary Grant Spotlight: Appalachian Judicial Circuit's MAT Program

The Appalachian Judicial Circuit has wholeheartedly embraced MAT. At any one time, there is an average of 45-50 participants in the Accountability Courts (Drug Court, Veterans Treatment Court, H.E.L.P. Court, and Family Treatment Court) on MAT, including Suboxone and Vivitrol, as well as daily oral Naltrexone. In FY23, a veteran entered the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) with a significant Opioid Use Disorder. She had become injured in the military as an Airborne soldier, and this required surgery on her ankle. She was prescribed pain medication which led to an addiction. This addiction eventually led to heavy heroin use which, as many times is the case, eventually led to criminal charges. She initially took a plea that did not include VTC, and that initial plea resulted in probation. However, no matter how hard she tried, she could not stop using heroin and eventually faced probation violations which led her to VTC. Upon entering Veterans Court, she was immediately assessed for MAT. Her medical providers thought the best course of treatment was Suboxone, along with counseling and therapy in the Veterans Court program. She was placed on Suboxone and has not had a positive drug screen since entering the program 15 months ago. She now has full-time custody of her child and recently enrolled in college. She credits MAT with finally being able to stay in recovery.

Bureau of Justice Assistance Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Adult Discretionary Grant

In December 2021, in partnership with CJCC, CACJ was awarded a \$1.5million BJA federal grant over 48 months to improve, enhance, and expand adult drug courts by scaling up drug court capacity by expanding availability of evidence-based programs through training for court staff; establishing a technical and training assistance statewide program to assist courts in improving policies and procedures based on collected data; coordinating with the Center for Court Innovation to conduct a statewide, mixed methods evaluation of drug courts across the state; and enhancing the current curriculum provided in the tune-up trainings for existing courts.

BJA FY21 Adult Discretionary Grant Spotlight: CACJ Training and Technical Assistance Program

Data collection is an essential component in a program's success, and it is critical when demonstrating the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of an accountability court program. The evaluation of a program's data can be used as a tool for determining whether a program is meeting its performance goals and objectives and make modifications where necessary. In 2018, CACJ contracted with Mazza Consulting, LLC using state appropriated funds to develop an automated reporting system that incorporates CACJ's data repository for each of the state's accountability courts. Implemented in September of 2020, the software was designed to transfer the authenticated data collected quarterly from each accountability court into accessible reports for authorized users of an approved program(s). CACJ took the needed steps to further the courts' access to data to provide measurable terms to which accountability can be placed when determining the success of the respective programs. However, due to funding restrictions and the creation of this process, a gap emerged for analyzing the data collected to assess the efficiency of existing policies in procedures that are unique to each court. Therefore, CJCC requested FY21 BJA funding to implement a statewide Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program to assist the courts with analyzing the reports created from the automated reporting system. This analysis will serve as a tool for determining the effectiveness of current policies and procedures, as well as provide assistance with any necessary modifications to the existing processes with the goal of bringing court capacity to scale.

Department of Community Affairs ESG-CV Housing Grant

In September 2021, CACJ was awarded just over \$3.5million by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in an Emergency Solutions Grant under the Federal CARES Act (ESG-CV), provided by the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). These funds are designed to provide both emergency temporary housing and permanent secure housing for those participants experiencing homelessness. Housing has historically been a common barrier to program entry for potential participants, and courts have worked diligently to find alternate housing solutions. Court programs applied for subgrants of these funds through CACJ as a judicial circuit. The 12 subgrantee judicial circuit programs who were awarded funds served a total of 121 persons, including 12 children and three veterans, between January 1 – December 31, 2022.

Standards and Certification Committee

Role of the Standards and Certification Committee

The Standards and Certification Committee (SCC) develops and refines the state standards and provides recommendations for operation for approval by the Council. In addition to the state standards, the SCC also reviews and approves certification applications and guides the peer review process.

Standards

The state standards provide the basic operating principles by which accountability courts must function to be eligible for state funding. They are developed under the guidance and expertise of the judges of the SCC, and they are drawn from the nationally-recognized standards and best practices generated by All Rise, formerly known as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, the leading national organization in this field. The development of state standards is statutorily mandated to ensure that accountability courts operate in a manner that will effectively reduce recidivism while protecting public safety and reducing the costs associated with prison beds.

Certification

Certification is the process by which the judges of the SCC ensure that state standards are being met. Every two years, all state-certified accountability courts must reapply for certification. Programs complete a detailed, lengthy certification application, verifying with documentation how they meet the state standards and best practices. Staff review and prepare the applications for approval by the SCC.

Peer Review

Peer review is another process by which CACJ verifies that programs are complying with state standards, and it is statutorily mandated that all state-certified accountability courts undergo peer review every three years. Accountability court teams, typically the coordinator, judge, and treatment provider, along with a specially-trained CACJ Certification Officer, spend two days observing another accountability court of the same type. This process includes a review of all court procedures, interviews with participants and team members, and observations of staffing and court proceedings. After the site visit, the CACJ Certification Officer prepares a detailed written report outlining the strengths of the program, where it is meeting or exceeding standards and best practices, and where it could use improvement. The format for the peer review visit and the report were originally generated for Georgia by NPC Research, a leading research and evaluation firm.

In FY23, 26 peer reviews were conducted with accountability courts around the state. In addition to the report that guides program improvements for the court that was peer reviewed, the peer review process creates a two-way learning environment where peer teams are immersed in state standards and best practices. Additionally, valuable information is gathered during each peer review that informs future training opportunities. A list of peer review judges and programs is provided below.

Adult Felony Drug Court

Chief Judge Brenda S. Weaver – Appalachian Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court , Appalachian Judicial Circuit
 Judge Currie M. Mingledorff, II – Barrow County Drug Court, Piedmont Judicial Circuit
 Judge Jason J. Deal – Hall County Drug Court, Northeastern Judicial Circuit
 Judge T. Craig Earnest – Pataula Adult Felony Drug Court, Pataula Judicial Circuit
 Judge David L. Cannon – Blue Ridge Drug Court, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit
 Judge Kimberly Childs – Cobb County Drug Court, Cobb Judicial Circuit
 Judge Jim Wilbanks – Conasauga Drug Court, Conasauga Judicial Circuit
 Judge Maureen Gottfried – Muscogee County Drug Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit
 Chief Judge D. Scott Smith – Cherokee Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Cherokee Judicial Circuit
 Judge Holly W. Veal – Henry County Drug Court, Flint Judicial Circuit
 Judge W. Kendall Wynne – Newton County Drug Court, Alcovy Judicial Circuit
 Judge Lawton E. Stephens – Western Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Western Judicial Circuit
 Judge Robert McBurney – Fulton County Drug Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit
 Judge Harold Hinesley – Toombs Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Toombs Judicial Circuit
 Chief Judge John T. Simpson – Coweta County Drug Court, Coweta Judicial Circuit

Mental Health Court

Chief Judge Kathlene F. Gosselin – Hall County H.E.L.P. Court, Northeastern Judicial Circuit
 Chief Judge Penny Haas Freesemann – Savannah-Chatham Mental Health Court, Eastern Judicial Circuit
 Judge Victoria S. Darrisaw – Dougherty Superior Court Substance Abuse/Mental Health Treatment Program, Dougherty Judicial Circuit
 Judge William P. Bartles – Henry County Resource Court, Flint Judicial Circuit
 Senior Judge Samuel D. Ozburn – Newton and Walton County Mental Health Court, Alcovy Judicial Circuit
 Chief Judge Kristina C. Graham – Lookout Mountain Mental Health Court, Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit

DUI Court

Judge Charles E. Auslander, III – Athens-Clarke County DUI Treatment Court, Athens-Clarke County
 Judge Eric A. Brewton – Cobb County DUI Court, Cobb County
 Chief Judge Eddie Barker – Douglas County State DUI/Drug Court – DUI Track, Douglas County
 Chief Judge T. Russell McClelland – Forsyth County DUI Court, Forsyth County

Family Treatment Court

Judge Alison W. Toller – Hall County Family Treatment Court, Northeastern Judicial Circuit
 Judge Jeremy D. Clough – Enotah Family Treatment Court, Enotah Judicial Circuit
 Chief Judge Michelle Harrison – Douglas County Family Treatment Court, Douglas Judicial Circuit
 Judge Amanda Trimble – Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court, Western Judicial Circuit
 Judge Thomas L. Cole – Chatham County Family Treatment Court, Eastern Judicial Circuit
 Judge Maureen Wood – Rockdale County Family Treatment Court, Rockdale Judicial Circuit

Training Committee

Role of the Training Committee

The Training Committee develops the courses and programs for the continuing education of the judiciary, court staff, and related personnel involved in the administration of accountability court programs throughout the state. The FY23 Training Calendar is at the end of this section, but some highlights are below. Additionally, Article 10 of the CACJ Rules outlines CACJ's training requirements in more detail.

In FY23, CACJ announced its approval from the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP). NBCC is the largest counselor credentialing body in the United States and advances counseling as the premier certification body of the profession. The NBCC Approved Education Provider program highlights a continuing education provider's commitment to quality education and dedication to professional knowledge and skills. NBCC Approved Education Providers offer training and education for professional counselors who are seeking to become certified/licensed and for those who want to maintain their certification/license at the state or national level. The NBCC Approved Education Provider emblem signifies authorized providers of training programs have satisfied NBCC ACEP eligibility requirements and have been granted ACEP status consistent with the NBCC Continuing Education Provider Policy. This rigorous review process ensures that learners receive a consistent, reliable, and quality learning experience that is applicable to their careers and advances their understanding as credentialed professional

counselors. CACJ, as a NBCC Approved Education Provider, offers Georgia's accountability court professional counselors an extra incentive towards accruing continuing education credit, thus minimizing retention challenges for employers.

CACJ Annual Conference

The CACJ Annual Conference is the centerpiece of CACJ's training offerings. On October 9-12, 2022, CACJ hosted a training conference at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia. The conference hosted 1,289 attendees and featured 40 local and national experts as speakers and provided 45 unique breakout sessions. Topics included suicide prevention, mental health and substance use, supervision strategies, self-care and resiliency, equity and inclusion, and unique issues faced by accountability court professionals. Georgia Governor Brian Kemp and Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs attended the conference as keynote speakers. The conference highlights included the recognition of the 2022 award recipients, recognition of the Coordinator Certification Program graduates, and a debut of the video: *Georgia's Accountability Courts: Changing Lives*.

Operational Tune-Up and Refresher Training

Ongoing training is critical to the success of treatment courts. Operational Tune-Ups and Refresher trainings challenge seasoned court teams to self-assess and take corrective steps to improve program policy and practices. These trainings are designed for treatment courts with at least three to four years of operating experience.

The Adult Felony Drug Court, Veterans Treatment Court, and Family Treatment Court Operational Tune-Up Trainings are facilitated by the National Drug Court Institute. The Mental Health Courts attend Mental Health Court Refresher Training facilitated by CACJ faculty and subject matter experts in the field of mental health treatment and accountability court operations. These trainings are offered annually to allow teams the opportunity to receive a tune-up training every three to five years.

New Judge Orientation

All new presiding judges are required to attend the New Judge Orientation (NJO), a two-day seminar organized solely to provide training to new accountability court judges. In FY23, the NJO was attended by 24 attendees. Presenters included accountability court judges, CACJ staff, and subject matter experts speaking on critical need-to-know topics for new judges.

New Coordinator Orientation and Coordinator Mentor Program

The accountability court program coordinator plays a pivotal role that is essential for the successful operation of an accountability court. The coordinator serves as the program's administrator and is responsible for some or all

the following duties: program fidelity, human resources, contracting, maintaining court administrative records, certification, fiscal responsibilities, grant writing, and grants management. CACJ hosts an annual New Coordinator Orientation to introduce new coordinators to CACJ operations. To support new coordinators in a more ongoing manner, CACJ also offers a Coordinator Mentor Program as a form of technical assistance to the courts. This program provides a structured method for an experienced coordinator (mentor) to work closely with a less experienced (or new) coordinator (mentee) to provide one-on-one training and guidance in accountability court administration.

Accountability Court Coordinator Certification Program

First launched in 2020, the Coordinator Certification Program is another way in which CACJ provides critical training and support to program coordinators. Designed in collaboration with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG), it is a two-year, part-time program that culminates in the award of an Accountability Court Coordinator Certification to coordinators. Coursework focuses on the critical skills needed to administer an accountability court program including grant management, fiscal administration, communication, conflict management, team dynamics, and more. CACJ and the CVIOG recognized the second cohort of 73 graduates of the Accountability Court Coordinator Certification Program at the closing session of the 2022 Annual Training Conference.

In December 2022, CACJ opened the Accountability Court Coordinator Certification Program to additional team member roles as a professional development opportunity for accountability court team members including treatment providers, case managers, and probation officers who are interested in completing the certification program.

New Treatment Provider Orientation

Treatment is a critical component of a successful accountability court program. Without effective substance use disorder and behavioral health treatment, accountability courts would be less effective. This training provides licensed and certified treatment professionals, who are new to accountability courts, with a foundational understanding of the best practices and standards used within Georgia's accountability courts. Additionally, they are informed of evidence-based treatment approaches that best serve justice-involved individuals.

Winter Forum

The Winter Forum is an opportunity for CACJ leadership, accountability court judges, and coordinators to meet and discuss issues facing accountability court programs. The training was first offered in February 2020, and in FY23

CACJ hosted 153 accountability court professionals to discuss challenges and innovative solutions on a variety of topics related to accountability court operations.

Treatment Training

Because treatment is so critical to the accountability court model, the training calendar includes several treatment trainings. These included trauma curriculum training, assessment training, and cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum training.

Training Date	Training Name
Accountability Court Team Trainings (Open to All Roles)	
July 20, 2022	Medication Assisted Treatment Training Webinar
October 9-12, 2022	CACJ Annual Training Conference
November 15-16, 2022	Mental Health Court Start-Up Training
November 15-18, 2022	Family Treatment Court Implementation Training
December 6, 2022	Do Our Words Matter: The Connection Between Language, Stigma and Substance Use Disorders (SUD)
March 7-8, 2023	Adult Drug Court Operational Tune-Up Training (5 Teams)
March 7-8, 2023	Family Treatment Court Operational Tune-Up Training (5 Teams)
March 9-10, 2023	Mental Health Court Team Refresher Training (8 Teams)
Judges Trainings	
August 23-24, 2022	New Accountability Court Judge Orientation Training
February 27, 2023	Accountability Court Judge Refresher Training
February 28, 2023	Accountability Court Winter Forum
Coordinator Trainings	
August 10, 2022	Data Webinar
August 16, 2022	New Coordinators' Orientation Training
September 1, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Conflict Management
October 10, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Accountability and Advocacy (During 2022 training conference)
October 11, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Succession Planning and Delegation (During 2022 training conference)
November 2, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Communication
November 7, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Conflict Management
November 9, 2022	An Overview of Accountability Court Certification
November 14, 2022	Coordinator Certification Program: Team & Group Dynamics
February 2, 2023	Coordinator Certification Program: Succession Planning and Delegation
February 2, 2023	Coordinator Certification Program: Accountability and Advocacy
May 2, 2023	Coordinator Certification Program: Team & Group Dynamics
May 4, 2023	Coordinator Certification Program: Communication
May 9, 2023	Coordinator Certification Program: Conflict Management
Self Guided Training	ASAM Learning Modules
Self Guided Training	Coordinator Certification Program asynchronous courses (Grants Administration, Financial Concepts, Procurement)
Treatment Provider Trainings	
July 11-14, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Male
August 1-2, 2022	Seeking Safety
August 8-11, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Female
September 19-22, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Male
October 17-20, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Female
November 14-17, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Male
December 12-15, 2022	Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) Female
May 9-10, 2023	Treatment Provider Refresher Training
Self Guided Training	ASAM Learning Modules
Attorney Trainings	
December 14, 2022	Attorney Training (Prosecutor / Defense Attorney)
April 17, 2023	Attorney Training (Family Treatment Court Specific)

Treatment Fidelity Monitoring and the Treatment Services Program

What is Treatment Fidelity Monitoring?

As recommended by national standards, CACJ requires that all certified accountability courts incorporate manualized, evidence-based treatment that addresses criminogenic risk factors, mental health and substance use disorders, and trauma. Manualized curricula are to be delivered with fidelity to the treatment model and must be administered by appropriately trained and certified providers to attain the treatment model outcome.

As an example, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) is an evidence-based (manualized) cognitive-behavioral intervention developed 25 years ago. It is currently being used in 50 states and seven countries and consistently yields successful results with several target populations. MRT has been proven to increase life purpose, increase moral decision-making, increase medication adherence, and decrease risk-taking behaviors, substance abuse, and recidivism. However, if MRT is not delivered reliably and consistently to the model, those outcomes are not guaranteed. Outcomes promised by evidence-based programs are only achievable if the programs are delivered exactly as designed, and the curricula are followed.

As one of the largest substance abuse and mental health treatment providers in the state of Georgia, CACJ created a fidelity monitoring process to help courts implement and deliver various manualized evidence-based curricula reliably and consistently through coaching and feedback. The term “treatment fidelity monitoring” refers to CACJ’s process for ensuring that courts receiving state-appropriated funds are delivering evidence-based treatment with fidelity to the treatment model. The process involves a site visit conducted by a Treatment Support Fidelity Specialist, or comparable CACJ staff person, to observe a group treatment session offered in an evidence-based curriculum. During the site visit, the CACJ staff person observes a treatment session and then prepares a detailed written report evaluating whether and how the session was delivered in accordance with the curriculum’s requirements.

In FY23, the treatment fidelity program expanded to include participant feedback forms. These anonymous forms allow participants to provide general information about their treatment and group experience. The form pairs well with the fidelity report by providing qualitative program data.

Treatment Services Program

In addition to treatment fidelity monitoring, CACJ's treatment team also provides technical assistance in the form of research-based responses to treatment inquiries, training presentations and webinars, MAT support, and continuously developing resources by working with partner agencies and stakeholders. CACJ's treatment services program also involves the services and support of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' (DBHDD) Behavioral Health Court Liaison to help with bridging gaps between accountability courts and CSB services. The treatment services team is comprised of licensed and certified clinicians who serve as subject matter experts to provide research-based responses to any treatment inquiry received.

Legislation Committee

Role of the Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee monitors legislation affecting CACJ, providing analysis of relevant legislation bills, and coordinating testimony before the Legislature as necessary. The judges of the Legislation Committee work collaboratively with the judges of their respective court types to ensure that judges are aware of relevant legislation and can provide input to the Legislature. The Legislation Committee supported CACJ in FY23 by ensuring judges were available as needed to testify at the State Capital on issues relevant to accountability courts. This year, the Legislation Committee coordinated with the Council of Superior Court Judges to efficiently streamline the process of ensuring effective communication with the Legislature.

Nominations Committee

Role of the Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee assists CACJ in sustaining its elected leadership through a nomination and voting process that takes place each fiscal year. It also recognizes individual court team members at the annual training conference through the Star Awards and the Judge Stephen S. Goss Award. The Nominations Committee also manages the model court selection process in which high performing courts are recognized and serve as a resource to new accountability courts. A list of model courts that served during FY23 and the presiding judges is listed below.

Model Courts

Adult Felony Drug Court

Appalachian Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Chief Judge Brenda S. Weaver
Atlantic Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Judge D. Jay Stewart
Cherokee Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Chief Judge D. Scott Smith
Clayton Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Judge Aaron Mason
Colquitt Substance Abuse/Mental Health Treatment Court, Judge Brian McDaniel
Forsyth County Drug Court, Judge Jeffrey Bagley
Newton County Adult Felony Drug Court, Judge W. Kendall Wynne
Northeastern Judicial Circuit Drug Courts, Judge Jason J. Deal
Piedmont Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Judge Currie Mingledorff
Savannah-Chatham County Drug Court, Senior Judge James F. Bass, Jr.

Adult Mental Health Court

Appalachian Judicial Circuit H.E.L.P. Court, Judge John Worcester
Cobb County Mental Health Court, Judge Ann Harris
Dawson & Hall Counties H.E.L.P. Court, Chief Judge Kathlene F. Gosselin
Henry County Resource Court, Judge William P. Bartles
Newton & Walton Counties Resource Court, Judge Layla Zon and Judge Jeff Foster
Piedmont Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court, Judge Currie Mingledorff
Rome Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court, Judge Jack Niedrach
Savannah-Chatham County Mental Health Court, Chief Judge Penny Haas Freesemann

Veterans Treatment Court

Appalachian Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court, Chief Judge Brenda S. Weaver
Atlantic Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court, Judge Robert Russell
Cobb County Veterans Accountability and Treatment Court, Judge Robert Leonard
Coweta County Veterans Treatment Court, Judge Nina M. Baker

DUI Court

Athens-Clarke County DUI Court, Judge Charles E. Auslander, III

Chatham County DUI Court, Judge Derek White

DeKalb County DUI Court, Judge Alvin Wong

Douglas County Misdemeanor DUI/Drug Court, Judge Brian Fortner and Judge Eddie Barker

Hall County DUI Court, Judge Larry A. Baldwin, II

Liberty County DUI Court, Judge Jeff Osteen

Rockdale County DUI Court, Judge Clarence Cuthpert

Troup County DUI Court, Judge Wesley Leonard

Family Treatment Court

Chatham County Family Treatment Court, Judge Thomas Cole

Cobb County Family Treatment Court, Judge Jeffrey Hamby

Enotah Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court, Judge Jeremy Clough

Hall County Family Treatment Court, Judge Alison Toller

Muscogee County Family Dependency Court, Judge Andrew Dodgen

Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court, Judge Crystal Bice

Data and Research Committee

Role of Data and Research Committee

Formerly a subcommittee of the Standards and Certification Committee known as the Metrics and Measures Subcommittee (MMS), the Data and Research Committee provides critical guidance and oversight for CACJ's statutorily mandated data collection processes. The primary objective of the Data and Research Committee is the development and refinement of accountability court performance measures and research recommendations for approval by the Council.

In FY23, MMS was formally changed to a standing committee due to the Council's commitment to data-driven approaches and expansion of data projects under the purview of the former subcommittee. The promotion to standing committee also allows for the addition of more appointed judges and to continue to grow in scope and expertise. The responsibilities of the Data and Research Committee include:

1. Identify elements necessary for performance measurement, including, but not limited to, recidivism, the number of moderate-risk and high-risk participants, drug testing results, drug testing failures, the number of participants who successfully complete the program, and the number of participants who fail to complete the program,
2. Coordinate with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform on the development and management of performance measurement and data system,
3. Provide, in conjunction with the Funding Committee, a recommendation for funding of any data management or research projects,
4. Establish protocols for the use and dissemination of performance measurement and program data, and
5. Report at least annually or as otherwise directed to the Council as to its activities.

Data are critically important to ensuring that accountability courts are operating in accordance with state standards and best practices by the monitoring of statutorily mandated performance measures. Good data collection practices are vital to both program and participant success, as they allow courts to make data driven decisions. CACJ utilizes data collected for resource allocation and funding decisions, as well as for policy and program improvement recommendations.

Additionally, CACJ partnered with American University who developed a Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Program Assessment tool, and the Center for Justice Innovation, who was the Bureau of Justice Assistance-designated statewide treatment court training and technical assistance provider, to implement Georgia's RED report recommendations. The goals within the recommendations encompass including equitable language in statements and documents, identifying the underlying reasons for disparities in accountability courts using research for guidance, developing local and state-level RED training strategies, addressing treatment barriers for minoritized participants, and establishing research strategies that target disparities.

Data Driven Award

CACJ's Data and Research Committee created the Data Driven Award to reward programs that fully utilize data and their case management systems to improve program and participant outcomes. Since data is instrumental to self-evaluation and for sharing program outcomes with community partners, stakeholders, and legislators, the Data Driven Award reinforces the importance of strong data collection. The Data Driven Award provides both recognition and up to \$15,000 of financial support for continued program evaluation. This year, seven courts submitted applications for consideration for the Data Driven Award.

The winner of the 2023 Data Driven Award was Judge Joy Parks and the Enotah STAR (Stabilize, Treat, Accept, Restore) Court. The mental health court's submission provided the Committee with lots of detail about their policy for data collection and indicated they are fully utilizing their case management system for self-evaluation. With CaseWorX, they are staffing and reviewing referrals, setting regular meetings to review data and make policy decisions, providing quarterly reports to prompt policy discussions, and using surveys to result in necessary changes to drug testing and case management. The Enotah STAR Court reviewed LS/CMI scores for all participants for the past three years and used the information to develop a court specific risk/need score range. They are an example of how to effectively utilize the data gleaned from their case management system and make it work for their program.

A message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



It is an honor to present to you the FY23 Annual Report for the Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ). This report reflects the accomplishments of CACJ's judicial leadership, CACJ staff, and of the local accountability court personnel across the state. The judges of the CACJ, our staff, and all accountability court personnel alike work tirelessly to serve Georgia citizens by providing evidence-based, research-backed substance abuse treatment and behavioral health treatment to Georgians across the state while working to uphold public safety through partnerships with local law enforcement agencies.

This fiscal year, CACJ accomplished a number of goals by continuing to leverage the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to thrive in a technology-driven working environment. Staff efficiently utilized our resources to service not only the members of CACJ but also all personnel working within an accountability court. For example, agency staff, judges, coordinators, case managers, treatment providers, and others participated in an All Rise supported train-the-trainer program to learn how to deliver national, evidence-based training to Georgia's accountability courts. In doing so, CACJ is able to deliver more trainings using agency staff and those working in our courts versus contracting with national trainers. This program is an example of how CACJ finds creative ways to stretch resources. It is also an example of our commitment to being good stewards of state funds. We have also worked to expand our technical assistance offerings to include more medication assisted treatment training and technical assistance through agency staff. We are working with courts to locate providers, develop policy and procedure, and then provide monitoring through either virtual or onsite visits.

I believe the future of Georgia's accountability courts continues to be bright. There continues to be a demand for substance abuse and mental health services provided to communities by accountability courts. This is demonstrated by the new implementation courts and tracks that want to begin operations in fiscal year 2025. It also demonstrated in the fact that accountability courts served 4% more participants statewide in fiscal year 2023 than they did in fiscal year 2022. Further, accountability courts once again are a more cost-effective approach to serving the eligible

population than incarceration. In FY23, for every state dollar invested into accountability courts there was \$5.33 saved.

As we move into 2024, CACJ is primed to work on new projects to help make accountability courts even more accessible to Georgians regardless of geographic location or economic status. We will be able to execute some of this work under a new stream of federal funds awarded to support accountability courts. CACJ, in conjunction with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, applied for and was awarded \$2.5 million in federal treatment court discretionary funds from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This grant program is expected to kick-off in 2024 and will allow CACJ to implement a standard screening tool for arrest in local jails to help further determine accountability court eligibility; establish a language access protocol for non-English or limited-English speaking participants; enhance our already robust data collection procedures to assess program outcomes; and to provide emergency and transitional housing for participants in need to address environmental and other risk factors that often limit accountability court participation. Housing is one of the most urgent needs for the courts, and sadly many potential participants are turned away from our programs because they do not have stable, sober housing ready for them when they leave incarceration.

I am honored to have the opportunity to lead CACJ staff. I consider it a professional and personal privilege to be able to do this work every day. The dedicated staff of CACJ continues to deliver and meet challenges head on. CACJ operations continued efficiently with a lean staff in FY23. We operate as a shared services model, in that we do not employ dedicated human resources, information technology, grant management, or fiscal staff. We are supported in these areas by the hardworking staff at the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts, and we could not do this important work without their assistance. CACJ staff is in place to serve as subject matter experts providing technical assistance and oversight expertise to Georgia's accountability courts.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report. On behalf of CACJ members, leadership, staff, and the local courts, I thank you for your support and recognition of our efforts.

Taylor Jones

Taylor Jones

Accountability Courts Statewide Performance Measures Report

Fiscal Year 2023

December 2023
Council of Accountability
Court Judges of Georgia



Prepared by the Georgia Statistical Analysis Center

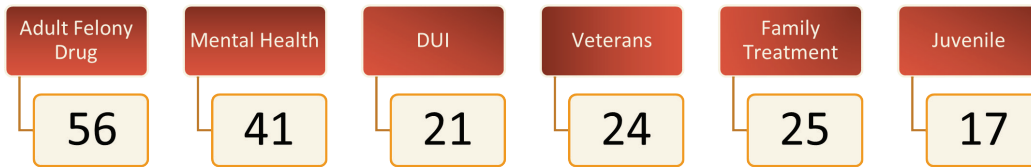
Executive Summary

Georgia’s accountability courts seek to provide research supported and cost-saving alternatives to incarceration. In Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023), participants in Council of Accountability Court Judges’ (CACJ) certified programs engaged in evidence-based treatment, ancillary services, monitoring in the community, and a focus on individual goals supervised by multi-disciplinary team members.

In FY 2023, there were 184 accountability courts serving 7,464 participants. Of those served, 2,890 entered the program during the fiscal year and 1,615 graduated.¹ From FY 2019 to 2023 there was a 13% increase in the number of accountability courts in Georgia.

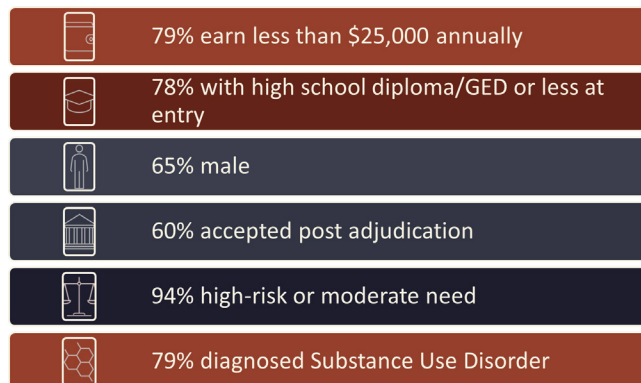


Total of 184 accountability courts and tracks in FY 2023



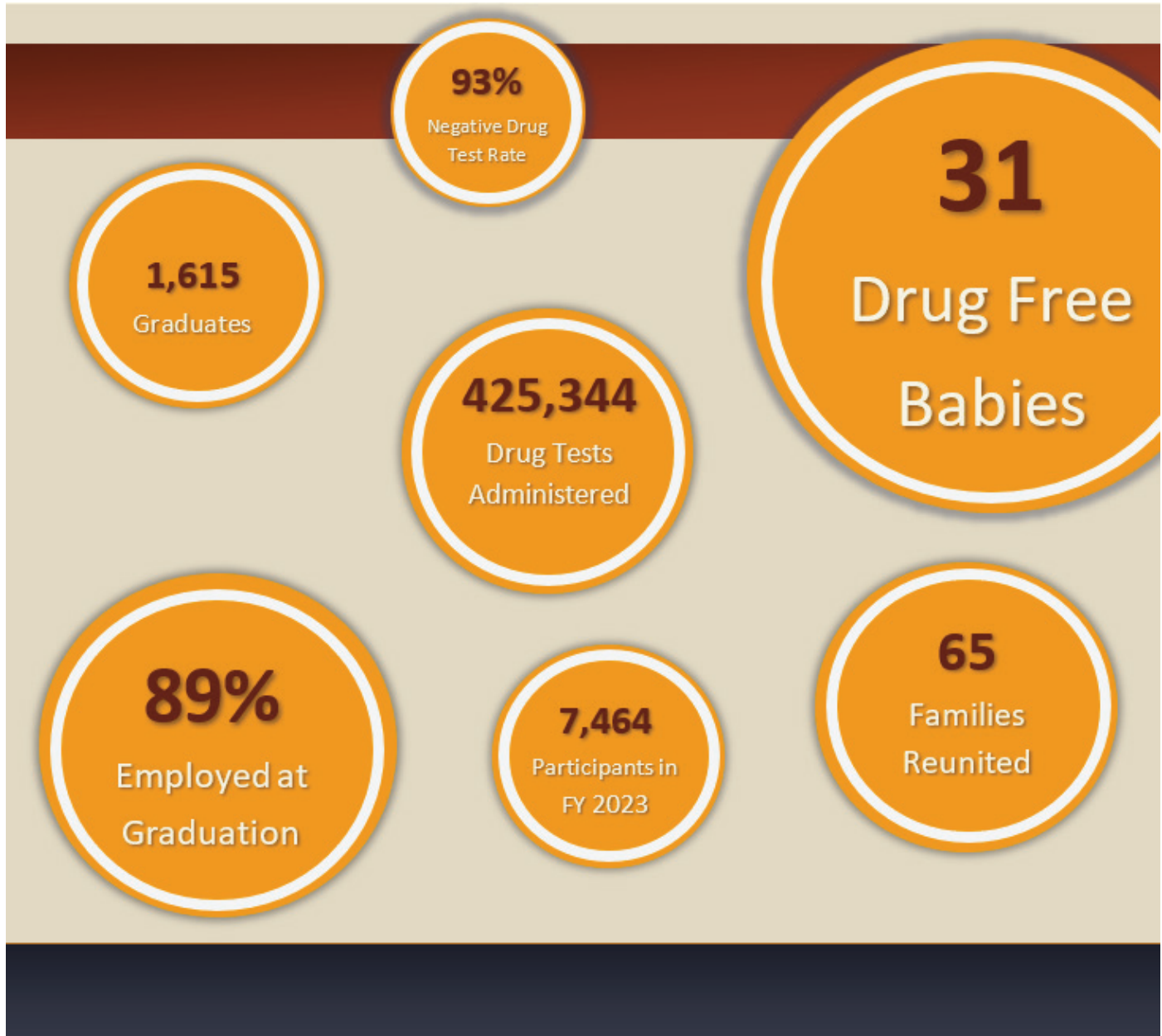
There was a 13% increase in the number of courts from FY 2019 to 2023

Entrance characteristics of accountability court participants in FY 2023



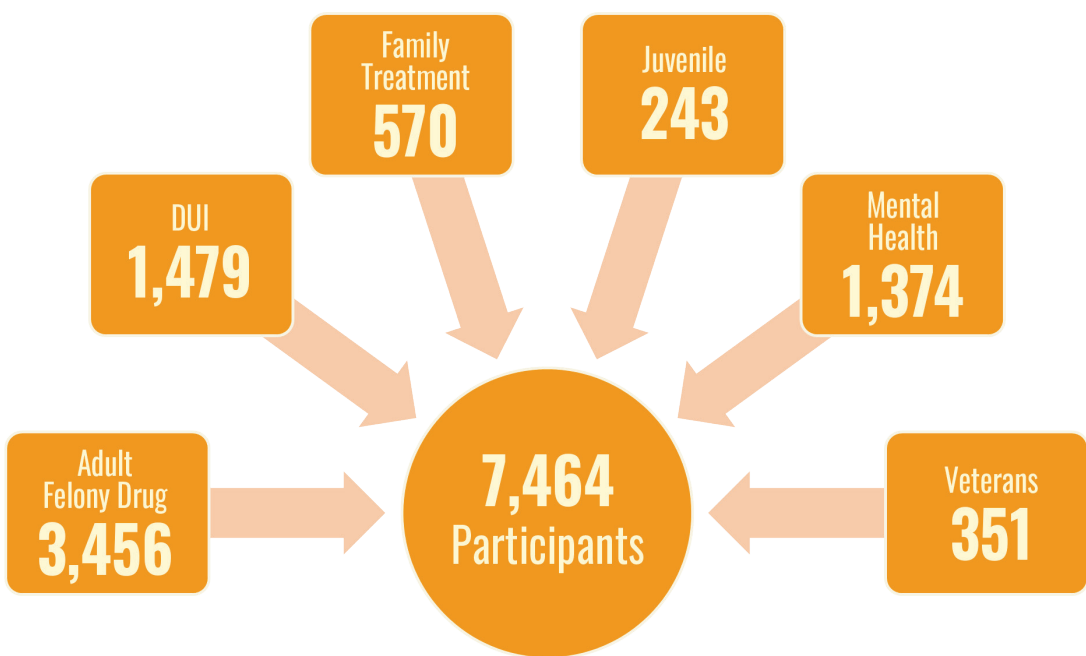
¹ All analyses use and are validated for data compiled on August 9, 2023.

Impact Summary



Participant Summary

 **7,464** total accountability court participants served in FY 2023



 **2,890** new accountability court participants in FY 2023

2 7,464 is the total number of unique participants in the accountability court system during the fiscal year. Some participants were in multiple program types; therefore the sum of court type participant counts is slightly higher than the total count of unique participants.

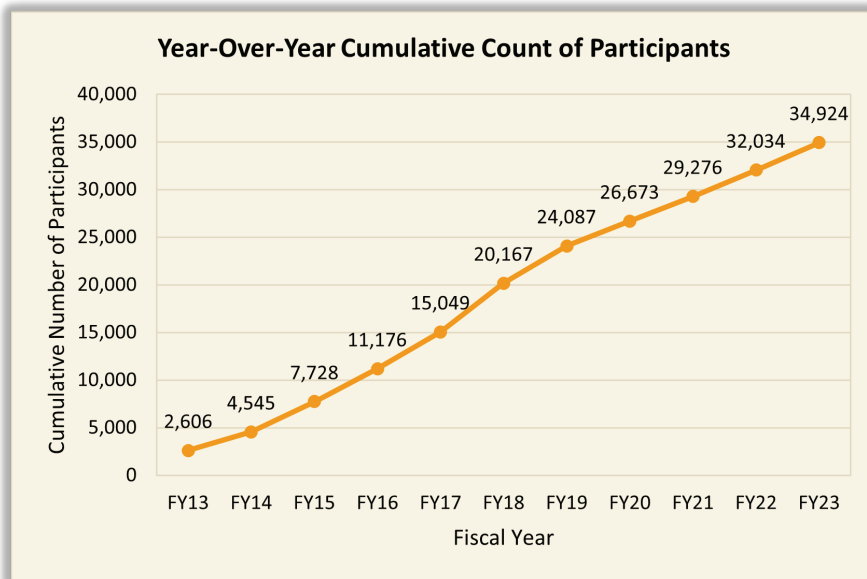
Participants

Georgia’s accountability courts served 7,464 participants in FY 2023, 269 more than last year. This is the first year since the pandemic that participant numbers have increased. Since 2013 over 34,000 unique participants have been served through Georgia Accountability Courts. For information on participant throughput by program county, please see Appendix A.



4% increase in the number of participants served from FY 2022

Number of Participants				
Court Type	Fiscal Year			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
DUI	2,072	1,617	1,303	1,479
Adult Felony Drug	5,034	4,099	3,607	3,456
Juvenile	241	288	157	234
Mental Health	1,497	1,418	1,269	1,374
Family Treatment	668	591	522	570
Veterans	414	385	337	351
Total	9,926	8,398	7,195	7,464

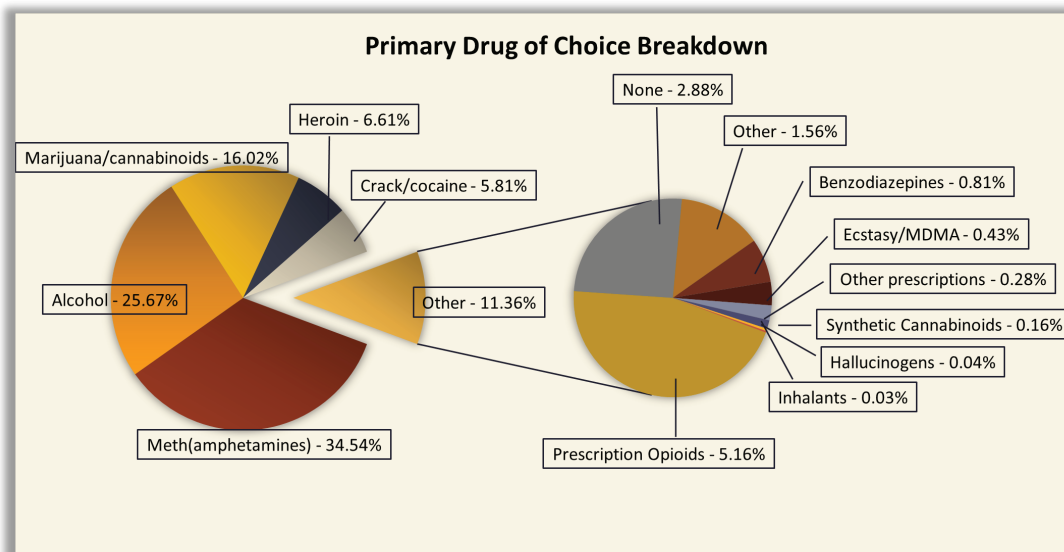


3 The total number is unique participants meaning someone who was in multiple programs in FY 2023 was only counted once.

Primary Drug of Choice

Over three quarters (76%) of the participants indicated that methamphetamines (34%), alcohol (26%), and marijuana/cannabinoids (16%) are their primary drug of choice. These preferences have not varied much since FY 2020, except for an increase in heroin preference. From FY 2020 to 2023 there has been a 32% increase on preference for heroin, but heroin represents only 7% of the primary drugs of choice indicated by program participants. For more information on primary drug of choice by program location, please see Appendix B.

32% increase in preference for heroin from FY 2020-2023



Drug Tests

In FY 2023, over 425,000 drug tests were administered through the 184 accountability courts.⁴ This averaged approximately 60 tests per participant. Nearly 50% of the participants tested positive for drugs in the first phase of

⁴ This figure includes tests administered to individuals who were not yet accepted into the program and is an aggregate of testing methods. Some participants are tested prior to the start of Phase 1 of programs.

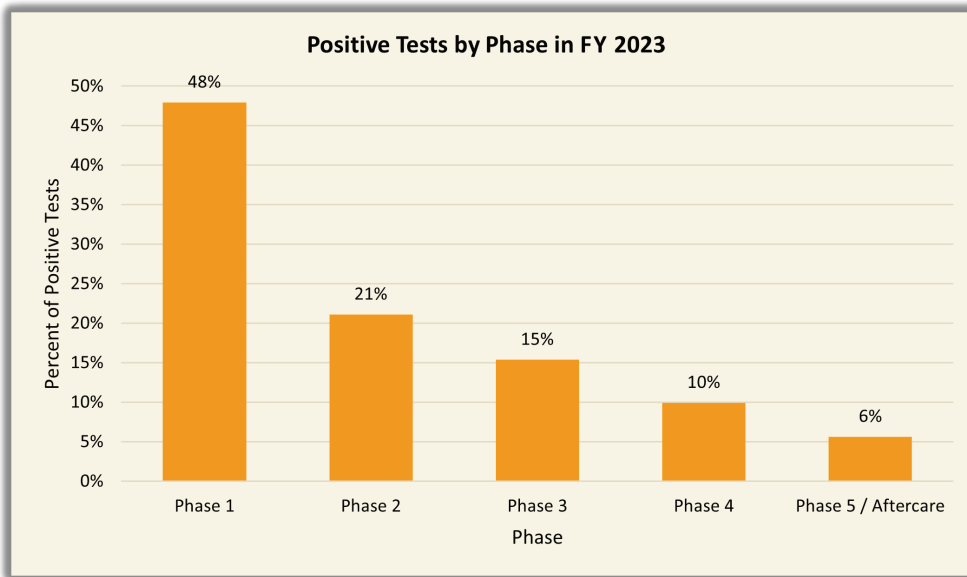
programming, but positive tests decreased substantially as the participants continued through the court programs.⁵ 96% of the drug tests administered were urine tests. The next most common modalities for testing were breathalyzer tests (2%) and saliva tests (2%). Blood, sweat, and hair modalities for testing were used in some cases, but only rarely.



93% negative drug test rate



96% tests were urine tests

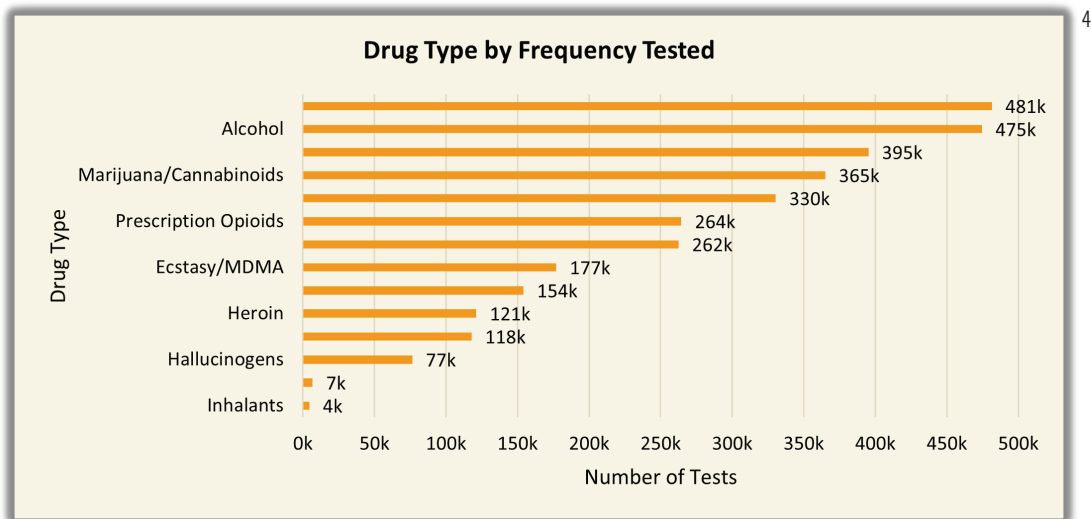


3 Approved positive tests are counted as negatives, and inconclusive tests are excluded from outcome analyses.

Drug tests nearly always tested for between 1 and 12 substances. The majority (64%) of drug tests are 7-12 panel tests, while 30% of drug tests are 1-6 panel tests. A substantial majority (90%) of positive drug tests detect only one substance in participants' systems, and nearly all positive drug tests detect three or fewer substances in participants' systems. However, only a third of positive drug tests were positive for substances which had been indicated as a primary, secondary, or tertiary drug of choice, which may suggest that continuing to use tests with comprehensive panels may be beneficial over only testing for drugs of choice.



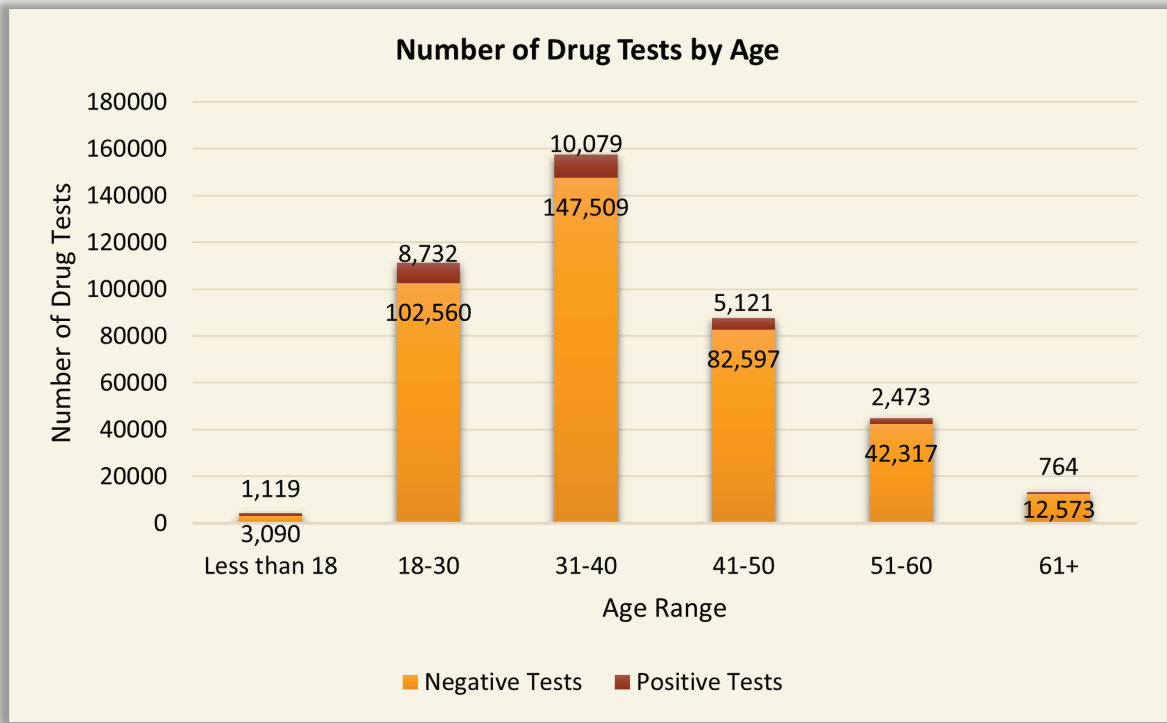
64% of positive drug tests are positive for a substance not identified as a primary, secondary, or tertiary drug of choice



4 Some substances are listed multiple times within a singular drug test because they test for multiple variations of a substance, causing some individual drug testing numbers to be higher than the number of drug tests. Ethanol, ETG, and ETS substance results all count as positive alcohol tests.

Drug Testing by Demographic

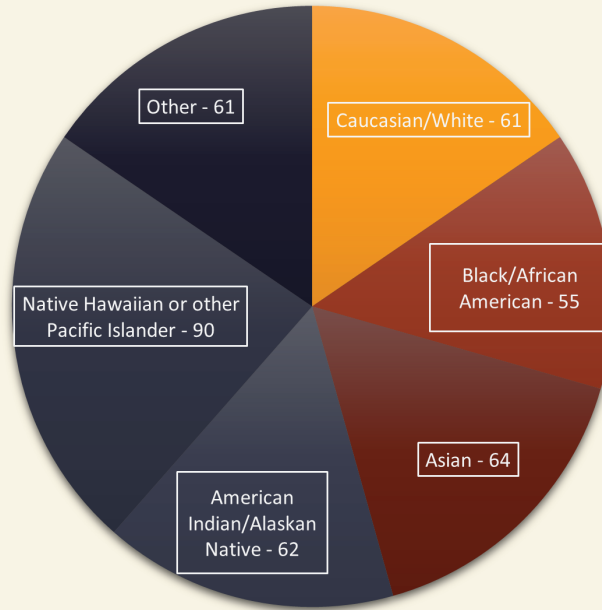
In FY 2023, the grand majority of drug tests were administered to participants between the ages of 18 and 50, with the 31- to 40-year-old age group being the most commonly tested single age group. Frequency of drug tests were the highest for individuals identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, with an average of 90 tests per individual, while all other racial categories had approximately 60 tests per individual. The percentage of positive drug tests within racial categories ranges from 4% within the Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander racial category to 9% within the Black/African American racial category. Frequency of drug tests were nearly evenly distributed across gender identity. Positive drug tests were also approximately equally distributed across gender identities.



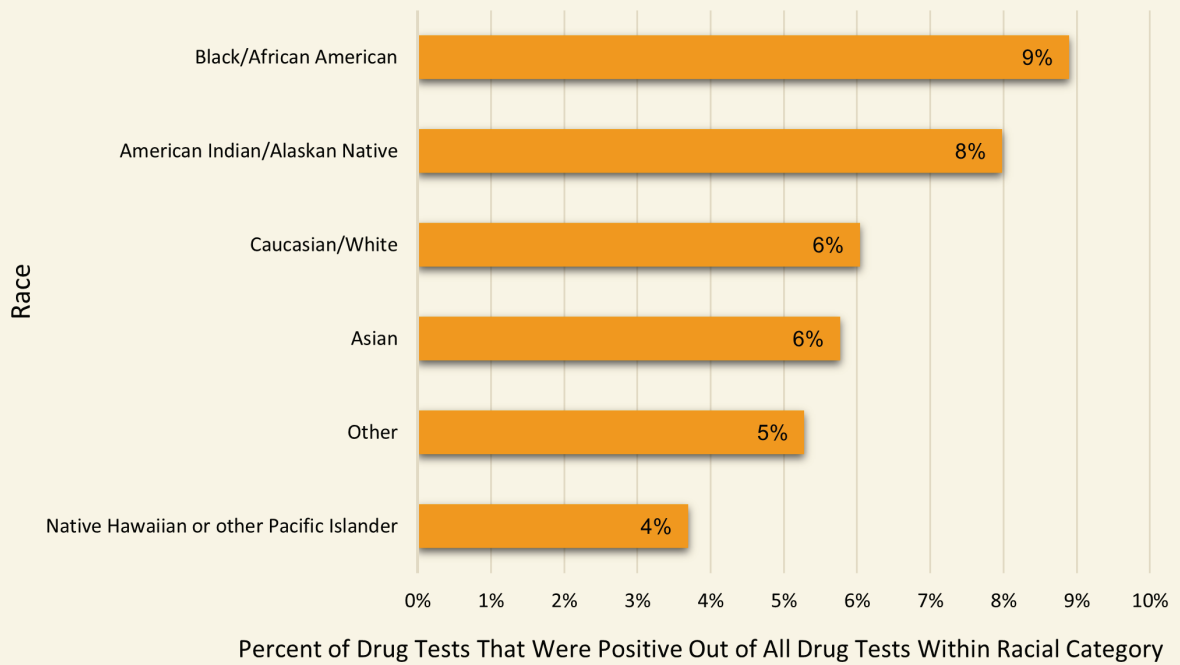
5

5 Age is calculated from acceptance date. Therefore, those who were not accepted into the program are not included in this figure for the number of drug tests by age.

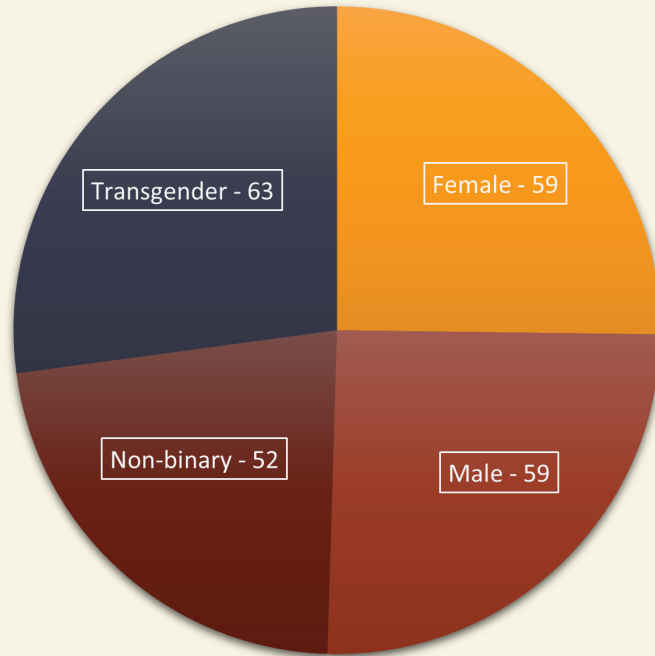
Average Number of Drug Tests per Individual by Race



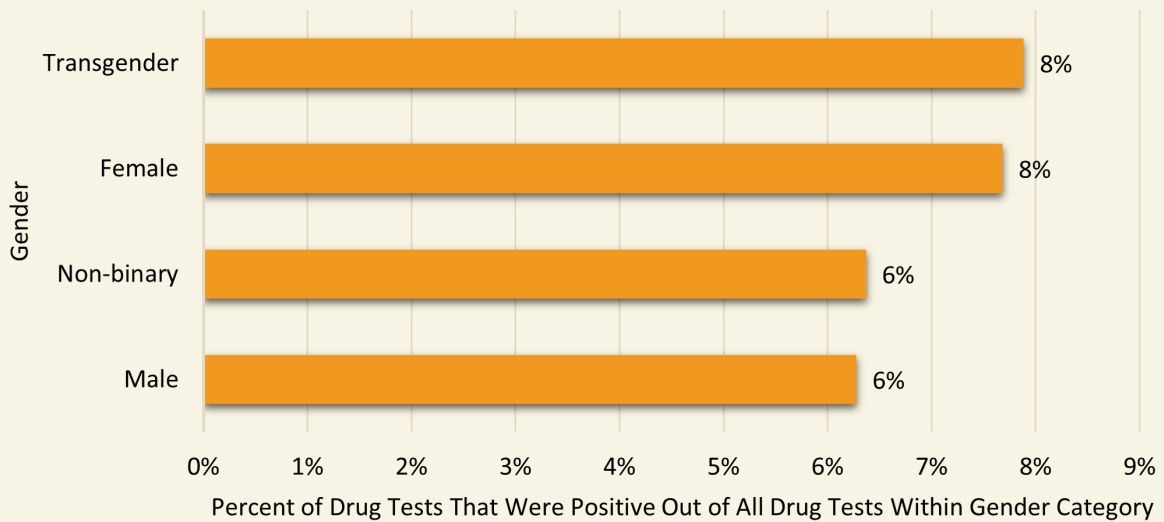
Percent of Drug Tests That Were Positive by Race



Average Number of Drug Tests per Individual by Gender



Percent of Drug Tests That Were Positive by Gender



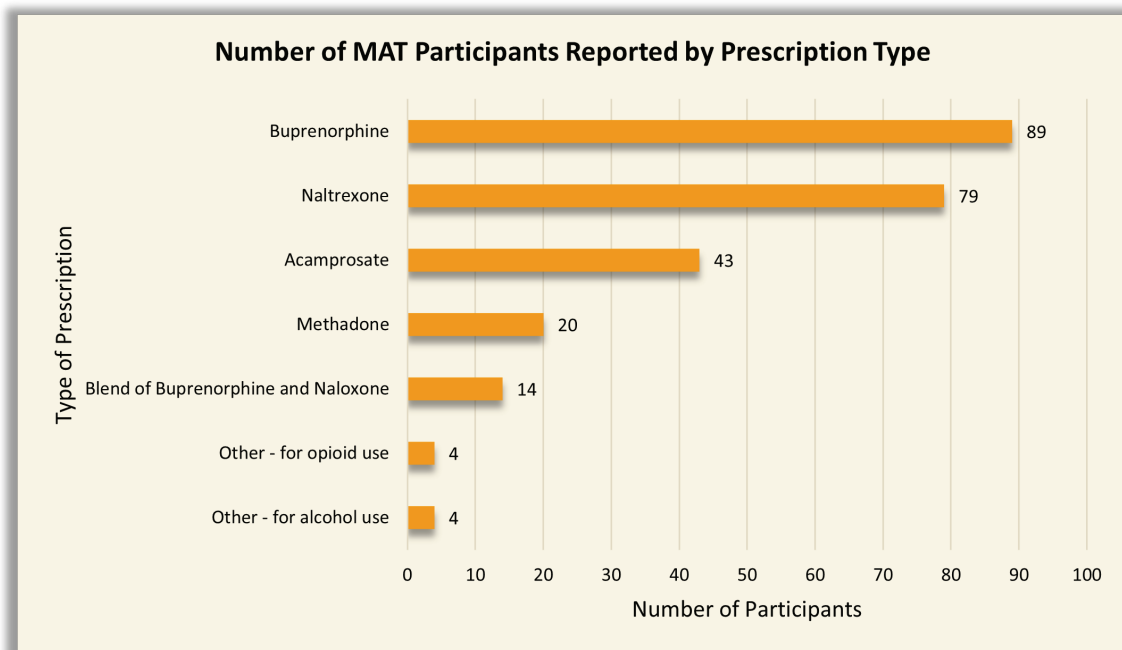
Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

MAT enables participants to receive medication therapy while participating in an accountability court. Courts piloted MAT in FY 2019, and at that time, participants engaged in 7 different types of therapy. In FY 2023, the 51 accountability courts who reported MAT data provided MAT to 242 of their participants. In FY 2023, the number of therapy types increased to 34 and patients averaged 60 treatment sessions during the year. On average, courts administered 72 drug tests per MAT participant with an 85% passage rate. Almost two thirds of MAT patients indicated that their primary drug of choice was heroin, prescription opioids, or alcohol.

Four primary prescriptions constituted 97% of the MAT prescribed to participants: Buprenorphine, Naltrexone, Acamprosate, and Methadone. Buprenorphine and Methadone are used to reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms for opiates. Naltrexone works to block the effects of opiates and alcohol to aid in decreasing the drug’s use. Acamprosate is a drug to help someone maintain sobriety from alcohol by decreasing the level of excitation and cravings that some experience after going through withdrawal.



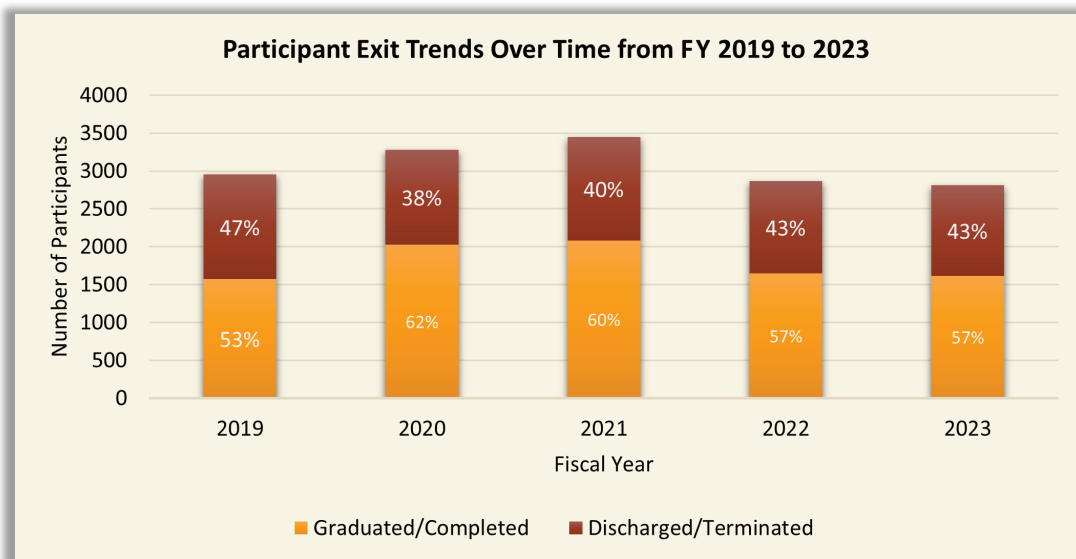
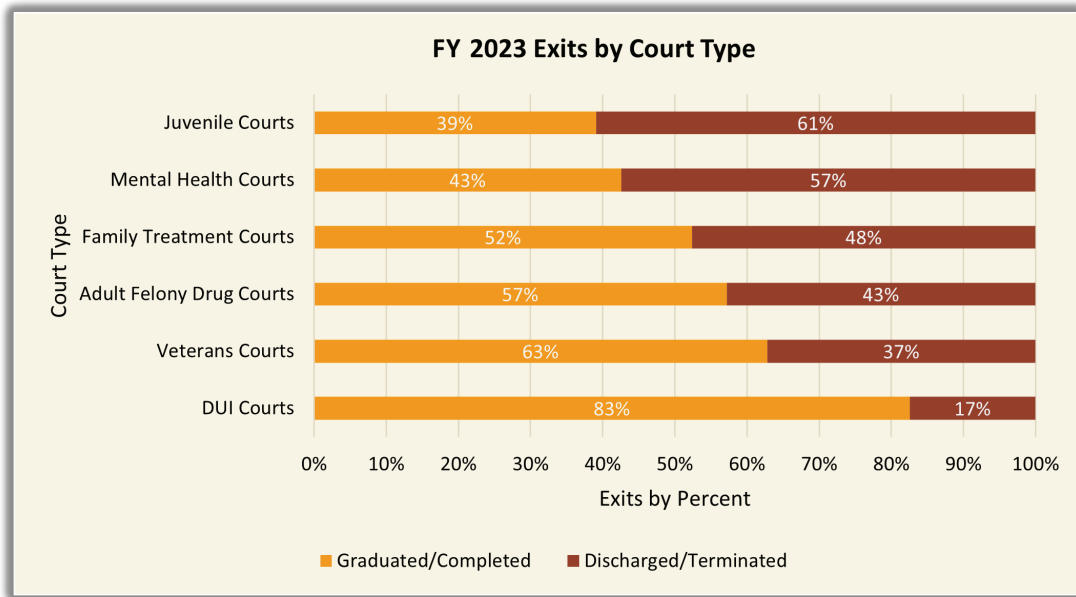
242 MAT participants reportedly served in FY 2023



Participant Graduates and Other Exits



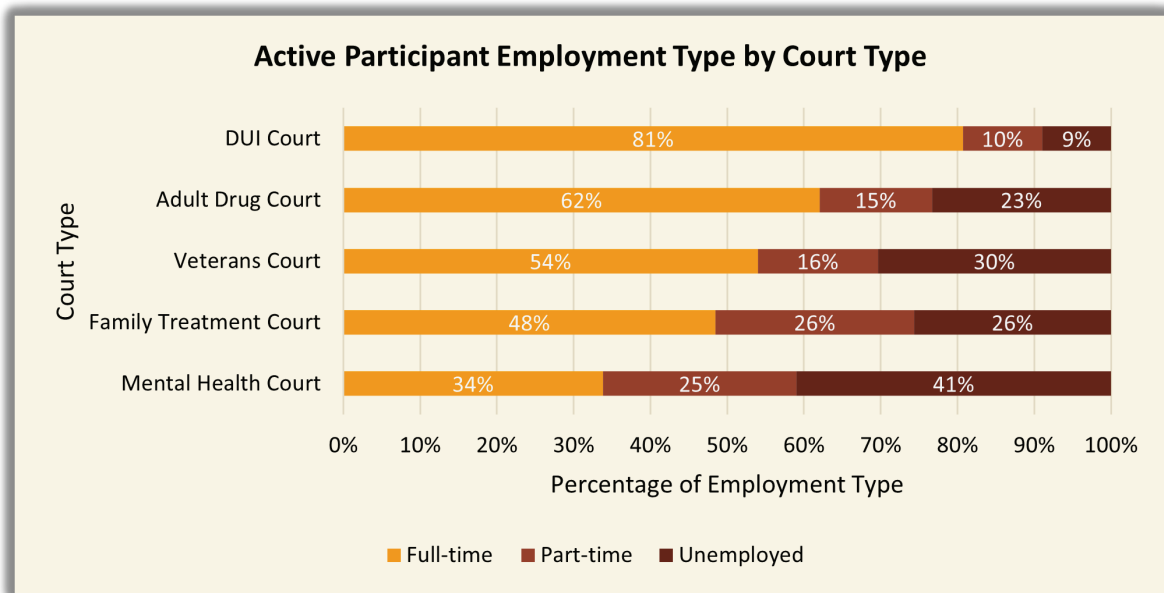
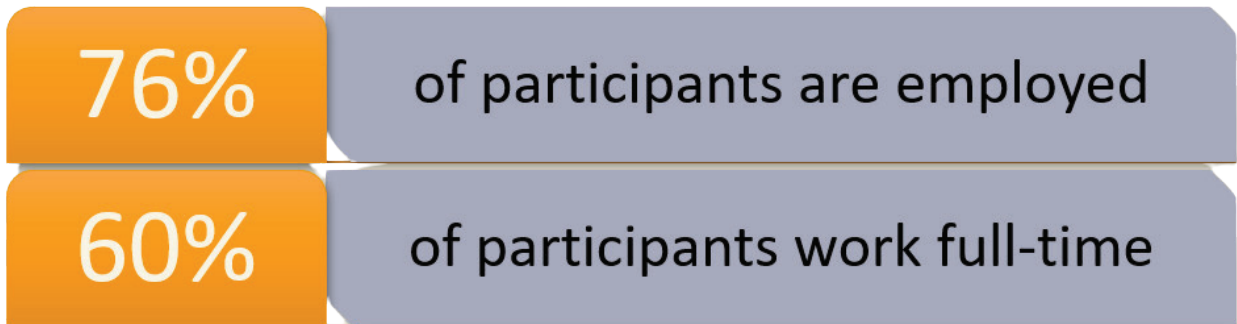
1,615 participants graduated across all courts



Employment Status for Participants

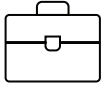
All employment statistics reflect only participants who were eligible to work; participants who were not eligible to work were not included in employment statistics. Participants who were disabled, students, in vocational rehab, and in a juvenile accountability court were considered ineligible for these analyses. Employment data came from Q4. When Q4 data was missing, it came from the previous quarter and so on. Among participants who had exited, their reported employment and income came from the quarter they were in at their time of exit, unless that quarter was missing data, in which it came from the previous quarter.

Active Participants



Participants at Entry and Exit

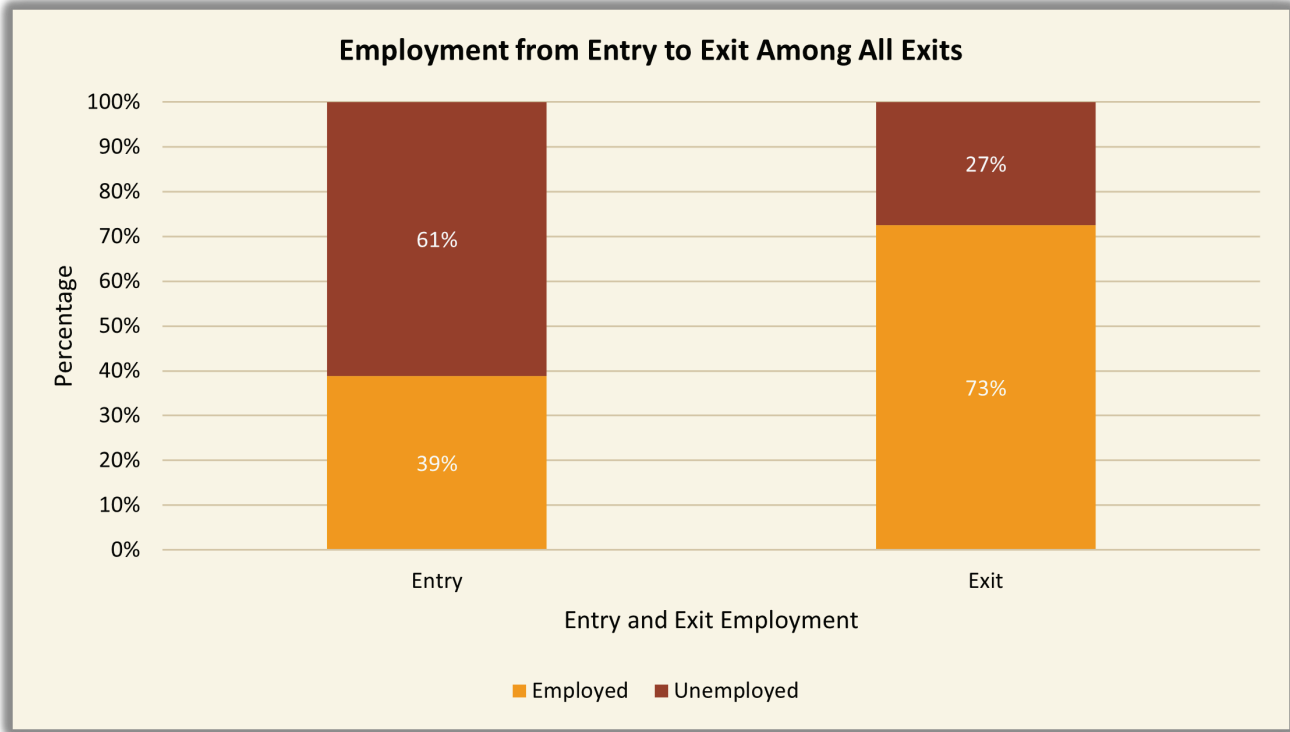
Although employment is a goal for most program types, it is important to note that some courts, such as the mental health courts, do not prioritize employment as a program outcome.

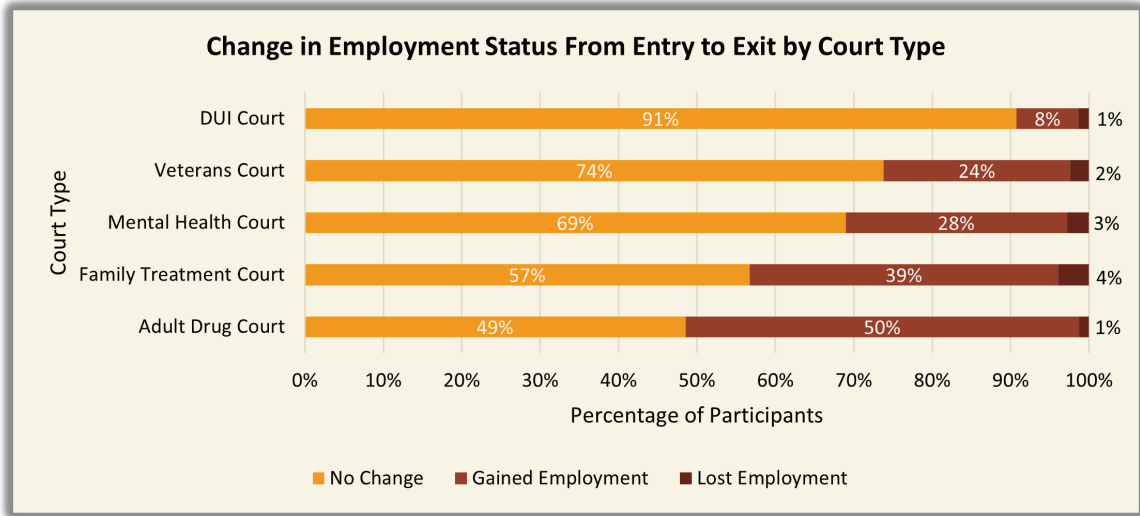


73% of participants are employed when exiting the program



89% of graduates are employed when exiting the program

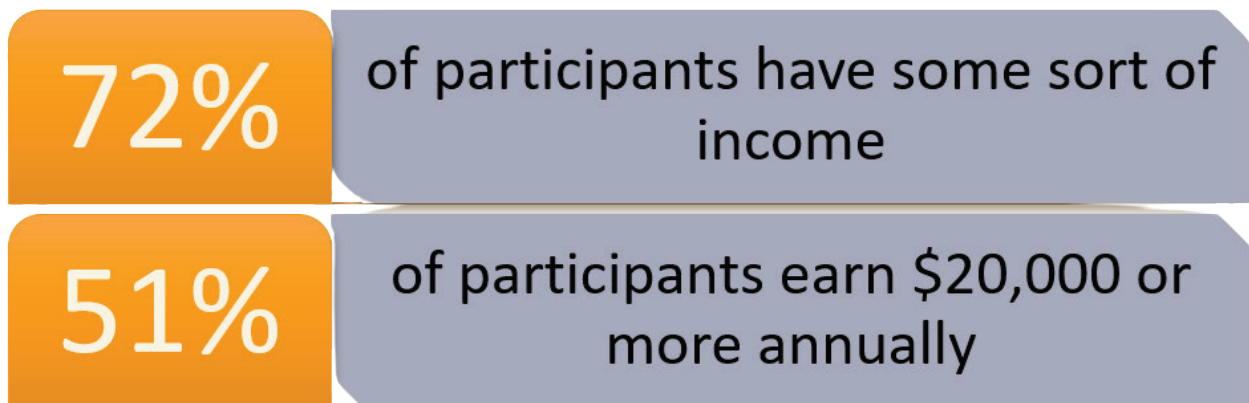


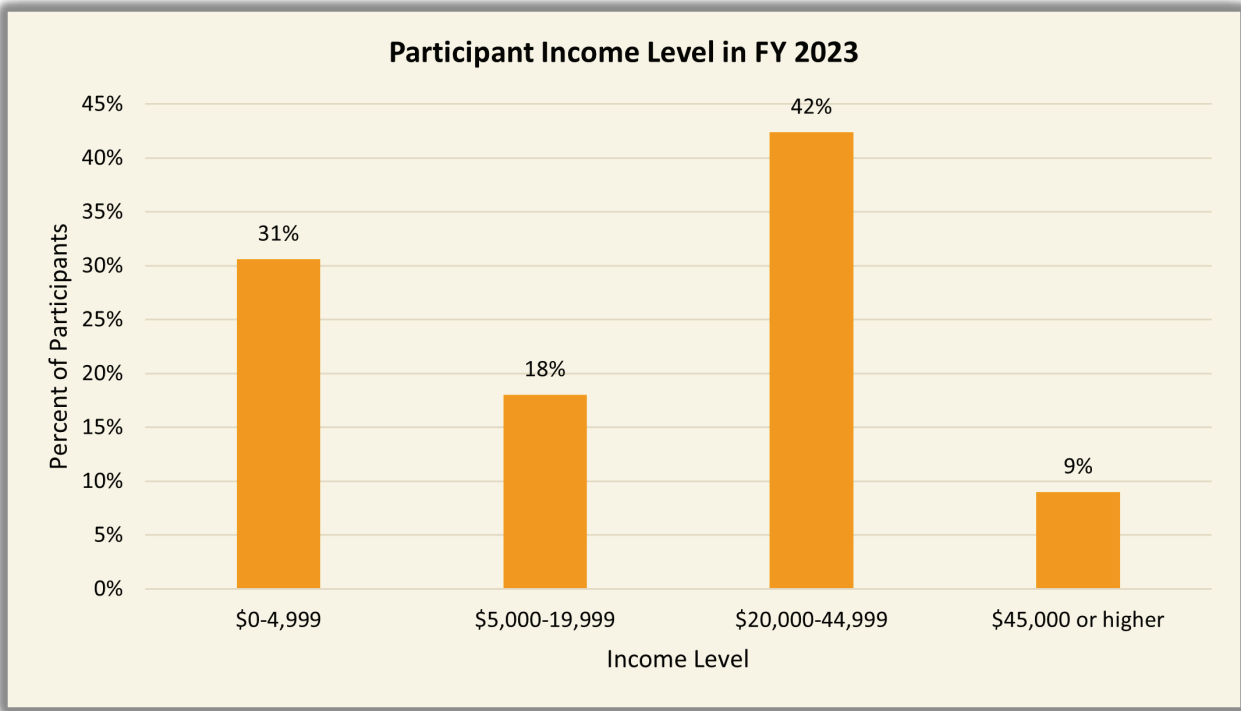
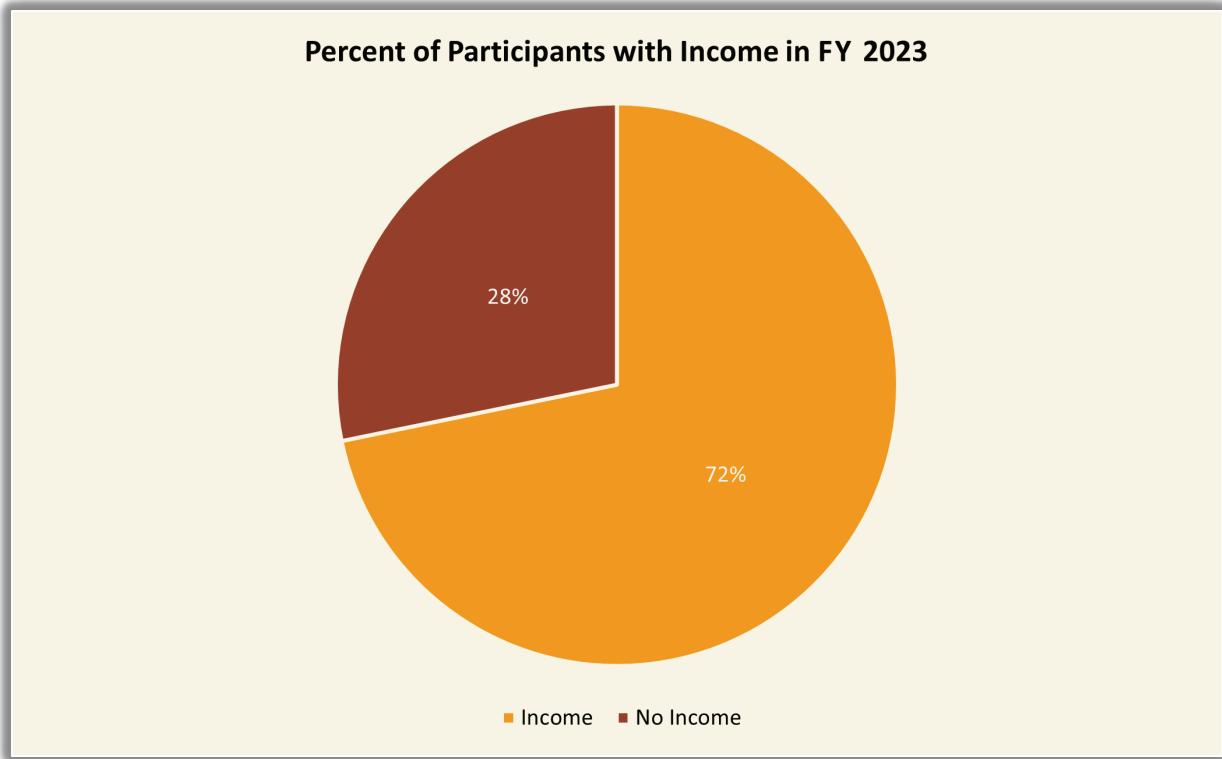


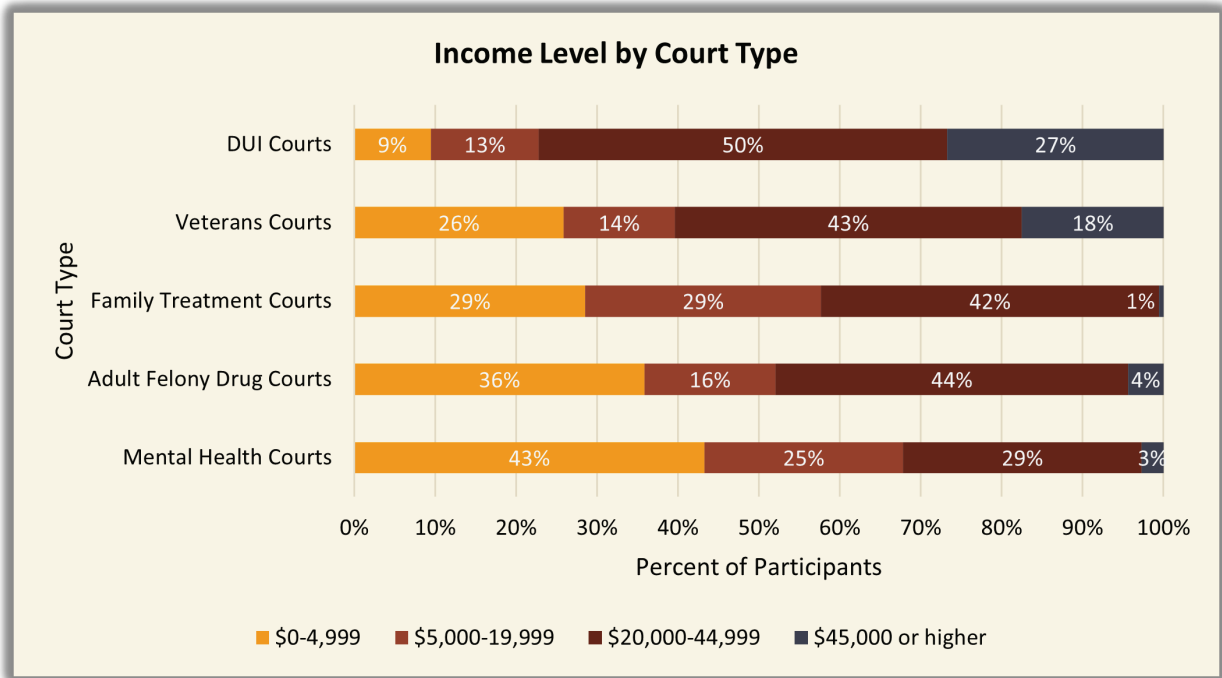
Income Level for Participants

All income statistics reflect only participants who were eligible to work; participants who were not eligible to work were not included in income statistics. Participants who were disabled, students, in vocational rehab, and in the juvenile court system were considered ineligible for these analyses. Income data came from Q4. When Q4 data was missing, it came from the previous quarter and so on. Among participants who had exited, their reported income came from the quarter they were in at their time of exit, unless that quarter was missing data, in which it came from the previous quarter.

Active Participants

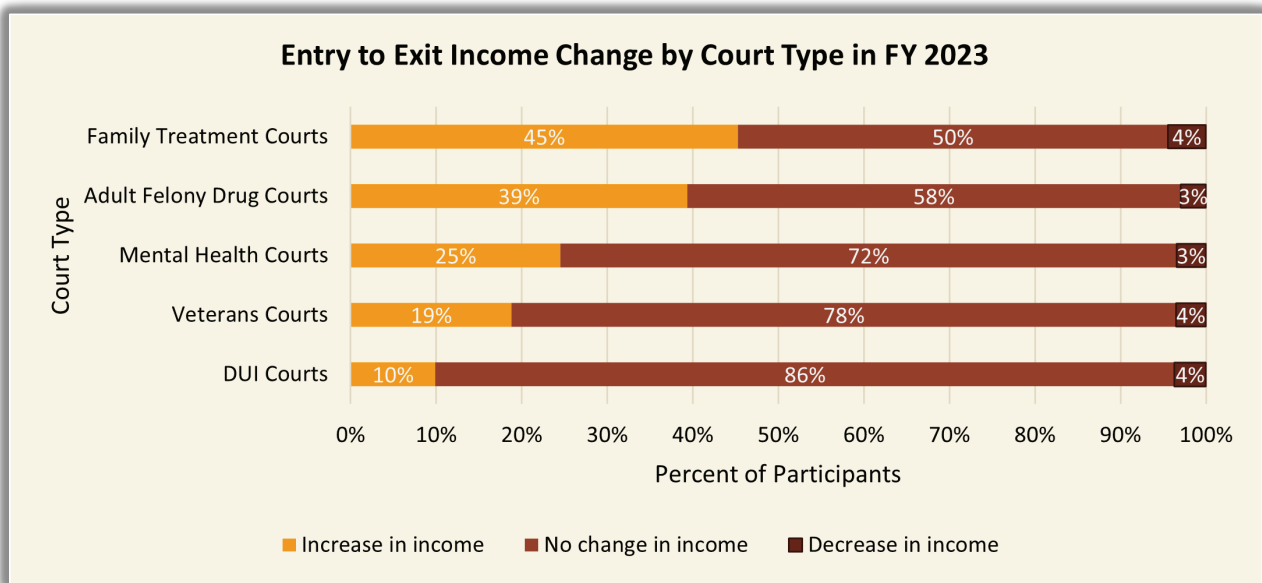


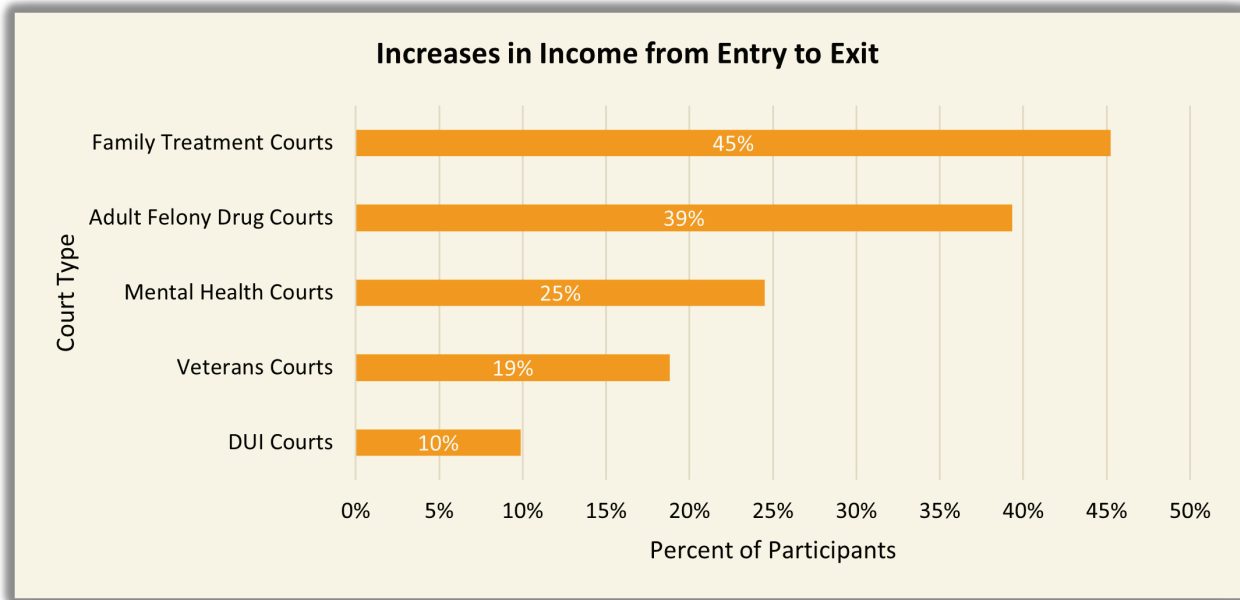




30% of participants increased their income from entry to exit

Participants at Entry and Exit





Family Outcomes



31 drug-free babies born



65 children reunified with their parent



38 participants reunified with their children

Visitations

The focus of Family Treatment Courts is to work as a multi-disciplinary team of court personnel, treatment providers, community partners, and child protective services to reunify families that have been separated due to a child maltreatment finding by the State (Division of Family and Children Services). Visitation is a key component of family treatment courts. In FY 2023, 10 of the 25 Family Treatment Courts reported data on visitations of family court participants with their children, which resulted in over 5,100 visitations scheduled during the period. This averages 15

visitations per program participant of the courts that reported visitation information. The visitations are well attended, with 92% of the court scheduled visitations being attended and fewer than 1% being canceled.

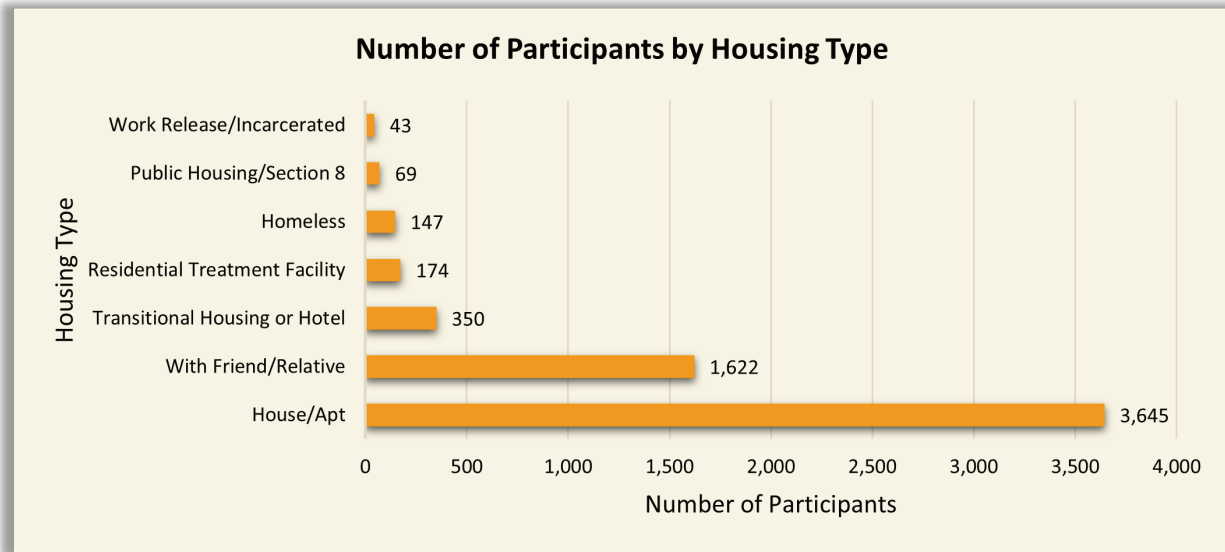


Stable Housing

The majority (60%) of program participants are housed in a free-standing home or an apartment that is not public housing. Over a quarter live with a friend or relative. Of the those that indicated if the housing was stable or unstable, 96% indicated the housing was stable. However, there are many records without this information reported. A small percentage (1.4%) of participants reported a change in their housing status during FY 2023. Of those that experienced a housing status change, 60% went from unstable to stable housing.



96% of those reporting indicated stable housing for participants

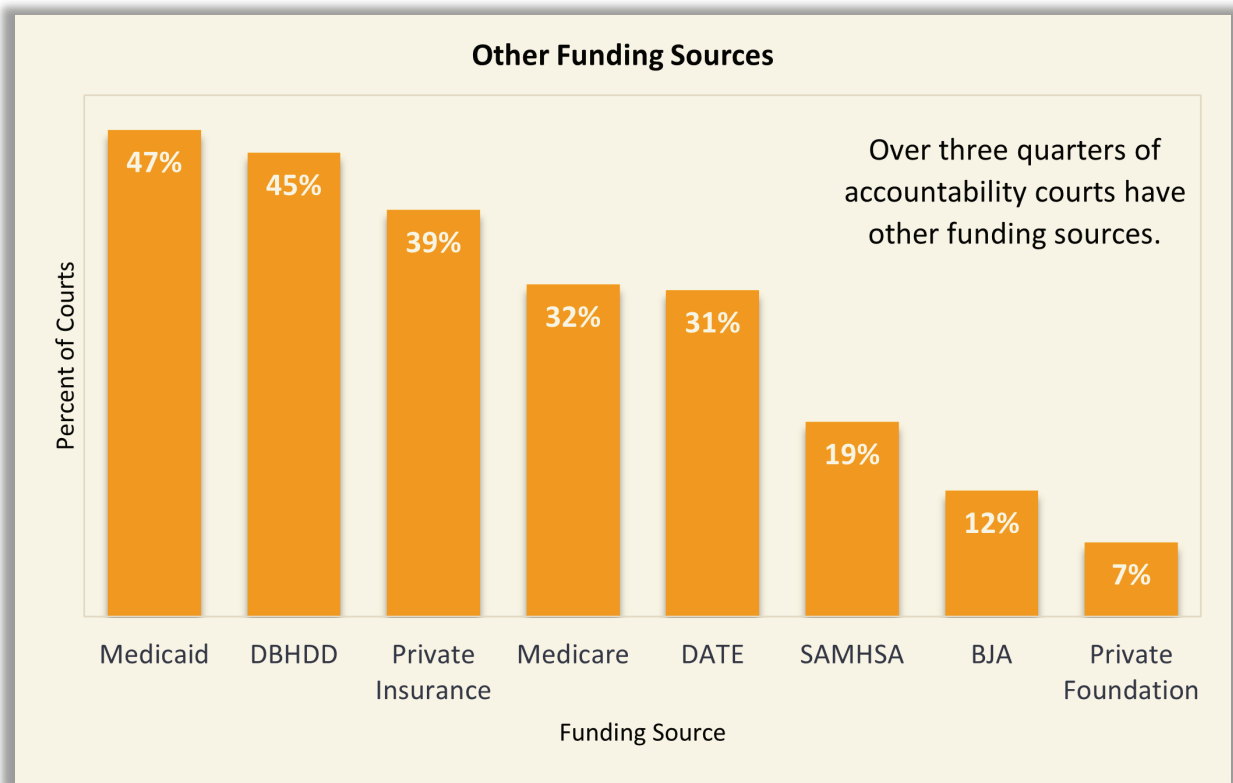
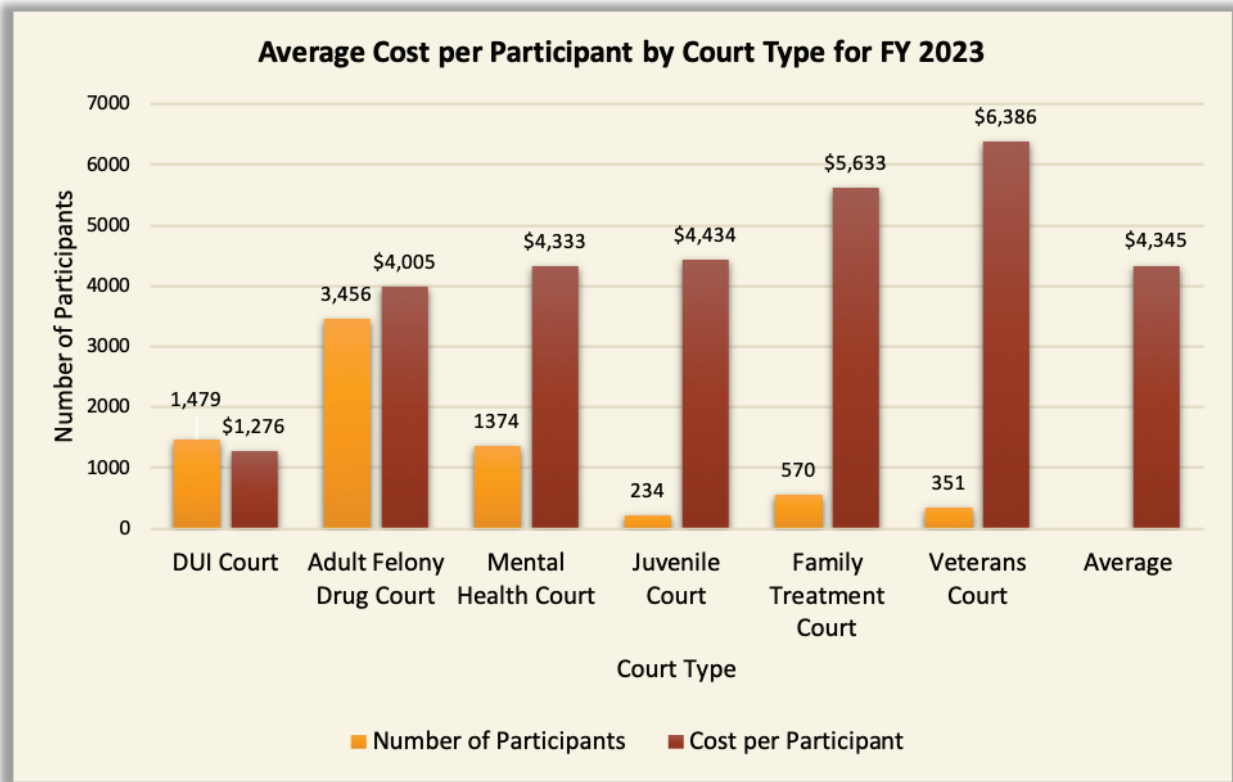


Budget Impact Analysis

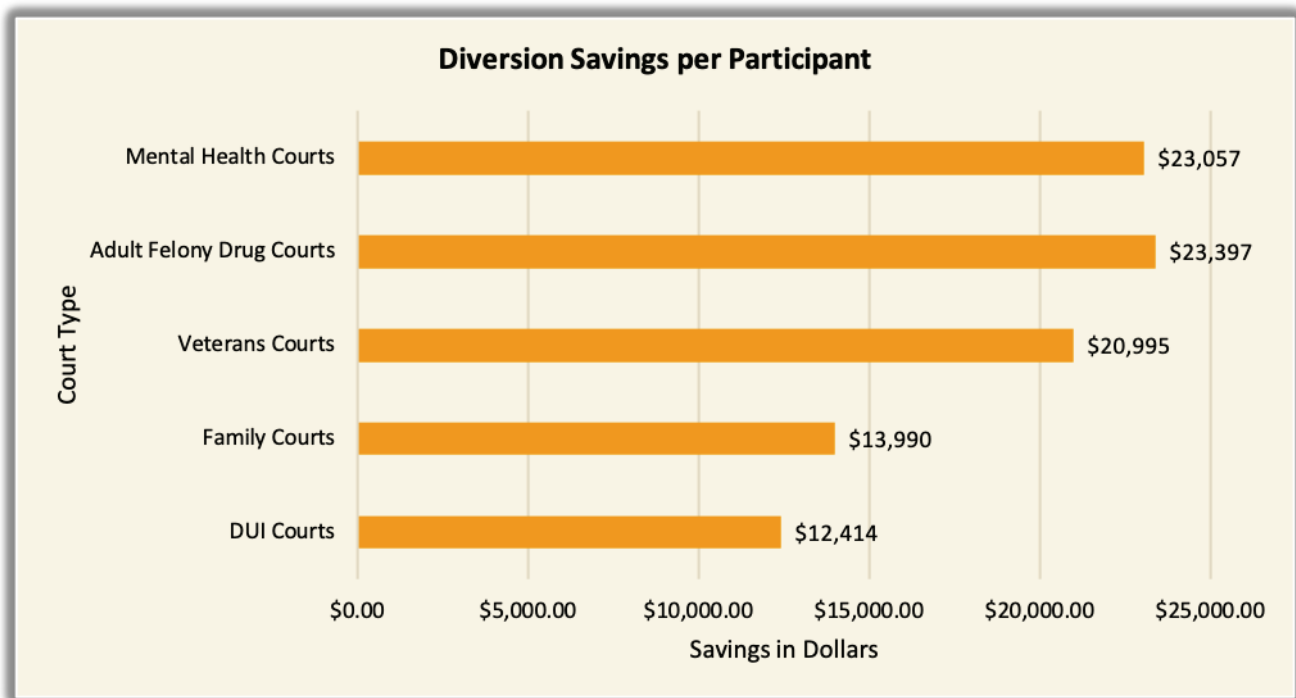
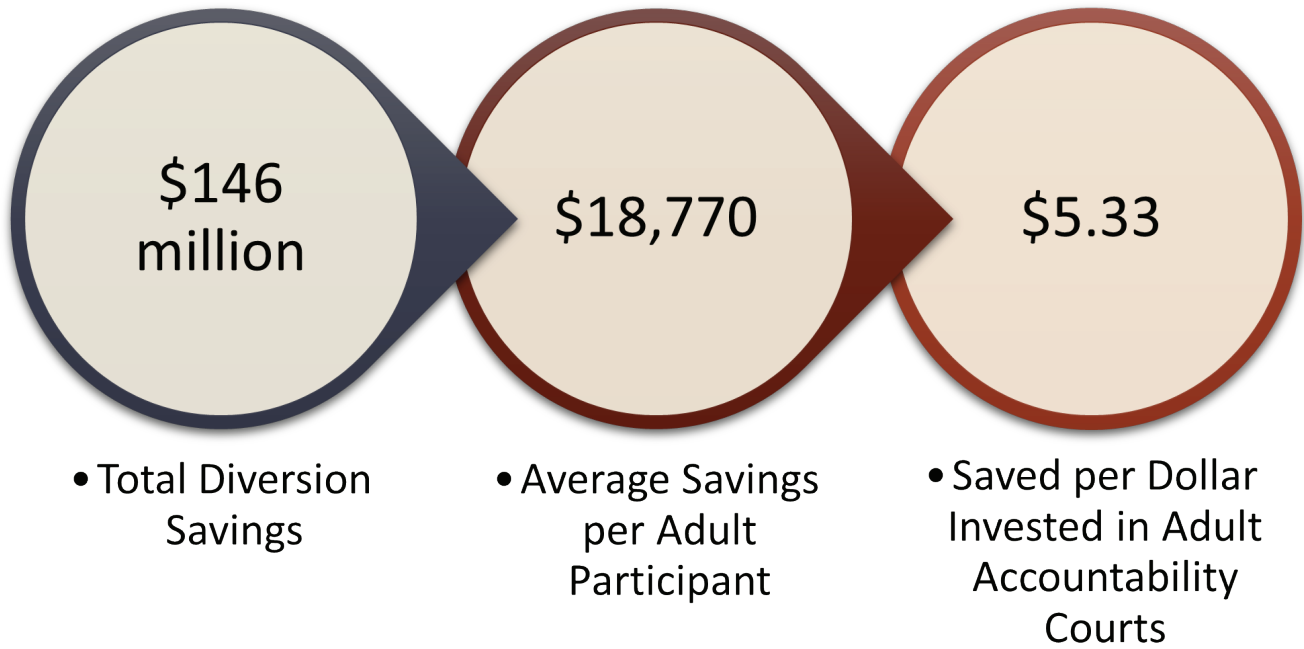
Cost per Participant

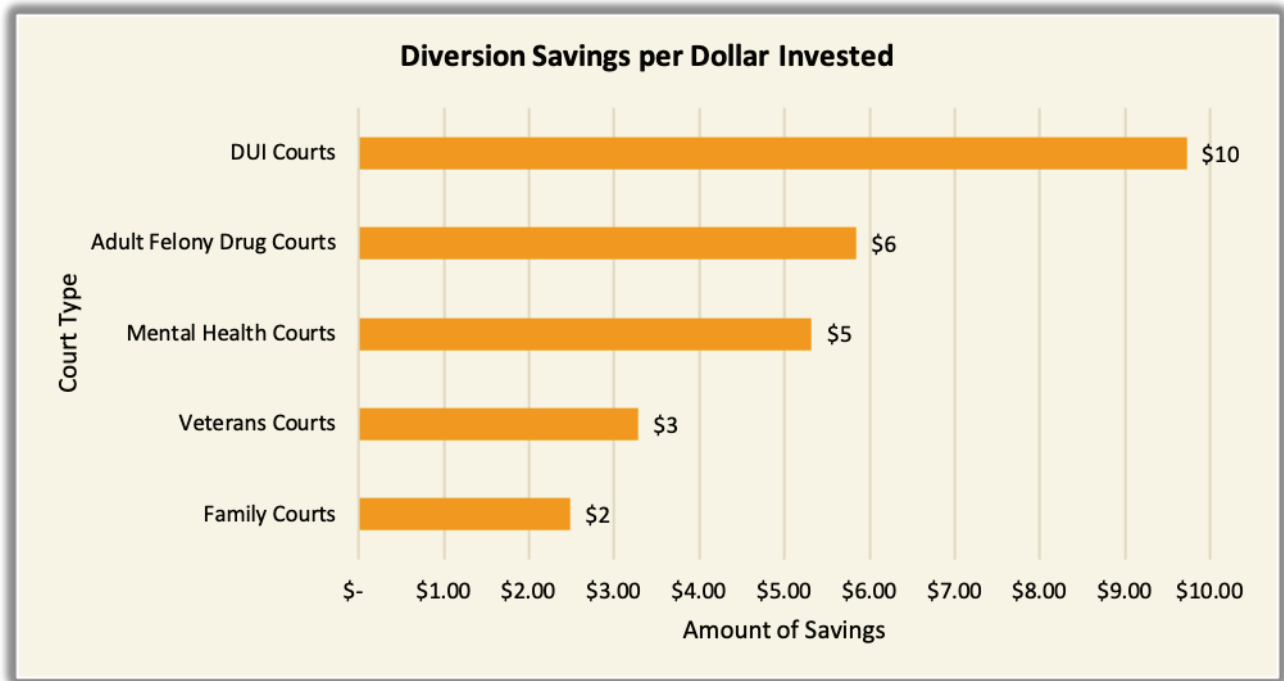


\$4,344 average award amount granted to courts per participant in FY 2023

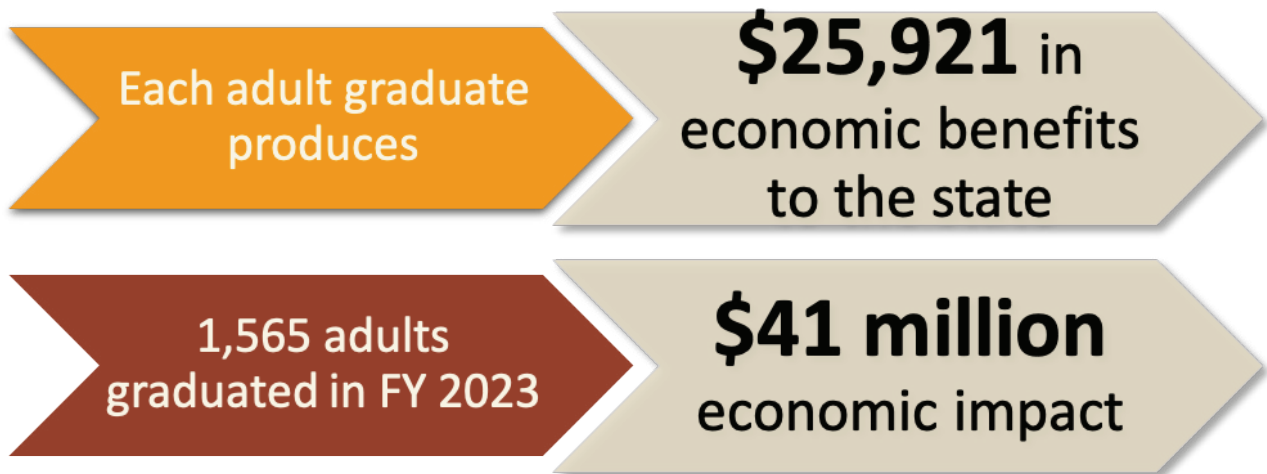


Diversion Savings



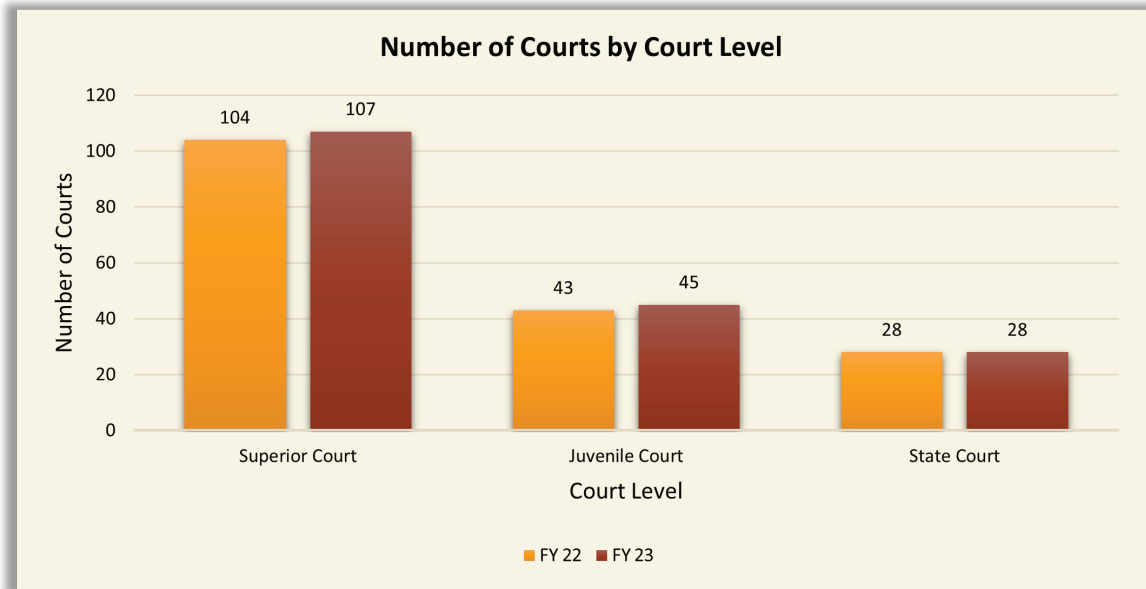


Economic Impact

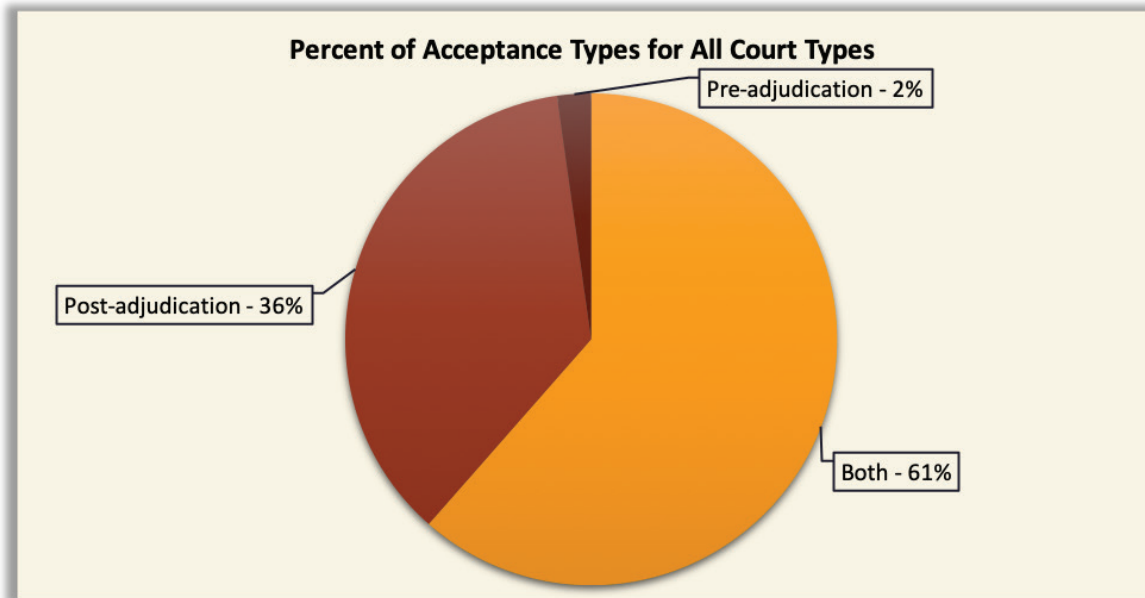


Court Operating Profile Analysis

Sixty percent of Georgia’s accountability courts are at the Superior Court level.

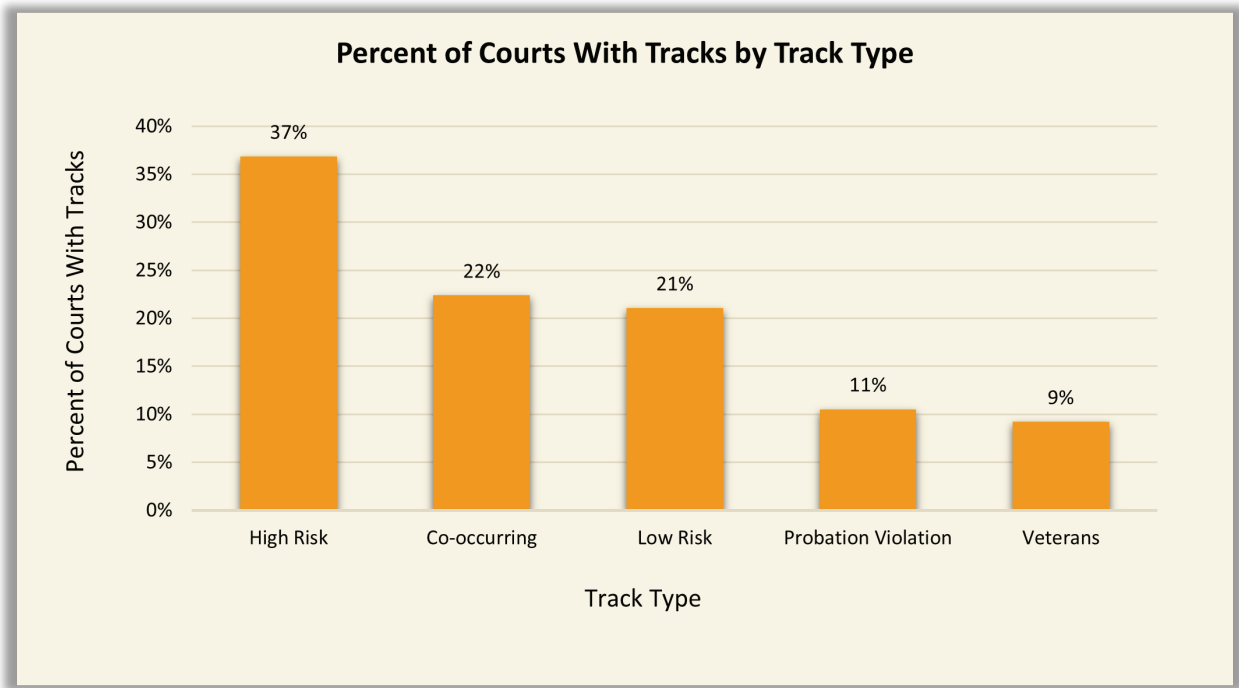


Most courts accept both pre- and post-adjudication criminal cases.



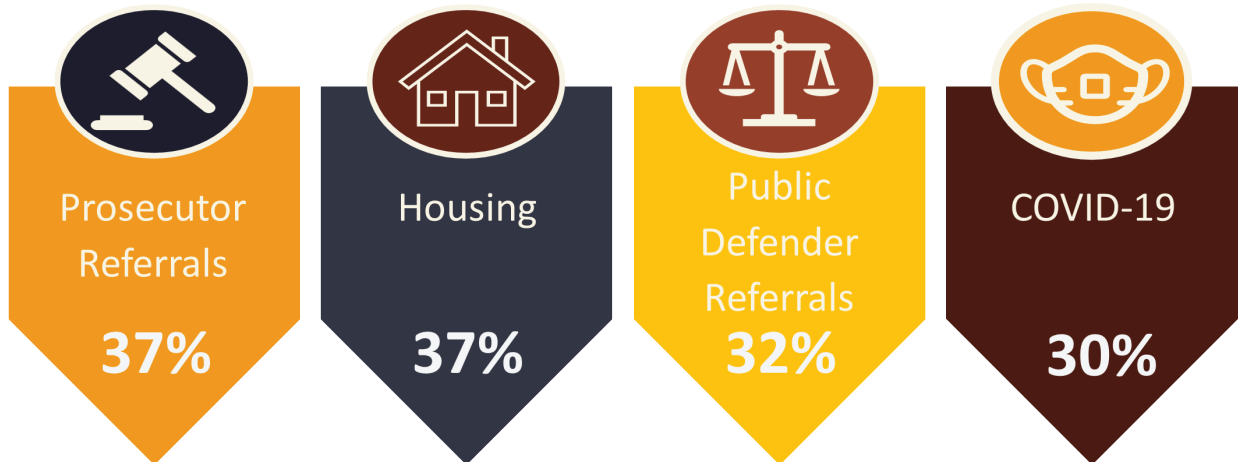
5 These analyses use self-report programmatic data.

About a quarter (23%) of the accountability court programs have different tracks.

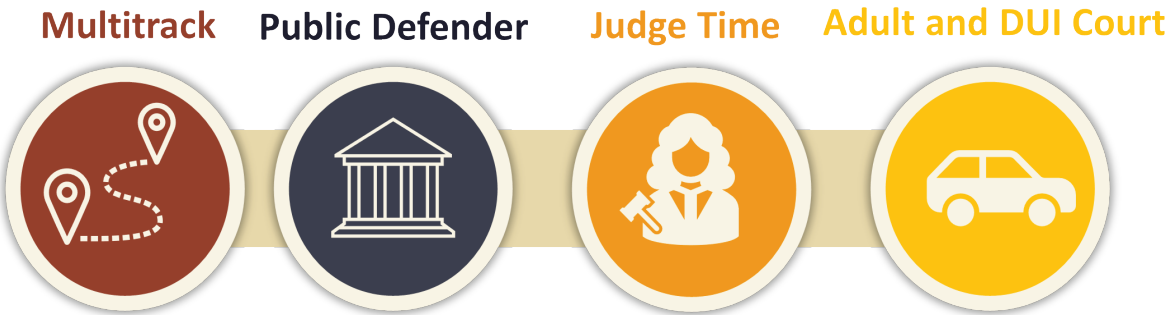


Top 4 Barriers

Lack of referrals from prosecutors and housing issues are the most reported barriers for courts to meet or maintain capacity.



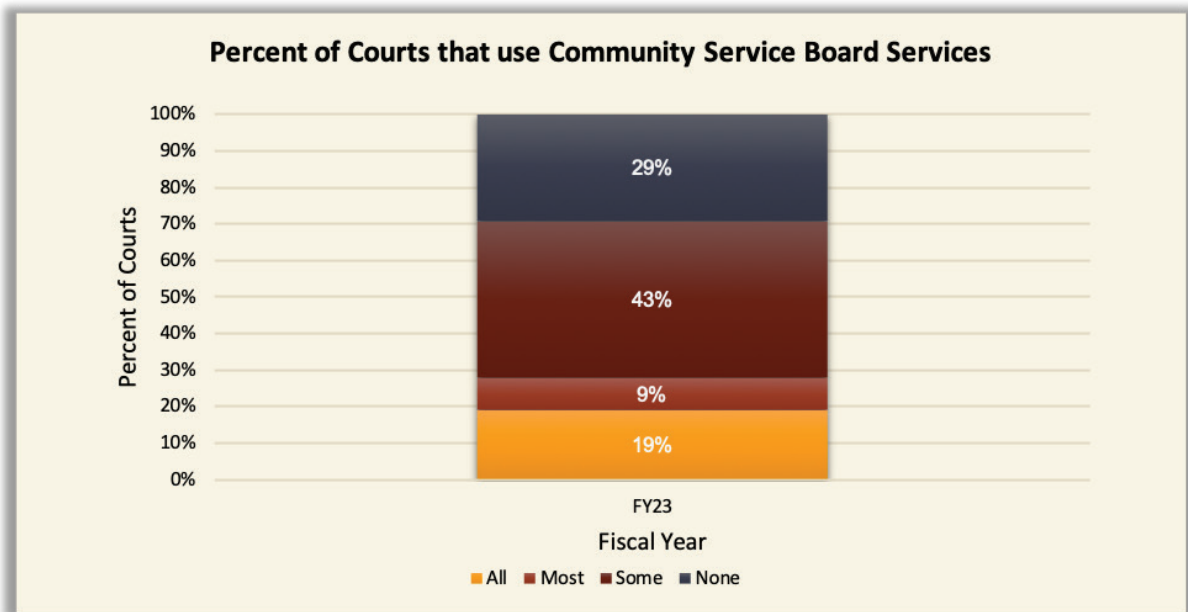
Court Capacity Correlations

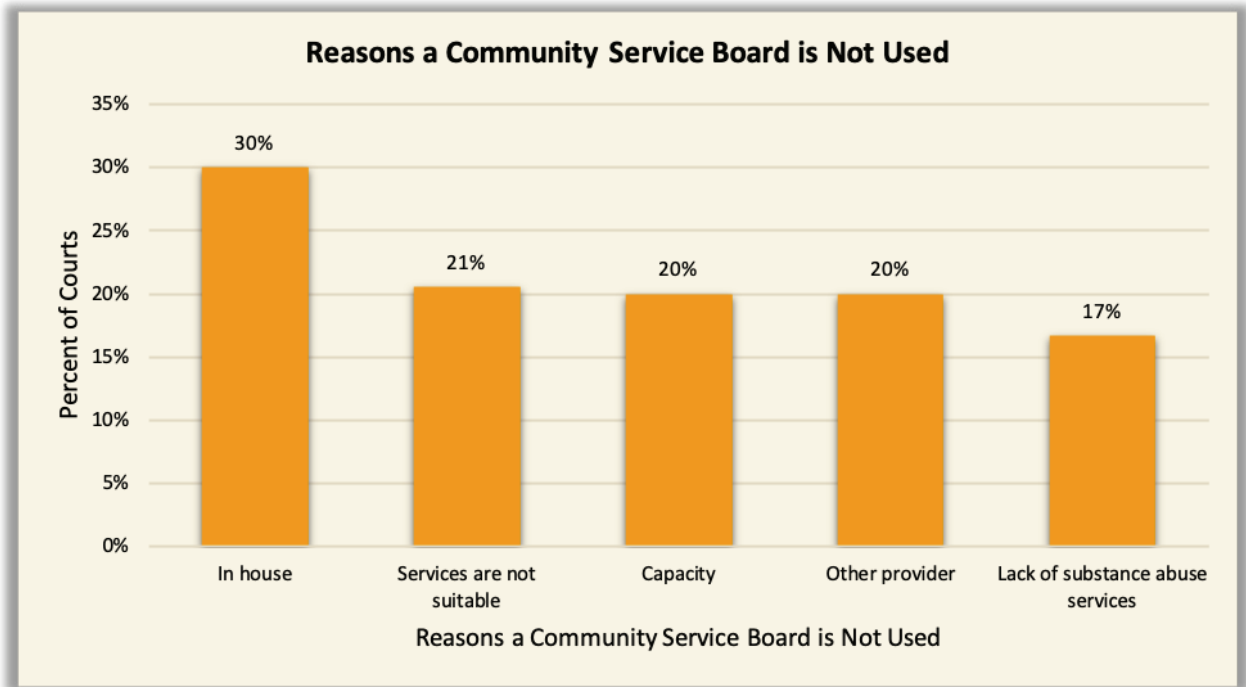


Courts with a greater service capacity are more likely to report having multitrack programs and that a lack of public defender and prosecutor referrals are a barrier to meeting or maintaining capacity. Courts which report a greater capacity for service also tend to report a greater number of competing demands on the judicial calendar. Adult Drug Courts and DUI Courts are courts which tend to report a greater capacity for service.

Community Service Board Services Utilization

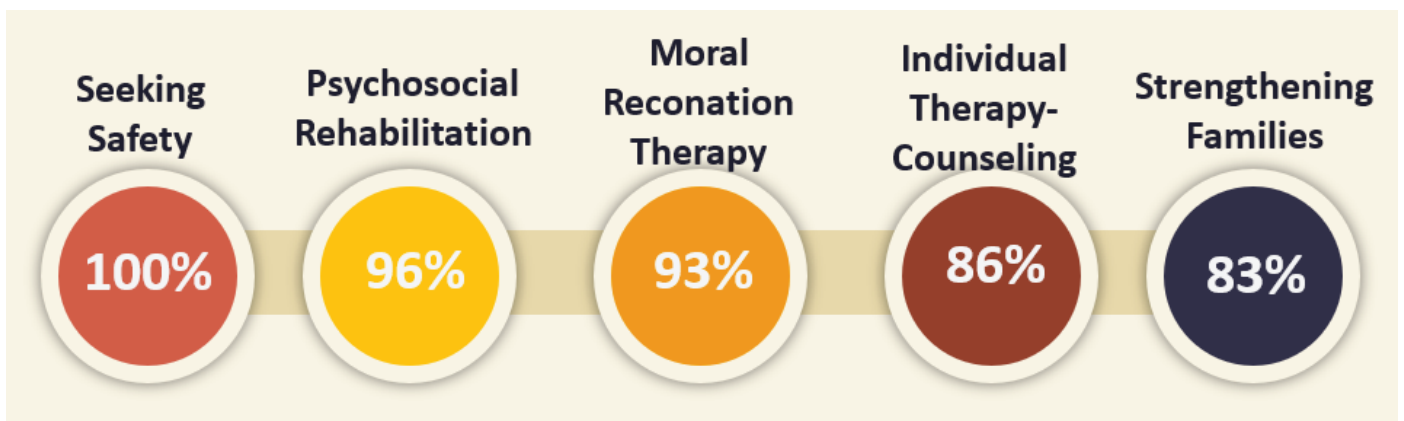
Almost a third of the courts do not utilize any services from Community Service Boards.





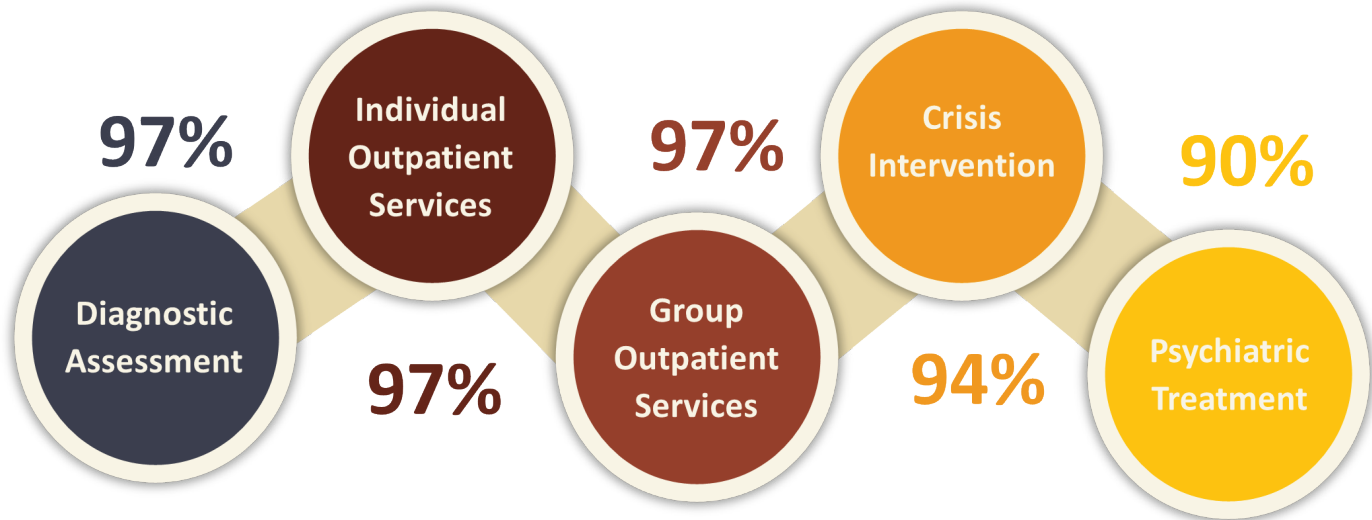
Top 5 Evidence-Based Treatments

100% of the courts offer evidence-based treatment. Seeking Safety is the treatment modality most offered.



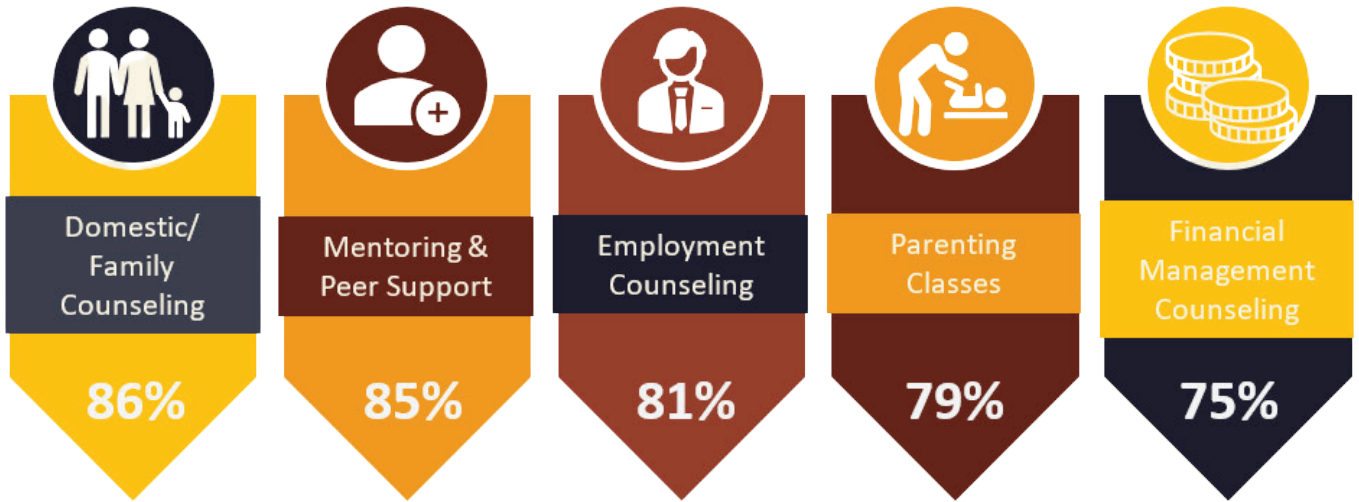
Top 5 Outpatient Services Provided

Almost all courts offer Diagnostic Assessment and Individual Outpatient Services.

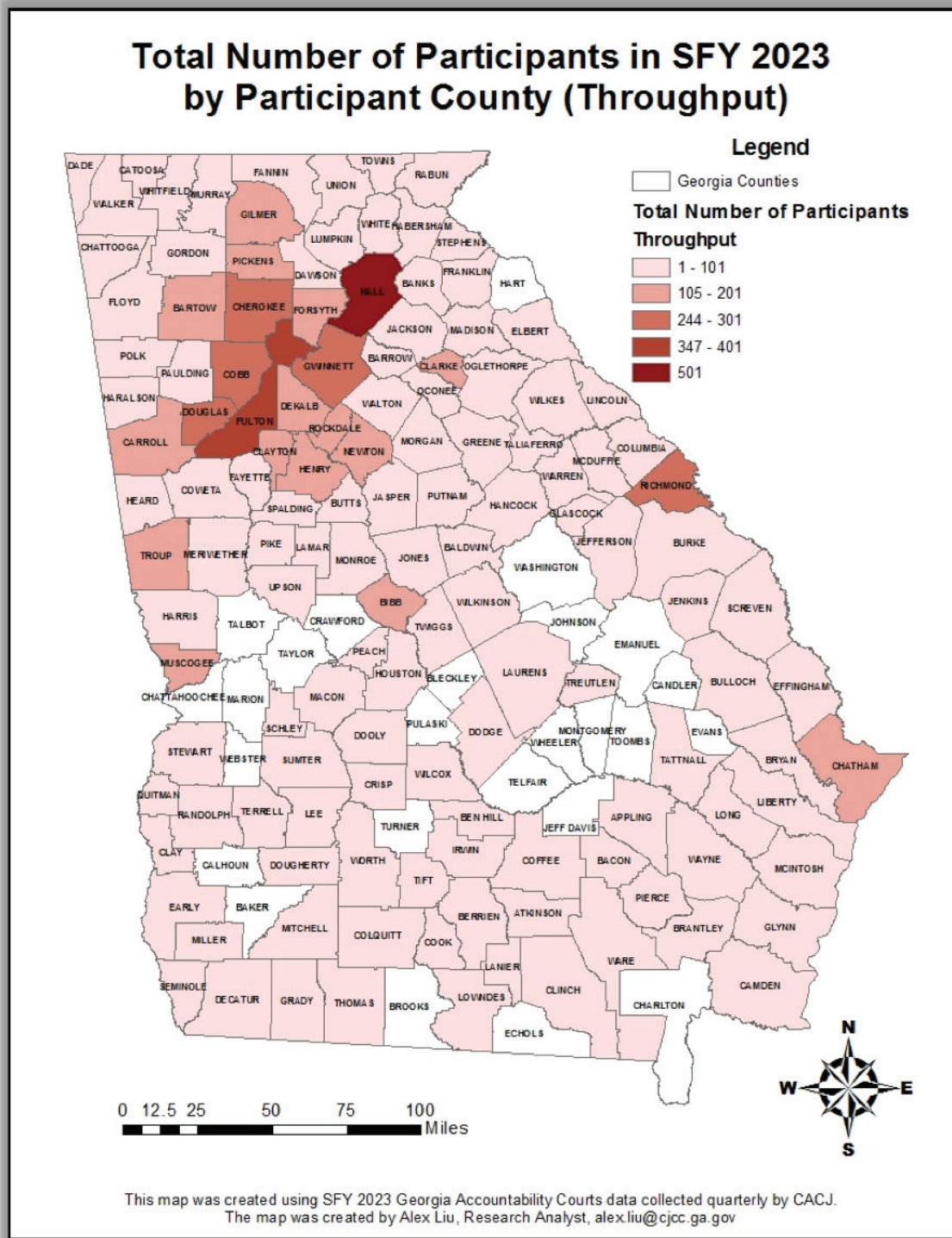


Top 5 Life Skills Services

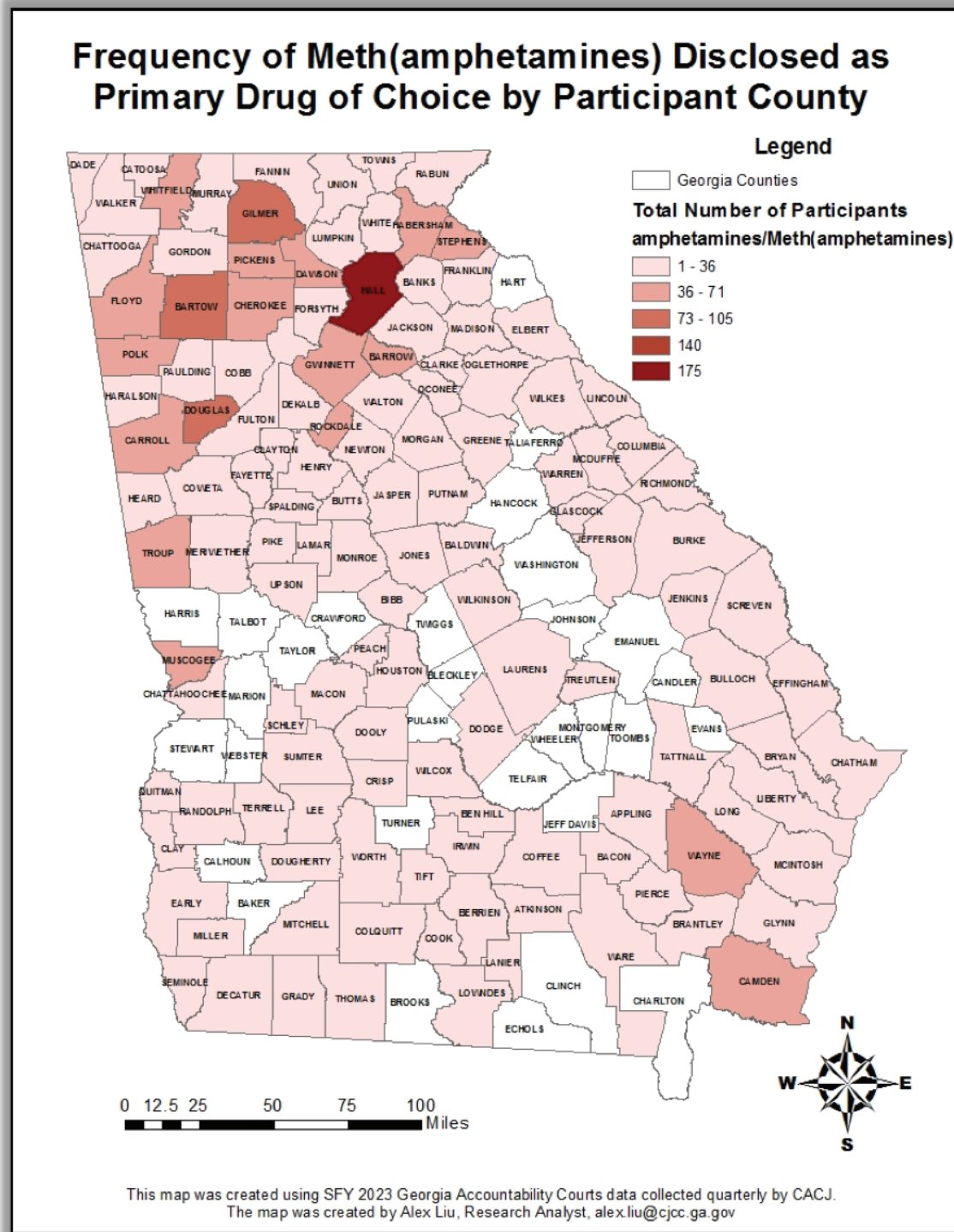
Domestic/Family Counseling is the most offered life skills service.



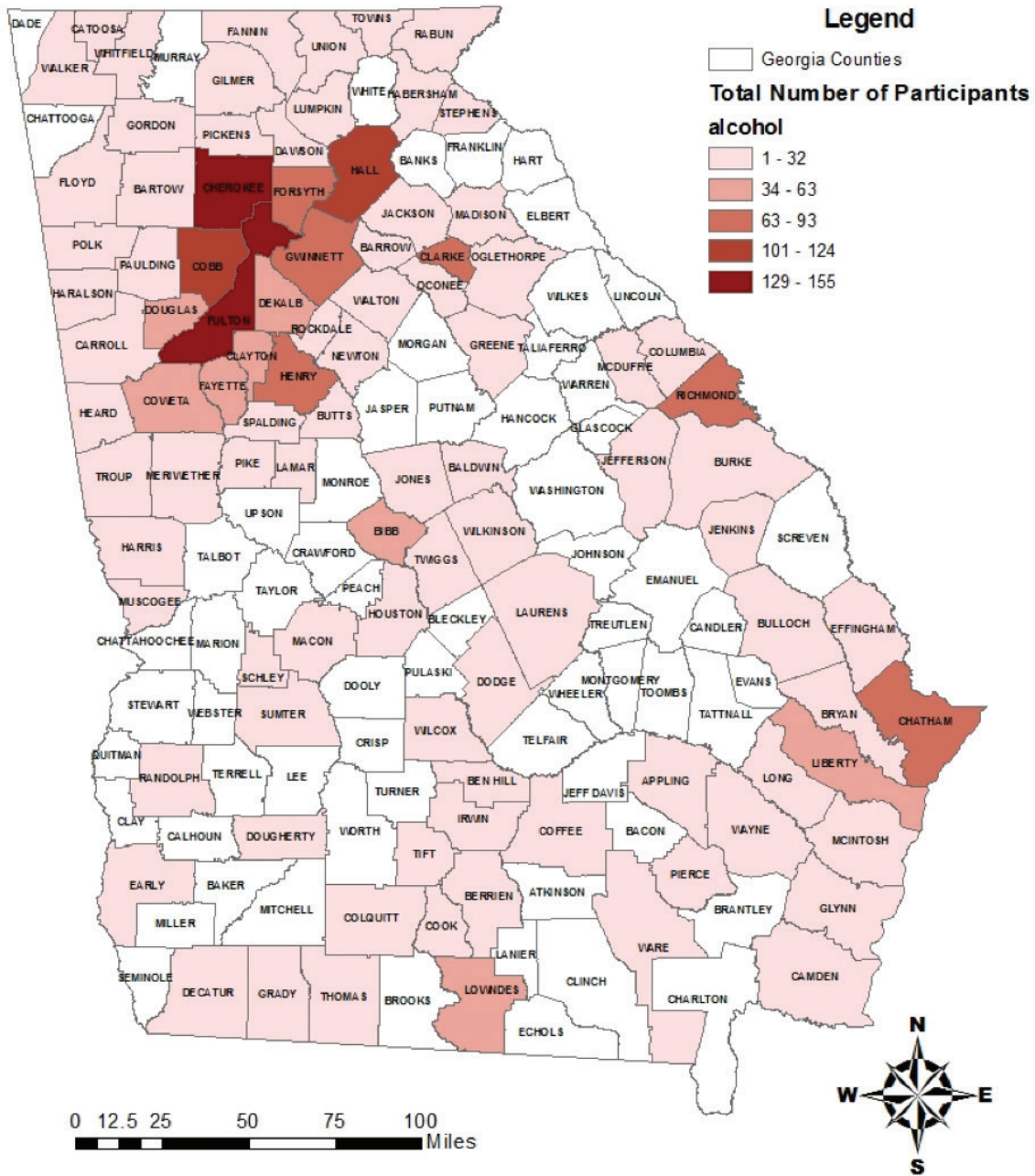
Appendix A: Participant Throughput by Participant County of Residence



Appendix B: Top 3 Primary Drugs of Choice by Participant County of Residence

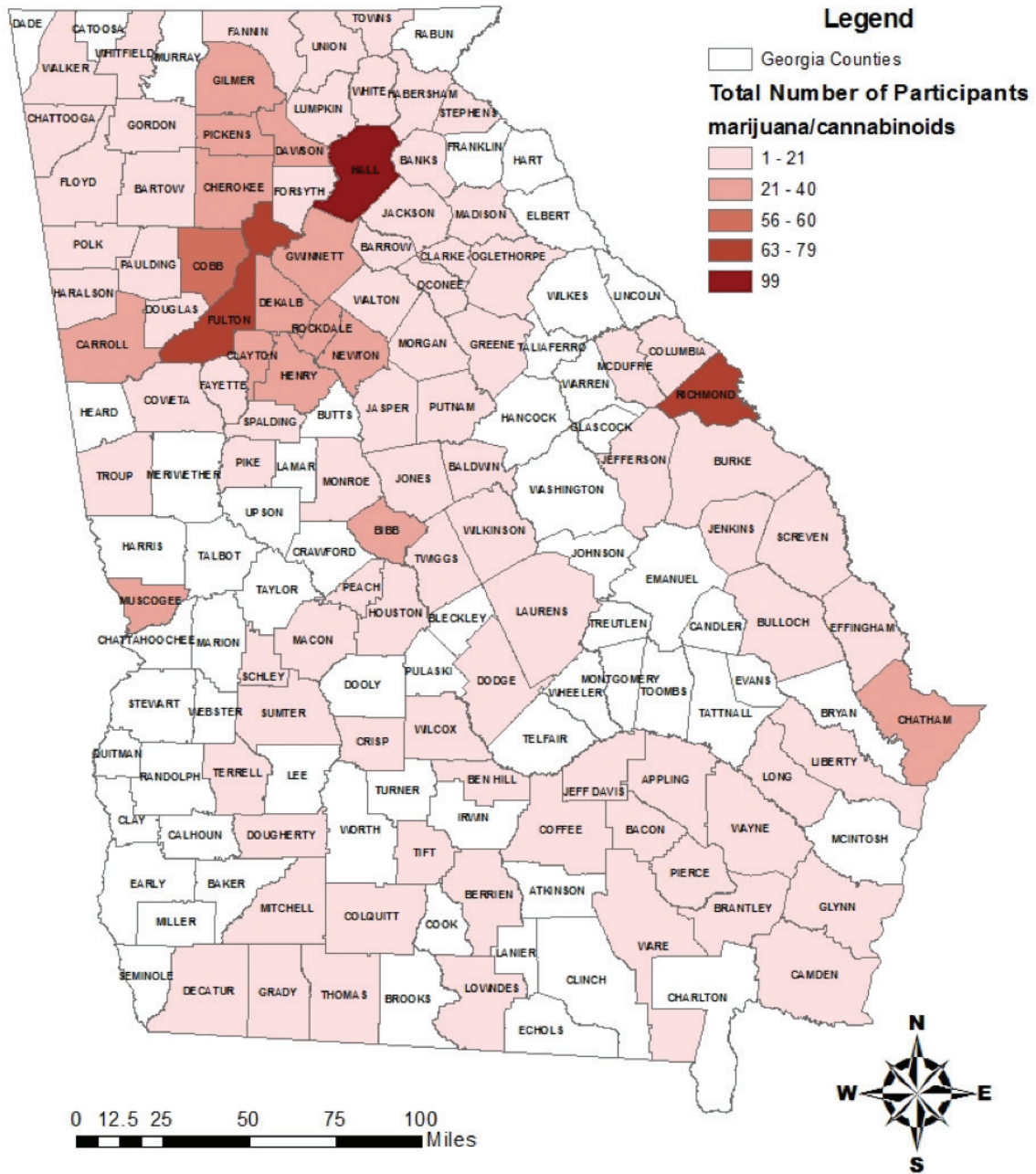


Frequency of Alcohol Disclosed as Primary Drug of Choice by Participant County



This map was created using SFY 2023 Georgia Accountability Courts data collected quarterly by CACJ.
 The map was created by Alex Liu, Research Analyst, alex.liu@cjc.ga.gov

Frequency of Marijuana/Cannabinoids Disclosed as Primary Drug of Choice by Participant County



This map was created using SFY 2023 Georgia Accountability Courts data collected quarterly by CACJ. The map was created by Alex Liu, Research Analyst, alex.liu@cjc.ga.gov



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