



Drug Court Monitoring, Evaluation, and Management Information Systems: National Scope Needs Assessment

MONOGRAPH

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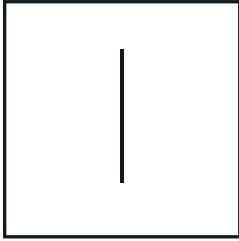
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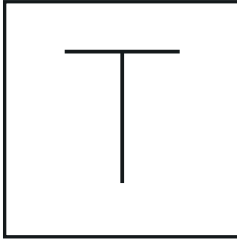


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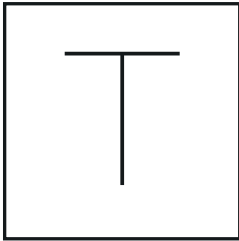
Many drug court practitioners contributed their time and effort to make this study

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We are grateful to all who have helped illuminate this issue and to those whose efforts will contribute to the continuing improvement of drug courts.

Foreword



This report provides the results of an assessment conducted as part of the National

Drug Court Training and Technical Assistance Program, which supports the Drug Court Grant Program. Both programs are administered by the Drug Courts Program Office (DCPO), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The Drug Court Grant Program addresses both the increasing number of nonviolent, substance-abusing adult and juvenile offenders who contribute to the pervasive problems of prison overcrowding, and the high recidivism rate for those offenders. Drug treatment courts leverage the coercive power of the criminal justice system to enforce abstinence among and alter the behavior of drug-involved offenders.

Drug courts are a growing phenomenon, and the number of jurisdictions establishing drug courts has grown significantly over the past 10 years. Although numerous drug courts throughout the Nation report success stories, many experts point out that rigorous evidence to document their impact is lacking, especially with regard to longer term outcomes. For the most part, the successes have not been rigorously documented because drug courts lacked both process and

impact evaluation data, because most programs began and continue without the benefit of rigorous evaluation plans or automated management information systems (MIS).

In recognition of this gap in resources and methodology, DCPO established initiatives to quantify the courts' needs for information technology and evaluation training and technical assistance, and to develop training and technical assistance solutions to address drug court priority needs. This report documents that quantification—the results of the first national survey of drug court MIS/evaluation requirements—and identifies a series of proposed DCPO initiatives to address the highest priority training and technical assistance requirements, as identified by the drug courts themselves.

SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, commissioned Cashman & Associates, Inc., to conduct this study on behalf of DCPO. Special thanks go to the organizations that worked in partnership with SEARCH to conduct this study: The Justice Management Institute (JMI), the Drug Court Clearinghouse and the Technical Assistance Project at American University, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

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I.

Introduction and Executive Summary



s of June 2001, more than 697 drug courts were operating in the United States, and

427 more were in the planning phases. Currently, all 50 States, including major Native American Tribal Courts, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and 2 U.S. Federal Courts have operational adult drug court programs. Thirty States have enacted legislation related to planning and operating drug courts.¹

More than 75 percent of the drug courts in the United States participated in a national survey in mid-1999 designed to help those dealing with large drug caseloads assess their needs for enhanced information-gathering tools.² This phenomenal response rate confirms that drug courts place a high value on information. As the Honorable Jo Ann Ferdinand, who presides over the Brooklyn Treatment Court in New York, noted:

“Computers allow judges to draw the big picture—to browse quickly and to spot connections, like the link between missed appearances and failed drug tests. Speed is imperative when handling so many cases, but the real value of automation is that it keeps appropriate team members apprised on all relevant client details—the facts needed to make the best decisions—while at the same time, [it] prevents unauthorized access to confidential data, such as judge’s notes.”³

Drug Court Approach

Drug courts represent a unique, information-intensive approach to managing drug-related cases. This approach is a fairly recent phenomenon for the justice system. It grew out of problems created for the justice system, and the communities it serves, when the growth of drug-related arrests threatened to overwhelm the system in the early 1980s.⁴ Faced with drained resources and a lack of

effective options to reduce recidivism, many jurisdictions began searching for alternatives, which led to the movement toward specialized courts in the late 1980s.⁵ Drug courts were developed to reduce substance abuse and recidivism through techniques such as treatment, judicial supervision, and graduated sanctions.

Typically, each drug court team—judge, drug-treatment providers, court coordinator, prosecutor, defense attorney, and other integral players such as probation and pretrial services—carefully monitors and continually reports on the nonviolent defendant’s journey to a drug-free life. For example, almost all drug courts require participants to obtain a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, to keep a job, and to pay current financial obligations, including drug court fees and child support (where applicable).

As team members track participants’ compliance with program requirements, the “total progress picture” must be available quickly and accurately so drug court team members can manage the participants effectively. The drug court team must be able to analyze and summarize these “progress pictures” to provide the data that drug courts need to monitor their day-to-day operations, evaluate their processes and impact, and demonstrate the costs and benefits of their programs to their communities.

National research charting the drug courts’ first decade of progress shows that the drug court approach is working. For example, close to 230,000 defendants have participated in more than 500 drug court programs nationwide since the early 1990s. Almost 70 percent of these defendants are still enrolled in or have graduated from drug court programs, nearly double the expected retention rate from traditional treatment programs.⁶

But what of the costs of these programs? The average cost of the treatment portion

of drug court programs is \$1,200 to \$3,000 per participant. Contrast that with a recent estimate of savings in jail-bed days of at least \$5,000 per defendant, which does not include savings in reduced police overtime, witness costs, and grand jury and indictment expenses.⁷

Monitoring and Evaluation Needs of Drug Courts

Some drug courts, such as the Buffalo Drug Court in New York, have made great strides in developing management information systems (MIS) that meet the specific needs of the drug court. Others, such as the Los Angeles County Drug Court Program, are pioneering ways to use systems for even greater effectiveness and efficiency, including use of a secured intranet to make the system available to authorized users whose locations are widely dispersed.⁸

Yet, study results show that most drug courts see major barriers to achieving their goals of managing their programs and evaluating their results. For example, drug courts surveyed clearly indicated that they lack funding for essential equipment and software. Another major barrier is the difficulty in linking diverse program information sources.

Drug courts want help to strengthen their ability to collect and manage important program details. They are looking for training and technical assistance to take advantage of available technologies that are capable of boosting productivity in their vital information-gathering and evaluation-producing processes.

This is known because of prior work in this area. In 1997, The Justice Management Institute, in cooperation with the Drug Courts Program Office (DCPO), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), convened two focus groups of

drug court practitioners, public health officials, researchers, court managers, and MIS experts. The first meeting topic was “Monitoring and Evaluating Drug Courts,” and the second was “Drug Court Management Information Systems.” The topic areas, although distinct, are “. . . closely interrelated, since sound monitoring and evaluation are heavily dependent on the availability of relevant and reliable information about program operations and participant outcomes.”⁹

The focus group participants took a position of strong consensus on several key points. Included among these was that

“Monitoring and evaluation of drug courts are critically important functions. Drug court practitioners recognize the importance of these functions, but many drug courts need help—through education and training, technical assistance, and resource augmentation—to make effective monitoring and evaluation a reality.”¹⁰

Obviously, drug courts are at a critical juncture. Stakeholders are rightfully encouraged by the successes of the drug court model. But more information is needed. In its report to the U.S. Congress issued in 1997 (the same year the focus groups convened), the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) concluded that “Existing evaluations provided some limited information but do not permit firm conclusions regarding drug court impact.”¹¹ GAO further explained:

“We note in this report that many of the studies we reviewed provide positive evidence of the merits of drug court programs. We do not believe, however, that all of these studies are equally sophisticated in their design and methods, or that the results of these studies can be simply summed to provide firm conclusions.”¹²

GAO went on to recommend more rigorous impact evaluations “To better ensure that conclusions about the impact of drug court programs on participants’ criminal recidivism and/or drug use relapse can be drawn”¹³

Although there is general agreement on the desirability of improving the monitoring and evaluation functions in drug courts, there is also recognition that this is a particularly difficult area and that it would take a concerted effort to implement this goal. Even GAO acknowledged:

“We recognize the difficulties inherent in collecting follow-up data. . . . We also recognize that the need for and benefits of having data must be balanced against the cost of collecting and maintaining it”¹⁴

Needs Assessment Survey: A Component of the National Training and Technical Assistance Program

DCPO’s national strategy for addressing these issues included the establishment of a national training and technical assistance program that included an initiative to provide the training and technical assistance for jurisdictions to develop effective MIS and evaluations for all drug courts.¹⁵ In other words, the objective is to help drug court practitioners and stakeholders capture the best practices of the current programs and share them nationwide to ensure that future drug courts achieve the same success rates.

This survey is an important step in that initiative, identifying the technical assistance and educational needs of existing drug courts and pinpointing the barriers that keep courts from fulfilling those needs.¹⁶ To bolster drug court capabilities, this survey identified the specific resources

and knowledge required to collect the data needed to effectively manage, monitor, and evaluate drug courts.

The survey queried the entire population of known drug courts in the United States to develop an assessment that is nationwide in scope and broadly reflective of all drug courts regardless of background or other characteristics. (The research methodology undertaken in this survey—including research design, assessment areas, drug court characteristics, statistical analysis, and scope—is detailed in section II.)

Survey responses were received from 257 of the 340 drug courts that were operational as of mid-1999, for a response rate of 75.59 percent. This response rate increases our confidence in the significance of the results as accurately representing the state of drug court evaluation and management information systems and the preferred approaches for continuing improvements. (Detailed survey results by assessment area are provided in section III. Section III also includes a general profile of drug courts based on background and other characteristics, such as population of the jurisdiction served and number of active participants, and an overview of issues that need further discussion and research.)

Summary of Major Survey Findings

In general, many drug court processes are not automated. Although there is widespread use of computers in the drug court environment, this survey showed that the automated support being provided to drug courts by existing computer systems is inadequate. This hampers drug court operations in many ways, such that

- Drug courts cannot take advantage of productivity gains and success sharing that computer automation offers.

- Drug courts cannot serve larger numbers of participants unless they are more fully automated.

The major findings of this study are summarized in the following key points, as well as in section IV:

1. Although there is widespread access to personal computers, vital data are not generally entered into automated systems, and there is not widespread, appropriately shared access to data among drug court team members. In fact, less than one-quarter of courts surveyed use automation to help judges interact with their caseload of defendants.
2. A strong correlation exists between automation and the time it takes for the judge to get failed drug test results. Because some of the less automated courts also have rapid test reporting, it seems that those courts that place a high value on the importance of information in the drug court environment are the same courts that establish the processes that will get them the crucial data in a timely fashion. The critical factor is the importance that the drug court places on the value of information.
3. An overwhelming majority of the drug courts surveyed expressed their willingness to use every technical assistance option offered to acquire the proper automation, maintain the technology, and obtain the education needed to generate regular productivity reports.
4. A lack of funding was the number one reason drug courts did not acquire the additional automation needed and the training and technical assistance to improve the administration of drug court justice.

5. In addition to funding barriers, drug courts also listed difficulty with linking to other systems as a prime barrier to automation.
6. Even though most serve large jurisdictions, the majority of drug courts have 100 active participants or fewer. The largest drug courts—those with 200 or more participants—are highly automated with good MIS support. This and other survey results suggest that the lack of automation is hindering drug court programs from serving larger numbers of participants and providing the resultant benefits to their communities.
7. Drug courts clearly specified that they need technical assistance with all aspects of automation—including help with initial “getting started” steps, such as developing needs assessments and technology plans and preparing funding proposals for stakeholders.
8. Surveyed drug courts overwhelmingly expressed a desire for additional education and training to deal specifically with evaluation and management information systems. Targeted workshops and videotaped training sessions dedicated to monitoring, evaluation, and MIS development rated highly among surveyed courts.
9. Difficulty with data entry and sharing are not a result of drug court indifference to the need to provide regular evaluation information. Indeed, fewer than half of the drug courts surveyed rated their current systems as good or very good at providing information for evaluations.
10. Less than 15 percent of all surveyed courts report that they have completed the necessary automation required to

produce reports needed for overall program evaluation. It is telling that this is about the same percentage of drug courts that have the largest number of active participants (200 or more).

Recommendations

The results of this survey clearly show that the automated support being provided to the drug courts by existing computer systems is inadequate.¹⁷ The respondents also identified several initiatives that, if adopted, would be useful in improving the monitoring, evaluation, and MIS capabilities of drug courts. Although the data were collected in summer 1999, the findings are as important today as when the survey was initially conducted and provide the only empirical evidence of user training and technical assistance needs.

Although DCPO and training and technical assistance providers have continued to develop and present programs and solutions responsive to the needs described in this report, those programs and solutions to some extent reflect the fact that training and technical assistance project staff have worked collaboratively throughout the project with DCPO staff, project partners, and other technical assistance providers and experts in the field to address the requirements of the drug court community. It would have been surprising if survey findings and recommended responses to the findings were contrary to DCPO’s understanding of the field’s needs and requirements, because the field was the same source for determining resource needs throughout the grant period. Thus, this report provides statistical evidence of the lack of hardware, software, evaluation, and MIS expertise among drug court staff. It also offers an agenda for addressing those needs through many of the same kinds of

training and technical assistance programs and content that DCPO and the field had assumed were needed based on subjective assessments.

Without technology, it is difficult for drug courts to link the information about their results with the goals of the court. It is also difficult to produce the reports and evaluations needed to persuade stakeholders to allot more funding for technology. This is obviously a vicious cycle that should be addressed to ensure continued and enhanced court success.

To break this cycle and ensure future information sharing, the drug court field should consider six broad recommended initiatives, which are detailed below and also presented in section V.

Recommendation 1

Confront the main barriers to drug court efforts to gather and maintain information through effective automated means.

The top two barriers to further automation cited by survey respondents were lack of funding and difficulty linking with other systems. Some ways of addressing these barriers are discussed below.

- **Lack of funding.** Although identifying a complete solution to this barrier is beyond the scope of any one entity, this major barrier might be mitigated in part by providing forms of assistance that drug courts identified as useful.
 - One such tool identified in this study is a model presentation on drug court costs and benefits. By taking data from available cost/benefit analyses conducted throughout the country, and by using modern computer graphics software such as Microsoft PowerPoint® or Harvard Graphics, assistance can be

provided to turn these facts into stakeholder presentations that can help generate vital funding.

- Another form of assistance would be to develop an MIS/evaluation listserv to update the field as developments occur, to provide a forum for practitioners to discuss issues, and to pose and answer questions of peers.
- An online clearinghouse of frequently asked questions about drug court MIS and evaluation that would feature answers by leading experts in the field would also be helpful.
- **Difficulty linking with other systems.** Providing training and technical assistance can also be instrumental in helping drug court personnel deal with the security, privacy, and access issues that arise when automating a system with shared information. Subject matter trainings could be conducted, including a workshop on linking drug court information systems to court information systems.

Recommendation 2

Respond to the call for specialized educational programs by developing workshops that address high-priority issues.

- A first workshop should focus on program monitoring and process evaluation and provide illustrations of output reports from a real MIS to illustrate what can be accomplished through awareness and planning.
- A second workshop should address using technology to enhance drug court operations. It should include the application of existing audio, video, data, and telecommunications products and tools—including testing, monitoring, and mapping technologies—to improve

the drug court team's ability to make the highest quality decisions and to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of drug courts.

- A third workshop on linking drug court information systems to court information systems should explore the barriers to system interface, including the privacy and security issues inherent in integrated justice information systems. Subject matter faculty should include representatives from jurisdictions in which the court and drug court systems are already integrated.

Recommendation 3

Provide technical assistance that addresses areas identified as needing special attention.

Survey respondents identified the following areas for training.

- Information technology strategic planning, including staffing issues.
- Comparing data being collected with recommended data elements and functional requirements.
- Conducting information system design and development and/or acquisition, including help preparing requests for proposals (RFPs); selecting consultants, hardware, and software; and drafting and negotiating contracts with vendors.
- Defining the scope of work to implement the technology plan.
- Making the business case to the funding agency.
- Establishing appropriately secure links to exchange critical information with other criminal justice agencies and treatment providers.
- Developing a drug court evaluation plan and selecting an evaluator.

Recommendation 4

Respond to the call for a specially tailored software package for drug courts by designing programs that help develop intelligent consumers of technology.

There should be a multiple approach to this recommendation.

- First, there should be more education about the use of technology, its acquisition, and the proper role of government in this process. These issues should be included in the workshops discussed in recommendation 2. These workshops should help drug court members become intelligent consumers of technology by dealing with questions such as
 - What is the role of management vis-à-vis technology as distinct from the roles of MIS personnel?
 - What are the appropriate roles of technology vendors?
 - Why and how do we deal with private-sector technology vendors?
- Second, initiatives should be undertaken that illustrate the steps needed to develop a system and demonstrate best practices for MIS systems. These initiatives might include a case study documenting the development and operation of a drug court MIS.
- Third, building on this case study and work that has already been done by SEARCH—including an assessment report of four public domain drug court software systems and an “information audit” report,¹⁸ which identify necessary information elements for a drug court MIS—an initiative should be undertaken to develop a set of common requirements for such software packages and/or a model RFP that includes the specific requirements of such a package.

Recommendation 5

Focus on the role of systems training in successful automation projects.

Drug courts should explore ways to focus on the role of systems training in successful automation projects. Because proper training is so important to the success of these projects, serious consideration should be given to various methods of training. Also, there should be an exploration of the means of encouraging this training, either by making training mandatory or by rewarding

those who have the training in a timely manner.

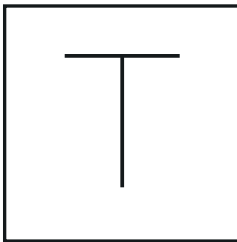
Recommendation 6

Develop a research agenda for drug court best practices.

There is a need to identify the best practices that have been developed for drug courts in particular, and courts in general, with regard to the use of performance measures and technology and automation components.

II.

Research Methodology



o bolster drug court capabilities, this survey was developed to identify the specific

resources and knowledge required to collect the data to effectively manage, monitor, and evaluate drug courts. In developing the survey, we were guided by the results of the 1997 JMI focus groups on evaluation and MIS. Among other difficulties, these focus groups identified six major obstacles to sound evaluation research on drug courts. These ranged from difficulty in obtaining relevant data, to the lack of a cadre of experienced researchers, to a lack of resources for evaluation, to inadequate management information systems.¹⁹

We were especially cognizant of the drug courts' unique challenge to evaluators, which has been documented by the work of the OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University. That is, a drug court evaluation must rely on many sources, such as intake assessment results, court dockets, probation

officer notes, and treatment-provider outcomes. The survey was developed with questions applicable to each part of the drug court team and their needs, taking into account the many different sources for relevant information.

Research Design

Focusing on the nexus between good information systems and evaluation, the questionnaire was designed to answer questions in a number of key assessment areas, including

1. How many courts use computers and to what extent are data routinely entered into the system?
2. Are members of the drug court team able to effectively communicate important information regarding an individual case or progress in treatment through the current MIS?
3. Is the current system capable of producing useful summary reports for overall program management and evaluation?

4. What are the main barriers to further automating the current system?
5. What are the most common types of technical assistance needs ranked by their usefulness to the respondents?
6. What are the most common types of education and training needs ranked by their usefulness to the respondents?

Sample

The survey questionnaire was pretested on a small group of drug courts and, after revision based on the results, the survey was sent to the remaining drug courts on the list of 340 drug courts operational as of mid-1999. The list of drug courts was provided by the Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University.

The survey was sent to the attention of the presiding drug court judge with a copy to the court coordinator. These drug court leaders were asked to meet with their drug court team before completing the survey in an effort to capture the capabilities and needs of all the participating entities that compose the team. Shortly after the survey was due, a followup postcard was mailed to increase the response rate.

Each survey was logged as it was received and the remaining courts that had not responded were sent an additional reminder postcard. This process proved to be very successful, and 257 surveys were received, a response rate of 75.59 percent. This response rate increased confidence in the significance of the results as accurately representing the current state of drug court evaluation and MIS, and the preferred approaches for continuing improvements.

Assessment Areas

The survey mailed to the drug courts consisted of four assessment sections and a section for write-in comments.²⁰

- **Management and Evaluation Information.** Included questions to assess the use of computers at each site, the type of information currently entered into computers, and the ability to automatically produce useful management and evaluation reports.
- **Automation.** Explored the extent to which each functional area is supported by automation, the access to computers by the drug court team, the networking of computers to improve communication, the availability of specifically relevant applications and capabilities, the access to technology training programs, the technology employees themselves, and the main barriers to further automation.
- **Technical Assistance.** Directed respondents to rate the usefulness of a number of technical assistance activities that might be provided to them during the second phase of this initiative.
- **Education and Training.** Asked respondents to rate the usefulness of a number of education and training programs that might also be provided to them in the second phase of this initiative.
- **Comments.** Each section of the survey provided space for additional comments to allow respondents to express difficulties or needs in areas not included in the structured portions of the survey. Many practitioners took added comments and suggestions.

Drug Court Characteristics

A “background” section of the survey also asked about a number of different court-identifying and demographic characteristics to determine where statistical differences might occur. The characteristics included

- **Type of court.** As indicated by the persons eligible to participate, such as adult, juvenile, family, or tribal.
- **Clients served.** As measured by the number of persons who are currently active participants in the drug court program.
- **Time in existence.** As measured by the time since the drug court accepted its first client.
- **Population.** As measured by the size of the population of the jurisdiction served.
- **Treatment providers.** As indicated by whether the providers are in-house or contractual and, if contractual, how many separate entities are providing services to the program.
- **Time elapsing before test results received.** As indicated by the amount of time it usually takes, from minutes to days, for judges to receive failed drug testing information. This question was included because drug testing is such an integral part of drug courts.

Statistical Analysis

Beginning with frequency and percentages, various statistical analyses were conducted to summarize and organize the data. Where appropriate, measures of association and bivariate tests of significance were conducted. The data, then, are presented in this report in several different ways.

1. First, the results of each question of the survey are presented in tables with percentages by both option and population served.
2. Second, bivariate analyses were conducted to determine if a statistically significant relationship exists between the characteristics of the courts and the survey responses to any of the evaluation or automation variables. Missing and skipped categories were excluded for these analyses due to small cell size. Chi-square was selected as the test of significance. The standard significance level used was 0.05 or less.²¹ Results of the significance testing are selectively reported when any of the results show a significant correlation.
3. Third, an analysis was done of the write-in comments. Selected responses were grouped by section, categorized, and the results presented in frequency tables in the appropriate sections of this report. All of the comments were assembled in full-text and are presented in appendix 2.

The population size of the jurisdiction served by the court was one of the court characteristics that presented the most significant statistical differences in results. Therefore, the tables in the body of this report are categorized based on population size.²² To present the results in a manageable format, the size of the population of the jurisdiction was grouped into three categories:

- **Small jurisdictions:** fewer than 100,000 people, $n = 59$.
- **Medium jurisdictions:** between 100,000 and 350,000 people, $n = 82$.
- **Large jurisdictions:** more than 350,000 people, $n = 107$.

Obviously, although drug courts share common components, each is unique, and surveying them individually allowed the survey team to identify unique aspects. The inclusion of write-in comments was especially helpful to assess how certain perspectives and practices contribute to the level of MIS and evaluation competency.

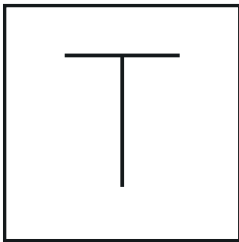
Scope

This survey queried the entire population of then-known drug courts in the United States to develop an assessment both nationwide in scope and broadly reflective of all drug

courts, regardless of background or other characteristics. Based on time and resources available, it was not feasible to complete a detailed analysis of each individual court's automated equipment configuration or work processes. Although these indepth analyses were beyond the scope of this assessment, it should be noted that such studies would provide valuable information for the individual court studied. If such detailed studies were done on a representative sample of drug courts, the studies would provide valuable data for extrapolations to the larger population of drug courts.

III.

Detailed Survey Results by Assessment Area



This section provides the following detailed survey results:

- Four specific assessment areas—Management and Evaluation Information, Automation, Technical Assistance, and Education and Training.
- Background characteristics of responding drug courts.
- Policy, technology, and tactical issues that were identified as needing further discussion and research through analysis of survey responses and write-in comments.

Management and Evaluation Information Capabilities: Supporting Decisionmaking

Drug courts determine their successes through information about what worked and what did not. As pointed out in the DCPO report of the 1997 focus groups that met to discuss drug court monitoring,

evaluation, and MIS, “Drug courts are information driven to a very significant extent, and their needs for information are significantly greater than existing court-based management information systems have been able to provide.”²³ Specifically, focus group participants were concerned about the lack of information to support the following types of decisionmaking:

- Operational decisionmaking in individual drug court cases.
- Overall management of the drug court caseload.
- Sound program monitoring.
- Useful evaluation.²⁴

But many questions are raised. By automating the routine processes of drug courts and compiling the vital data they need to make these decisions, how well are the current management information systems serving drug courts? What types of data are routinely entered into court computers?

How do the courts rate their abilities to monitor the entire caseload based on comprehensive, accurate, and current data? Is the information extensive enough to have an evaluation conducted and presented to stakeholders with an accurate picture of court success? Are the computer databases that support the data for the drug courts part of separate or integrated systems capable of sharing?

Use of Computers

Without a doubt, computers are an integral part of the drug court environment (table 1a). In response to the question “Does your drug court use any computers?,” a vast majority of the courts, regardless of the size of the jurisdiction, use computers—92 percent of the small, 92 percent of the medium, and 96 percent of the large jurisdiction courts. Although computers are widespread, the automated support provided to the drug courts by these computers is inadequate.

These findings are illustrated by write-in comments from several different respondents: “We do not have software yet, although we have computers.” Another noted, “No MIS system—some computers for word processing and e-mail only.” Yet another said, “Information is entered in an after-the-fact manner. The system is not used to assist team members or the judge in their daily duties. The system is merely storing the information so that it can be used for evaluation purposes.”²⁵

As expressed in survey respondents’ comments, it is also important to assess the overall extent of the information being entered into automated systems.

At this time, it is apparently standard practice to gather drug court statistics “after the fact.” In some instances, this is handled by clerical personnel who perform data entry only and in other instances it is through contracting with outside sources.

These outside contracts are typically with academic institutions. Graduate students come in (on an irregular basis) to review all or selected samples from the reams of paper reports. Then they match client information to other data, thereby reconstructing court actions, and they finish by compiling the statistics.

Although this process may meet the immediate goal of providing a program evaluation report for local, regional, State, or Federal reporting requirements, it is not meeting the needs for ongoing management and long-term planning. This process also makes it more difficult to compile the reports that regional stakeholders are comfortable using to answer important policy and managerial questions. Further, these processes are at variance with the foundation principles needed for the integration of the information systems of courts and other justice agencies.

This move to integrate State court information systems is being driven mainly by the cost savings associated with increased efficiency.²⁶ Two of the integration principles that are relevant to this practice follow:

- Data should be captured at the originating point, rather than reconstructing it down the line or having others capture it.
- Data should be captured once and used many times, leveraging existing resources and improving data quality.²⁷

Obviously, the full benefits of computerization are not being realized. First, because the routine processes are not automated and data entry is after the fact, productivity gains that may be realized from automation will remain elusive. Second, important local progress and success stories are being lost because information pertinent to drug court case outcome and processing is not automatically being captured.

Automated Information Support

The second question in the Management Information assessment area probed the extent to which specific types of information are being routinely entered into the computer system. The questions about specific drug court functions follow the typical sequence of handling cases, starting with an initial screening of an individual for program eligibility (tables 1b–1d).

- **Screening and assessment outcomes.** Only 51 percent of the small, 56 percent of the medium, and 62 percent of the large jurisdiction courts routinely enter information from an initial evaluation of the defendant.
- **Defendant’s criminal history.** Only 58 percent of the small, 62 percent of the medium, and 65 percent of the large jurisdiction courts routinely enter information relevant to the defendants’ criminal history, even though this information is extremely relevant to the defendants’ placement in the drug court system and to matching them with appropriate treatment services.
- **Treatment services (type, duration, intensity, status).** Slightly more courts—54 percent of small, 68 percent of medium, and 68 percent of large jurisdiction courts—input details on the drug treatment plans prescribed for defendants.
- **Drug testing frequency and outcomes.** This is the most important indicator of a defendant’s “clean” progress. Here, results are slightly more encouraging, with about 64 percent of small, 70 percent of medium, and 74 percent of large jurisdiction courts entering this information.
- **Compliance/Noncompliance information.** About 64 percent of small, 68 percent of medium, and 65 percent of large jurisdiction courts routinely enter compliance information.
- **Status hearing outcomes.** One aspect that makes drug courts unique is the relationship between the judge and offender during treatment. For example, status hearings held throughout treatment increase accountability, yet only 53 percent of small, 60 percent of medium, and 58 percent of large jurisdiction courts record the outcome of these hearings in an automated system.
- **Sanctions imposed.** Can courts assess the outcomes of sanctions based on statistical records? About 63 percent of small, 61 percent of medium, and 65 percent of large jurisdiction courts routinely enter information on sanctions imposed. This process allows for the effective monitoring of individual clients and provides the data required

Table 1a.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total n = 248 %
	Small n = 59 %	Medium n = 82 %	Large n = 107 %	
1. Does your drug court use any computers?				
Yes	91.5	91.5	96.3	93.5
No	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	0.9	1.2
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

to monitor the effects of specific sanctions on the overall caseload.

- **Incentives provided.** What court-provided incentives work to promote defendant success? Few drug courts can find out via an accurate, automated report. In fact, only 31 percent of small, 42 percent of medium, and 34 percent of large jurisdiction courts routinely enter this information.
- **Information needed to monitor client progress.** About 61 percent of small, 61 percent of medium, and 52 percent of large jurisdiction courts make an effort to enter this information into an automated database.
- **Fees imposed/Bench warrants.** Specifically, 51 percent of small, 54 percent of medium, and 50 percent of large jurisdiction courts input information relevant to fees imposed and collected. A somewhat higher percentage—61 percent of small, 71 percent of medium, and 74 percent of large jurisdiction courts—enter information on bench warrants issued or executed.
- **Award of GED or vocational certificate/Employment status.** Are defendants preparing themselves for financial responsibility? Only 39 percent of small, 44 percent of medium, and 40 percent of large jurisdiction courts routinely follow up on GED awards via automated systems. Slightly more—56 percent of small, 62 percent of medium, and 64 percent of large jurisdiction courts—input employment status.
- **Living arrangements.** Finally, are defendants making lifestyle changes; that is, living in a drug-free environment and maintaining relationships with “clean” family and friends? Only 51 percent of small, 54 percent of medium, and 53 percent of large jurisdiction courts can effectively monitor their defendants’ living arrangements through automated reports.
- **Rearrest or conviction during program.** Another important indicator of compliance among participants is rearrest or conviction while the defendant is in drug court services. However, only a little more than half—51 percent of small, 61 percent of medium, and 64 percent of large jurisdiction courts—routinely enter this information into an automated system.
- **Rearrest or conviction after graduation.** This is a desirable component of any outcome evaluation; however, it is generally very difficult for courts to obtain reliable data after the court releases the defendant. Despite the difficulties, 29 percent of small, 32 percent of medium, and 35 percent of large jurisdiction courts input this information into a database. To determine the effectiveness of drug court programs, a record of how participants perform after they are released from the drug court is especially helpful. If paired with a control or comparison group, this information provides data to determine whether drug courts are having an impact on drug use and subsequent criminal behavior.
- **Drug-free/Employment status after graduation.** Ideally, rearrest or measures of recidivism should also be supplemented with more detailed measures of behavioral or lifestyle change. Although this information is very desirable, it is difficult to obtain after people have left the program. With most drug courts focusing on operations, it is not surprising that only 17 percent of small, 17 percent of medium, and 10 percent of large jurisdiction courts can routinely enter data relevant to the clients’ drug-free status postgraduation. Similarly, only 10 percent

Table 1b.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
2. Type of information routinely entered into your computer system:				
a. Screening and assessment				
Yes	50.8	56.1	61.7	57.3
No	37.3	35.4	33.6	35.1
Do not know	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Criminal history				
Yes	57.6	62.2	64.5	62.1
No	32.2	28.0	30.8	30.2
Do not know	1.7	1.2	0.0	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. Treatment services				
Yes	54.2	68.3	68.2	64.9
No	35.6	23.2	27.1	27.8
Do not know	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.4
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Drug testing				
Yes	64.4	69.5	73.8	70.2
No	23.7	22.0	21.5	22.2
Do not know	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.4
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	2.4	1.9	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Compliance/noncompliance information				
Yes	64.4	68.3	64.5	65.7
No	25.4	22.0	30.8	26.6
Do not know	1.7	1.2	0.0	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
f. Status hearing outcomes				
Yes	52.5	59.8	57.9	57.3
No	35.6	30.5	37.4	34.7
Do not know	3.4	1.2	0.0	1.2
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 1c.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
2. Information routinely entered into your computer system (continued):				
g. Sanctions imposed				
Yes	62.7	61.0	64.5	62.9
No	27.1	29.3	29.0	28.6
Do not know	1.7	1.2	1.9	1.6
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
h. Incentives provided				
Yes	30.5	41.5	33.6	35.5
No	55.9	47.6	61.7	55.6
Do not know	3.4	2.4	0.0	1.6
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	2.4	1.9	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
i. Information to monitor client progress				
Yes	61.0	61.0	52.3	57.3
No	30.5	29.3	42.1	35.1
Do not know	0.0	1.2	0.9	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
j. Fees imposed and collected				
Yes	50.8	53.7	49.5	51.2
No	39.0	36.6	45.8	41.1
Do not know	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.4
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	2.4	1.9	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
k. Bench warrants issued/executed				
Yes	61.0	70.7	73.8	69.8
No	30.5	19.5	20.6	22.6
Do not know	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.4
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	2.8	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
l. GED or vocational certificate award				
Yes	39.0	43.9	40.2	41.1
No	52.5	43.9	55.1	50.8
Do not know	0.0	3.7	0.0	1.2
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 1d.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
2. Information routinely entered into your computer system (continued):				
m. Employment status				
Yes	55.9	62.2	63.6	61.3
No	35.6	28.0	31.8	31.5
Do not know	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.4
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n. Living arrangements				
Yes	50.8	53.7	53.3	52.8
No	39.0	36.6	42.1	39.5
Do not know	1.7	1.2	0.0	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
o. Rearrest or conviction while in the drug court program				
Yes	50.8	61.0	63.6	59.7
No	40.7	28.0	31.8	32.7
Do not know	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.8
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	0.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
p. Rearrest or conviction after graduation from the drug court program				
Yes	28.8	31.7	34.6	32.3
No	59.3	53.7	60.7	58.1
Do not know	1.7	3.7	0.0	1.6
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	4.9	1.9	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
q. Drug-free status after graduation from the drug court program				
Yes	16.9	17.1	10.3	14.1
No	71.2	68.3	84.1	75.8
Do not know	1.7	3.7	0.9	2.0
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	4.9	1.9	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
r. Employment status after graduation from the drug court program				
Yes	10.2	13.4	7.5	10.1
No	78.0	72.0	86.9	79.8
Do not know	1.7	3.7	0.9	2.0
Skip	8.5	6.1	2.8	5.2
Missing	1.7	4.9	1.9	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

of small, 13 percent of medium, and 8 percent of large jurisdiction courts collect data with regard to employment status postgraduation.

These statistics paint a rather bleak picture of the support provided to these courts regarding automated data available for various types of indicators, especially data on postgraduation status. Yet these results are not surprising. Even GAO acknowledges the difficulties of collecting certain types of data and the policy considerations inherent in running these programs. In its 1997 report, GAO stated:

“We recognize the difficulties inherent in collecting followup data on criminal recidivism and particularly drug relapse, as well as comparable data on nonparticipants We also recognize that the need for and benefits of having data must be balanced against the cost of collecting and maintaining it, as well as against any logistical and legal implications, including existing statutory limitations. Nevertheless, if meaningful impact evaluations are to be done in the future on the growing number of drug courts, more of them must collect and maintain data on factors affecting program operations and outcomes, including data on participants after they leave the program.”²⁸

The write-in comments of survey respondents provide insight, as some comments show progress toward the goals set by GAO. For example, one drug court official stated, “For rearrest, drug status, and employment status postgraduation, we have the capacity and are just in the beginning stages of data collection.” Other drug courts show there is a long way to go to meet the GAO challenge, as exemplified by comments from several respondents stating that “most information is in narrative form only,” and “all information is tracked in a written chart.”

Note: The drug courts that can count on the fastest automated turnaround for vital drug test results—within minutes or hours—are usually the best equipped to react quickly, because these courts are also more likely to have computerized information detailing other aspects of defendant progress, such as sanctions and rewards.

Assembling Data Into Helpful Reports

Drug courts were also asked to rate their ability to automatically produce management reports for a number of purposes. It is no surprise that, since many courts do not have the time or the equipment to capture all of the pertinent data needed for reports, many do not rate their report-generating capabilities highly. Only 56 percent of small, 56 percent of medium, and 44 percent of large jurisdiction courts rate their system for generating automated reports to support informed decisionmaking on individual cases as either “good” or “very good” (table 1e).

The courts in the largest jurisdictions, and with the largest potential caseload, are less likely to feel their system does a good job providing information relevant to monitoring overall operations of the court. Only 53 percent of small, 51 percent of medium, and 39 percent of large jurisdiction courts rate their information system as either good or very good.

The qualified concern regarding report-generating abilities also transfers to courts using computerized reports to gauge their own effectiveness. Only 51 percent of small, 37 percent of medium, and 37 percent of large jurisdiction courts rate their current system as good or very good at providing information for evaluations to assess effectiveness. In addition, only 37 percent of small, 52 percent of medium, and 44 percent of large jurisdiction courts feel

Table 1e.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
3. Rate your drug court's ability to produce management reports for				
a. Making informed decisions on individual cases				
Very good	28.8	18.3	14.0	19.0
Good	27.1	37.8	29.9	31.9
Fair	18.6	25.6	24.3	23.4
Poor	11.9	8.5	15.9	12.5
Very poor	8.5	6.1	7.5	7.3
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	5.1	3.7	7.5	5.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Monitoring overall operations				
Very good	18.6	17.1	6.5	12.9
Good	33.9	34.1	32.7	33.5
Fair	23.7	29.3	26.2	27.2
Poor	13.6	12.2	22.4	16.9
Very poor	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.8
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	5.1	2.4	6.5	4.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. Evaluating impact to assess effectiveness				
Very good	18.6	11.0	4.7	10.1
Good	32.2	25.6	31.8	29.8
Fair	20.3	30.5	19.6	23.4
Poor	16.9	20.7	27.1	22.6
Very poor	6.8	6.1	9.3	7.7
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	5.1	6.1	6.5	6.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Maintaining statistics on target populations served				
Very good	13.6	18.3	15.0	15.7
Good	23.7	34.1	29.0	29.4
Fair	28.8	24.4	17.8	22.6
Poor	15.3	13.4	22.4	17.7
Very poor	13.6	4.9	8.4	8.5
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	5.1	4.9	6.5	5.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Analyzing costs and benefits for stakeholders				
Very good	10.2	4.9	3.7	5.6
Good	16.9	12.2	14.0	14.1
Fair	18.6	28.0	19.6	22.2
Poor	23.7	25.6	30.8	27.4
Very poor	20.3	20.7	23.4	21.8
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	10.2	8.5	7.5	8.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

they can provide statistics proficiently on target populations served. Only 27 percent of small, 17 percent of medium, and 18 percent of large jurisdiction courts feel their system can provide cost and benefit analyses for stakeholders.

Overall, less than half of the drug courts believe they have the information needed to create automated reports for the people they serve that demonstrate what they do and how well they are accomplishing their goals.

On a positive note, drug courts that value timely drug test turnaround times appear more likely to capture the data that will support good management decisions for the overall program. These courts are more likely to capture information that will ultimately help the court evaluate its overall performance, as well as its ability to reach targeted populations.

Separate or Integrated Computer System

Compounding the shortage of information for reports is the nonintegrated nature of computer systems serving drug courts.

These courts offer a unique continuum of services that often involve the defendant in the court system, the treatment providers, and pretrial and probation services. Therefore, each part of the system needs appropriate access to the defendants' progress reports and the ability to chart progress. However, 58 percent of small, 52 percent of medium, and 50 percent of large jurisdiction courts have separate or stand-alone computer systems that are not part of a larger court or county system (table 1f). "Currently, we keep information in at least four separate databases," reported one drug court coordinator. It would be helpful to know why the majority of courts have separate systems and whether or not it would be feasible to integrate them.

Automation: Enhancing Effectiveness and Efficiency

Within each drug court, automation offers the opportunity to enhance productivity, to serve larger numbers of participants, and to chart results. A lack of automation creates a barricade to sharing the information needed to make a drug court program run effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, these

Table 1f.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Management Information

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
4. Is the computer database that supports the drug court a separate or integrated system?				
Separate	57.6	52.4	49.5	52.4
Integrated	22.0	30.5	35.5	30.6
Do not know	8.5	7.3	1.9	5.2
Both	10.2	3.7	10.3	8.1
Skip	0.0	3.7	0.9	1.6
Missing	1.7	2.4	1.9	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

factors will limit both the number of participants served and the benefits that accrue to the community.

Where are today's drug court programs in the continuum between effective, shared communication and isolated, nonproductive operation? Results from the automation assessment area of the survey show that drug courts of all sizes are making definite inroads into automation. In fact, computers are prevalent in drug court settings. However, computers are not located in the right places and the right team members do not have enough access to them to ensure that courts have the ability to gauge day-to-day and overall program success. Looking at the activities of the drug court from a functional perspective—screening, assessment, docketing, and scheduling—it is apparent that progress is needed in supporting these processes with automation. More important, drug courts point to lack of funding as a formidable foe that keeps

needed court-specific programs, training, and in-house expertise out of reach.

Screening and Assessment

Table 2a and figure 1 show each size court's level of automation with regard to screening and assessment information on drug court defendants.

- **Screening information.** Although partial automation is prevalent, 48 percent of small, 44 percent of medium, and 28 percent of large jurisdiction courts report that screening information on drug court defendants is not automated.
- **Assessment information.** Only 19 percent of small, 21 percent of medium, and 11 percent of large jurisdiction courts are fully automated with respect to assessment information. A full 41 percent of small, 38 percent of medium, and 32 percent of large drug courts report this function is not automated at all.

Table 2a.

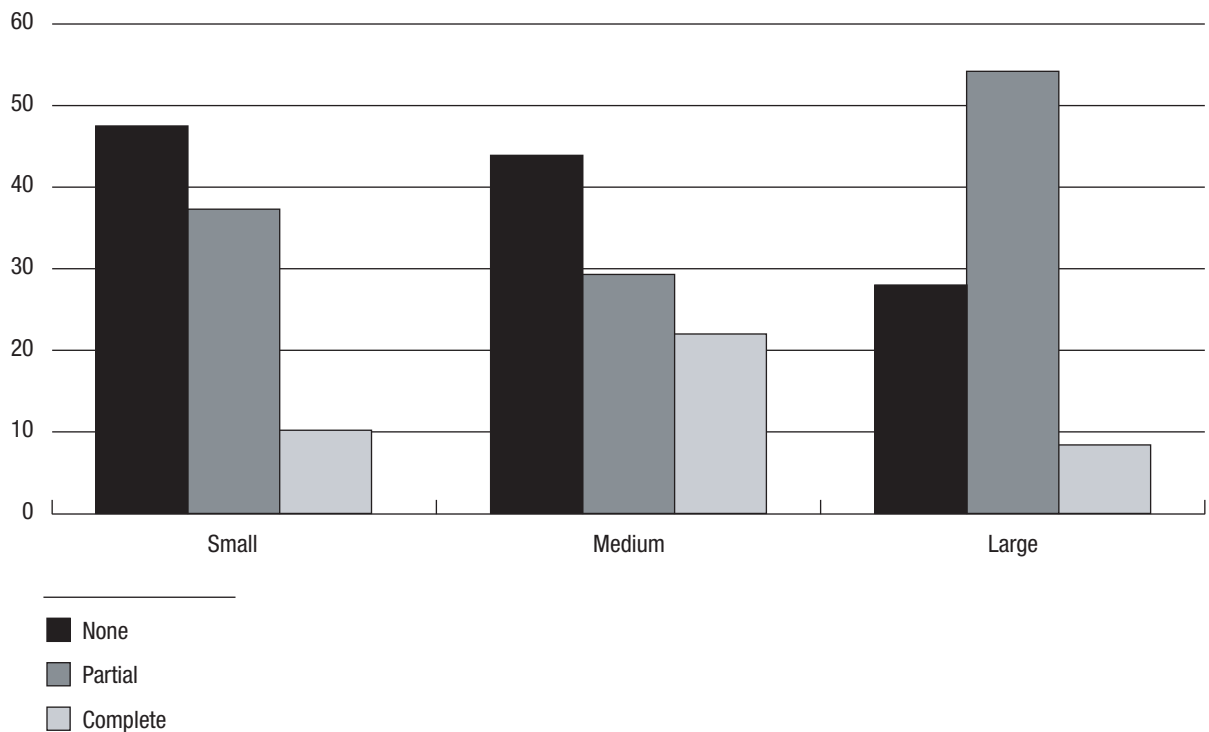
Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
1. Extent to which each function is automated:				
a. Screening*				
None	47.5	43.9	28.0	37.9
Partial	37.3	29.3	54.2	41.9
Complete	10.2	22.0	8.4	13.3
Missing	5.1	4.9	9.3	6.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Assessment				
None	41.4	37.8	31.8	36.0
Partial	32.8	35.4	48.6	40.5
Complete	19.0	20.7	11.2	16.2
Missing	6.9	6.1	8.4	7.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 19.09, p = .001$.

Note: Results of the chi-square significance testing are selectively reported when any of the results show a significant correlation—that is, there is a very low likelihood that these results would have occurred by chance. Results are shown if they were at the level of probability of 0.05 or less. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 1.
Level of Automation of Screening Information



Once again, it is obvious that drug courts of all sizes are grappling with the daunting task of obtaining current, accurate pictures of their clients and their potential clients in their target populations, yet they are not receiving much automated support from their MIS. Without this screening and assessment information, along with criminal histories, it is hard to know if a drug court is reaching its target population.

Monitoring Day-to-Day Defendant Progress

Drug courts, especially large jurisdiction courts, fare only slightly better with regard to monitoring specific components of their day-to-day programs. They are also deficient in terms of having certain information automatically accessible to judges and other drug court team members. The following describes, and table 2b illustrates, each size

court’s level of automation with regard to information on treatment case management, probation monitoring, court case management, drug court MIS, judicial supervision, and graduation/program separation.

- **Treatment case management.** Only 19 percent of small, 20 percent of medium, and 16 percent of large jurisdiction courts are fully automated in terms of the treatment case management function.
- **Probation monitoring.** Although approximately 40 percent of the courts report having this function partially automated, only 22 percent of small, 16 percent of medium, and 14 percent of large jurisdiction courts are fully automated.
- **Court case management (docketing and scheduling).** Large jurisdiction

Table 2b.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
1. Extent to which each function is automated (continued):				
c. Treatment case management				
None	35.6	31.7	25.2	29.8
Partial	40.7	47.6	51.4	47.6
Complete	18.6	19.5	15.9	17.7
Missing	5.1	1.2	7.5	4.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Probation monitoring				
None	28.8	29.3	33.6	31.0
Partial	42.4	40.2	37.4	39.5
Complete	22.0	15.9	14.0	16.5
Missing	6.8	14.6	15.0	12.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Court case management*				
None	25.4	17.1	6.5	14.5
Partial	27.1	25.6	38.3	31.5
Complete	44.1	53.7	51.4	50.4
Missing	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
f. Drug court management information system				
None	39.0	26.8	30.8	31.5
Partial	30.5	42.7	47.7	41.9
Complete	25.4	26.8	15.9	21.8
Missing	5.1	3.7	5.6	4.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
g. Judicial supervision				
None	39.0	31.7	41.1	37.5
Partial	28.8	41.5	37.1	36.7
Complete	27.1	20.7	14.0	19.3
Missing	5.1	6.1	7.5	6.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
h. Graduation/program separation				
None	27.1	28.0	29.9	28.6
Partial	50.8	35.4	40.2	41.1
Complete	16.9	30.5	23.4	24.2
Missing	5.1	6.1	6.5	6.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 13.39, p = .01$.**Note:** Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

courts are more likely to have information partially automated (figure 2). About half, 44 percent of small, 54 percent of medium, and 51 percent of large jurisdiction courts, have this function completely automated.

- **Drug court management information systems (client sanctions and rewards).** Some 25 percent of small, 27 percent of medium, and 16 percent of large jurisdiction courts are fully automated with regard to this function.
- **Judicial supervision.** Only 27 percent of small, 21 percent of medium, and 14 percent of large jurisdiction courts report being fully automated. In other words, less than a quarter of the courts use automation to help judges interact with their huge caseload of defendants.
- **Graduation/Program separation.** Only 17 percent of small, 31 percent of medium, and 23 percent of large

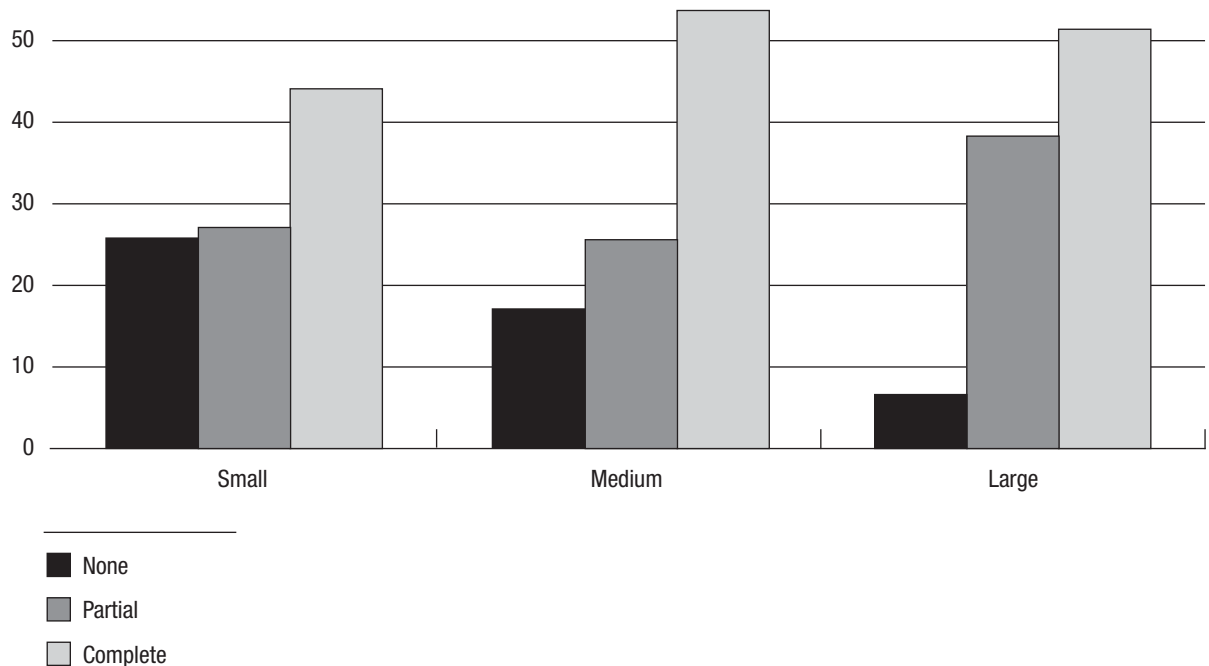
jurisdiction courts are fully automated with regard to client graduation and program separation.

Tracking Vital Client and Program Successes

Drug courts of all sizes are clearly struggling to use technology to capture, maintain, and provide some of the more important composite data elements used to determine the success of the total program. Table 2c illustrates that only about 14 percent of small, 15 percent of medium, and 8 percent of large jurisdiction courts report complete automation with respect to maintaining overall program evaluation information. Obviously, many court successes go unreported, and so too the opportunity to share the methodology behind those successes is unreported.

Collecting data on postprogram recidivism is another challenge for these courts, as was earlier described by GAO. Significant

Figure 2.
Level of Automation of Court Case Management Data



expense, logistical, and jurisdictional issues must be addressed to obtain this information after the defendants are released from the program. It is not surprising that only about 10 percent of small, 13 percent of medium, and 9 percent of large jurisdiction courts report complete automation with respect to tracking this vital indicator of success (table 2c). Almost half the drug courts report they have no access to automation that is capable of tracking which defendants succeed after they leave the drug court.

These drug courts, like other problem-solving courts, are setting a more ambitious standard for themselves by seeking to assess the longer term outcome of court actions on individual defendants. In this regard, entities like GAO, acting on behalf of Congress, are ultimately requesting that courts take more responsibility for the outcomes of individual case decisions and, in the aggregate, for the quality of justice being dispensed. Such demands from the legislative branch have policy implications for the

entire judicial branch of government. Although these policy issues are relevant to this discussion because the demands for evaluative data drove the need for this assessment, a full analysis of the policy implications are beyond the scope of this report. Nonetheless, these policy issues need to be kept in mind, because those responsible for courts in general, and drug courts in particular, have a long-standing and bona fide interest in automated systems to support the management of these courts.

Part of the difficulty in building systems to track drug court data stems from the fact that traditional courts have not collected this type of data. Indeed, the role of modern court management has only recently emerged, with most of the development of the role of the court manager evolving in the last few decades. Before that, traditional courts left the management of cases to others, most notably to members of the bar. Although modern principles of case flow management have been accepted by many legal communities, the

Table 2c.
Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total n = 248 %
	Small n = 59 %	Medium n = 82 %	Large n = 107 %	
1. Extent to which each function is automated (continued):				
i. Overall program evaluation				
None	30.5	26.8	29.0	28.6
Partial	47.5	54.9	56.1	53.6
Complete	13.6	14.6	7.5	11.3
Missing	8.3	3.7	7.5	6.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
j. Postprogram recidivism				
None	44.1	46.3	49.5	47.2
Partial	35.6	34.1	31.8	33.5
Complete	10.2	13.4	9.3	10.9
Missing	10.2	6.1	9.3	8.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

focus on performance standards and the measurement of performance in the courts is a relatively recent phenomenon.²⁹

Although more attention is being paid to court performance measures, court officials continue to face a tremendous struggle to secure the resources necessary for MIS software that tracks information on very basic court processes. And the goal of tracking defendants' activities after their cases have been disposed seems even more difficult to achieve.

Access to Computers by Individual Team Members

The lack of individual access to computers may be a contributing factor to the lack of automated information. Most members of the drug court team do have some access to computers. For example, 92 percent of small, 94 percent of medium, and 86 percent of large jurisdiction courts responded "yes" when asked if team members had access to computers (table 2d). Yet, when asked if they had access at their desks rather than at central or shared areas, the positive responses dropped noticeably, with 64 percent of small, 71 percent of medium, and 67 percent of large court teams having computers on their desks.

Two other questions were used to gauge the accessibility of computers, one about computer availability in the courtroom and the other about the availability of laptops for travel. Drug court decisions may be made in the courtroom, in a different building across town, or across the county from team members' desks. When asked if the members had access to computers in the courtroom, the number of affirmative responses dropped significantly, with only 20 percent of small, 34 percent of medium, and 36 percent of large jurisdiction courts having courtroom computer access. Similar percentages—27 percent of small,

46 percent of medium, and 30 percent of large jurisdiction courts—have laptops available for travel (figure 3).

Several respondents provided write-in commentary that illustrated the environments reflected in the statistical results, such as, "Some team members have computers on their desks. The computers in the courtrooms are for clerks only." Another succinctly stated the desktop availability as "Some do, some don't."

Sharing Information Among Networked Team Members

Added to the lack of timely access to computers is the diminished ability for appropriate drug court team members to share current, accurate information via computer. It is extremely important for all drug court team members to be linked and to share appropriate information on the defendants' progress through various drug court services. As in any court or justice setting, controlling access to confidential data is also an important requirement.

Controlled computer networks, with password access to high-speed information sharing among team members in diverse locations, are particularly beneficial in settings such as drug courts. Yet not all courts have network access. Table 2e shows that 39 percent of small, 63 percent of medium, and 66 percent of large jurisdiction courts have communication networks that allow drug court team members to communicate or share information via computer (also figure 4). It is important to note that small, more physically dispersed areas fare the worst with availability of networks. This distinction between the small jurisdictions and their colleagues in medium- to large-size jurisdictions was so great that it was statistically significant at the level of .005. That is, our statistical tests showed an

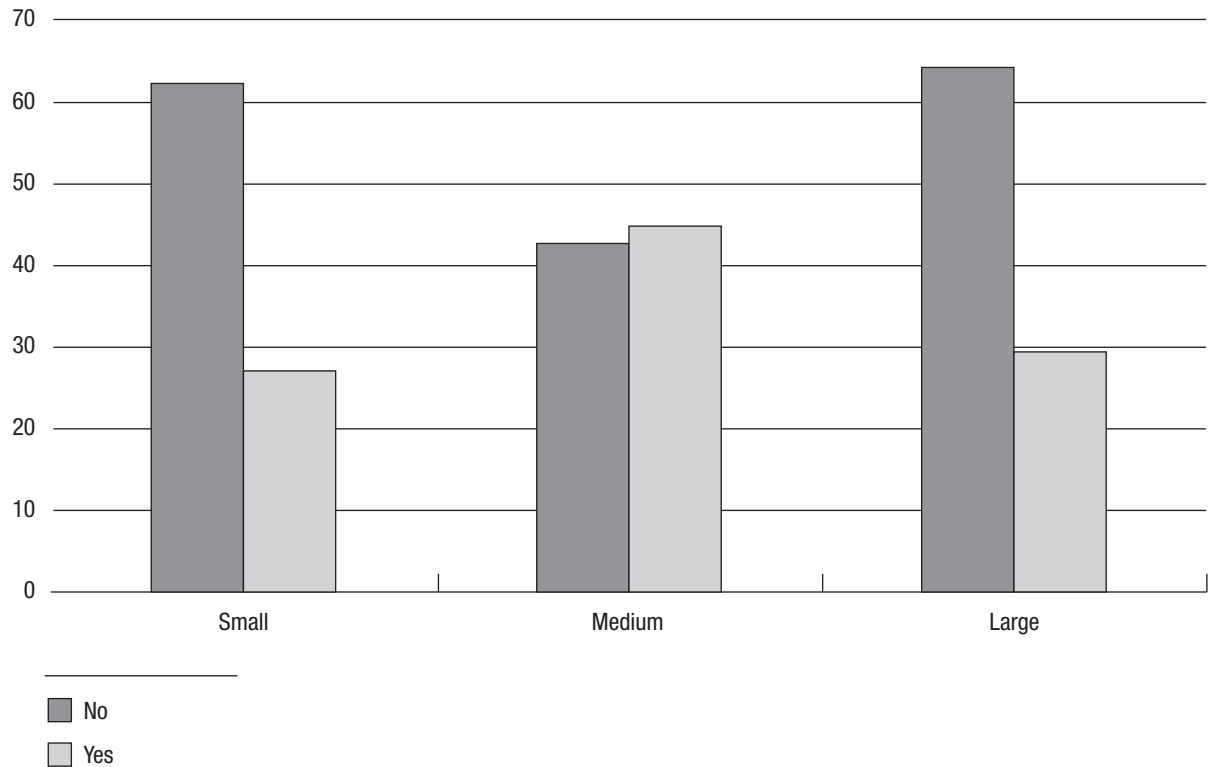
Table 2d.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
2. Access to computers:				
a. Do members of the drug court team have access to computers?				
Yes	91.5	93.9	86.0	89.9
No	8.5	3.7	12.1	8.5
Skip	0.0	2.4	0.9	1.2
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. In central, shared areas?				
Yes	30.5	25.6	21.5	25.0
No	57.6	64.6	72.9	66.5
Skip	10.2	9.8	4.7	7.7
Missing	1.7	0.0	0.9	1.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. On their desks?				
Yes	64.4	70.7	67.3	67.7
No	25.4	19.5	27.1	24.2
Skip	10.2	9.8	4.7	7.7
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. In the courtrooms?				
Yes	20.3	34.1	35.5	31.5
No	69.5	56.1	58.9	60.5
Skip	10.2	9.8	4.7	7.7
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Are laptops available for travel?*				
Yes	27.1	46.3	29.9	34.7
No	62.7	43.9	64.5	57.3
Skip	10.2	9.8	4.7	7.7
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 8.70, p = .013$.**Note:** Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 3.
Level of Laptop Availability for Travel Use



extremely high level of confidence that these results did not occur by chance.

It appears that the judge and the court coordinator are most likely to be linked via a computer network. Specifically, table 2f shows that 32 percent of small, 51 percent of medium, and 57 percent of large jurisdiction courts have networks that link to the drug court judge. In addition, 31 percent of small, 52 percent of medium, and 56 percent of large jurisdiction courts have networks that are linked to the court coordinator, who oversees case flow and ensures the efficient administration of justice.

However, beyond the judge and court coordinator, network coverage decreases, especially among the team members responsible for providing accurate progress information to the judicial decisionmakers. All of these team members depend

on current information to adequately represent their clients, as well as to guard the public welfare, as tables 2e and 2f illustrate:

- **Treatment providers.** Only 27 percent of small, 35 percent of medium, and 27 percent of large jurisdiction courts offer networked systems linked to treatment providers.
- **Pretrial services.** Only 3 percent of small jurisdiction courts have networks that are linked to pretrial services, in comparison to 21 percent of medium and 22 percent of large court networks (figure 5). This is an important issue because pretrial services are often responsible for collecting relevant screening and assessment data.

- **Probation.** Some 20 percent of small, 37 percent of medium, and 42 percent of large jurisdiction courts have a networked system that includes links to probation.
- **Prosecutors.** Only 15 percent of small, 31 percent of medium, and 39 percent of large jurisdiction courts have networks with links to prosecutors.
- **Public defenders.** About 15 percent of small, 22 percent of medium, and 36 percent of large jurisdiction courts extend their network links to the defense teams.

The write-in comments given in response to this question provide some details from specific courts. The comments range from respondents whose courts are not networked, who said, “Drug court members cannot communicate via computer,” to other respondents with more progress in developing networks who stated, “Planned linkage (for) calendar year 2000.” Other comments came from drug courts even further along in the automation process who have immediate team members and beyond all linked, such as, “Program evaluator is also linked.”

Table 2e.

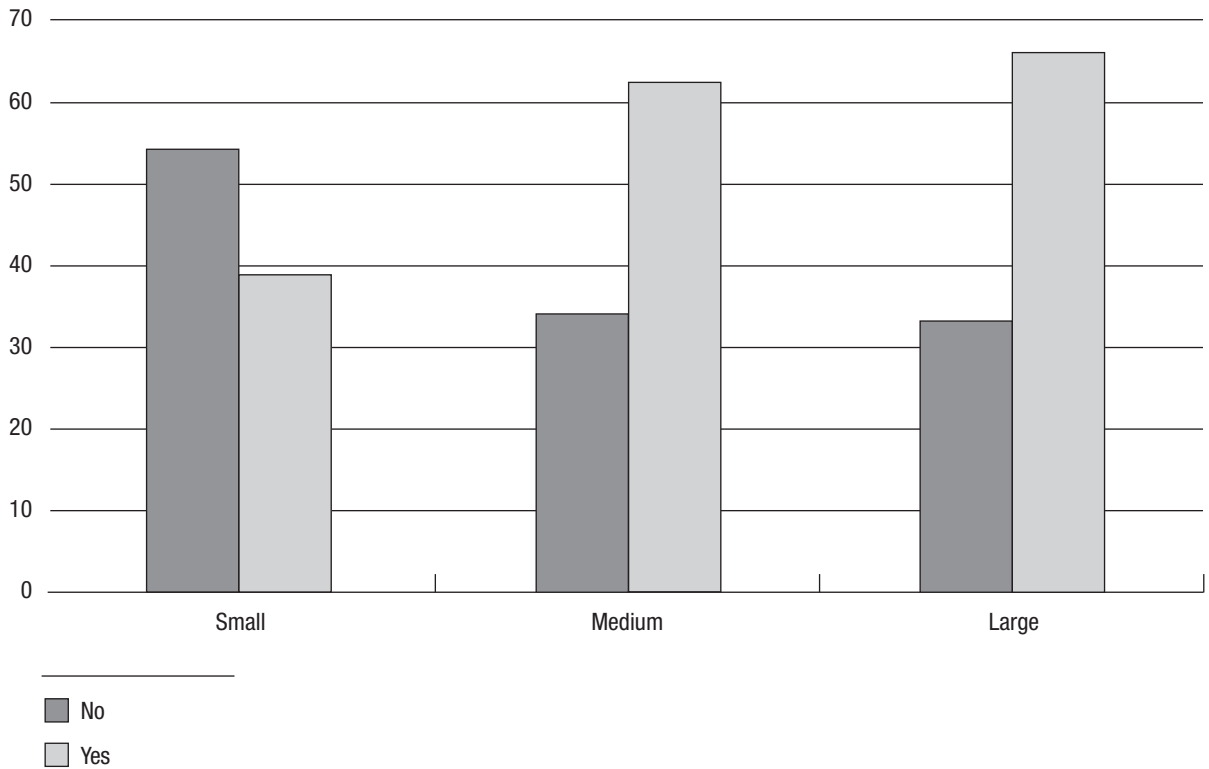
Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
3. Communications network:				
a. Are drug court team members linked via a computer network?*				
Yes	39.0	63.4	66.4	58.9
No	54.2	34.1	32.7	38.3
Missing	6.8	2.4	0.9	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Are judges linked?				
Yes	32.2	51.2	57.0	49.2
No	11.9	14.6	10.3	12.1
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. Is the court coordinator linked?				
Yes	30.5	52.4	56.1	48.8
No	13.6	13.4	11.2	12.5
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Are treatment providers linked?				
Yes	27.1	35.4	27.1	29.8
No	16.9	30.5	40.2	31.5
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 10.58, p = .005$ **Note:** Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 4.

Level of Drug Court Team Linkage via Computer Network



Gaining Access to Computer Programs That Support Success

Drug courts clearly have basic computer programs that help in tasks like letter writing or sending e-mail. For example, 95 percent of small, 98 percent of medium, and 96 percent of large jurisdiction courts have word-processing programs (table 2g). In addition, more than 70 percent of drug courts of all jurisdiction sizes report access to both e-mail and personal calendar functions (table 2g). As further illustrated by table 2g, a majority of drug courts have access to the Internet, database management software, spreadsheet applications, and antivirus programs.

However, access drops off noticeably when it comes to programs specifically tailored to court tasks. When asked if there was software appropriate for their job,

respondents were less positive. For example, only 49 percent of small, 57 percent of medium, and 66 percent of large jurisdiction courts have links to other justice system databases as appropriate to job function, such as arrest records, criminal histories, and court dockets. More important, even fewer report access to task-relevant software, such as screening programs for intake or pretrial services officers and case management programs. Only 34 percent of small, 38 percent of medium, and 36 percent of large jurisdiction courts have access to task-relevant software.

Finally, only 22 percent of small, 42 percent of medium, and 54 percent of large jurisdiction courts have access to the court's main trial court case management system. Although large jurisdiction courts report having this access more often, even

Table 2f.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
3. Communications network (continued):				
e. Are pretrial services linked?				
Yes	3.4	20.7	21.5	16.9
No	40.7	45.1	45.8	44.4
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
f. Is probation linked?				
Yes	20.3	36.6	42.1	35.1
No	23.7	29.3	25.2	26.2
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
g. Is the prosecutor linked?				
Yes	15.3	30.5	39.3	30.6
No	28.8	35.4	28.0	30.6
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
h. Is the public defender linked?				
Yes	15.3	22.0	35.5	26.2
No	28.8	43.9	31.8	35.1
Skip	52.5	34.1	31.8	37.5
Missing	3.4	0.0	0.9	1.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 9.09, p = .05$.**Note:** Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

larger systems are not well automated. Only 54 percent of the large jurisdiction courts report having this access (figure 6).

The comment of one respondent sums up the picture of sporadic access to job-specific capabilities, stating, “E-mail is limited to the office. We have links to other justice system databases for arrest records only. Not all of us have these functions.” Another commented, “Working on software specific to drug court.”

Educating Team Members on Specific Software Programs and Technologies

Not only do drug courts have limited access to task-specific computer programs, they also may face a severe shortage of automation training programs. Many veterans of successful automation projects consider training on the new computer systems and software critical to ensuring the successful installation and usefulness of a system. As stated in a 1993 book on court automation, “Millions of dollars can be spent on hardware and

Figure 5.
Level Linked to Pretrial Services

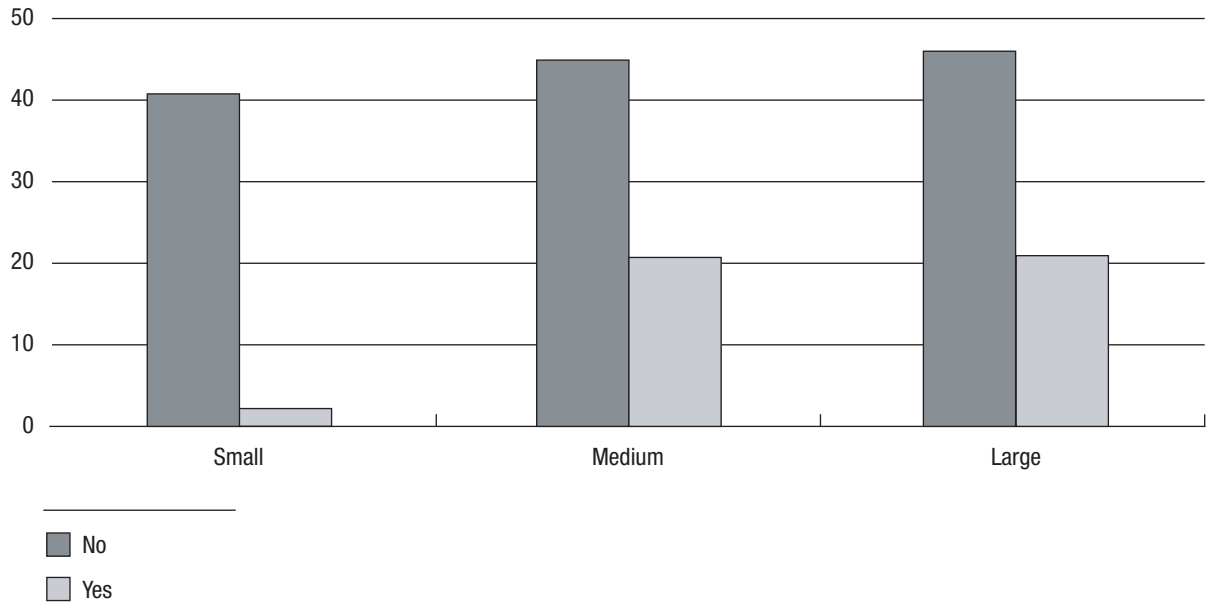
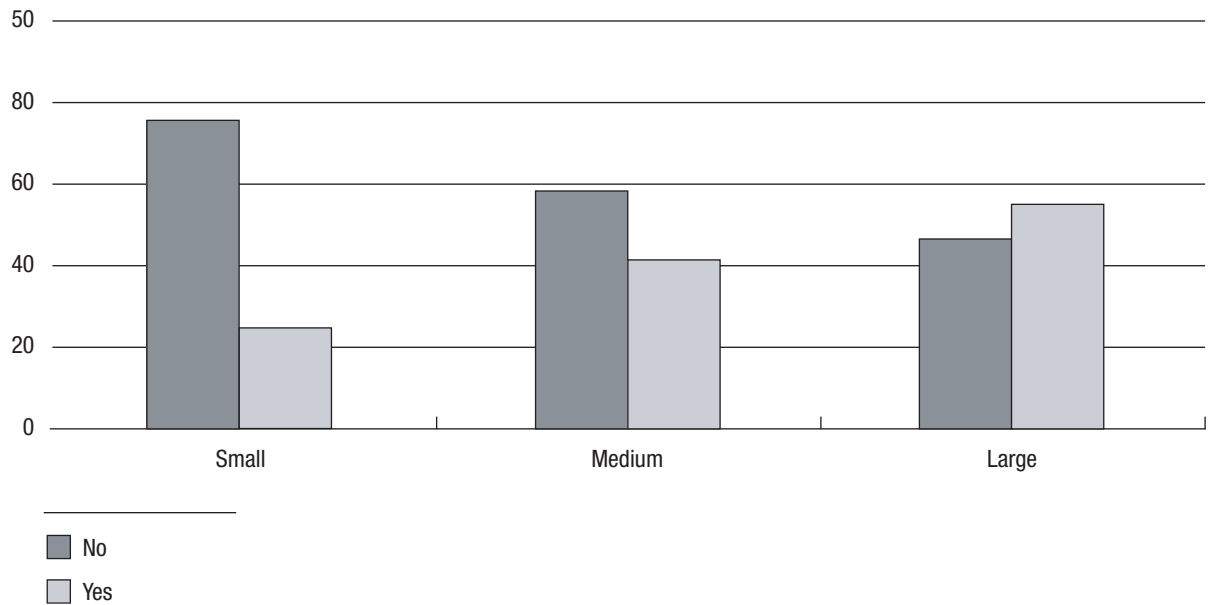


Figure 6.
Level of Access to Main Trial Court Management Program



software, yet the ultimate success of the system depends on the quality of work of the individuals with the lowest salaries and the least training in the judicial branch. Good training and quality control

procedures are perhaps the most important challenges project leaders will face. If training is not effective, the automation process cannot be successful.”³⁰

Table 2g.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
4. Which of the following capabilities do you have?				
a. Word processing				
Yes	94.9	97.6	96.3	96.4
No	5.1	2.4	3.7	3.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Personal calendar				
Yes	76.3	70.7	70.1	71.8
No	23.7	29.3	29.9	28.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. E-mail				
Yes	72.9	78.0	80.4	77.8
No	27.1	22.0	19.6	22.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Internet access				
Yes	67.8	63.4	59.8	62.9
No	32.2	36.6	40.2	37.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Database management				
Yes	67.8	67.1	62.6	65.3
No	32.2	32.9	37.4	34.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
f. Spreadsheet				
Yes	67.8	69.5	65.4	67.3
No	32.2	30.5	34.5	32.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
g. Antivirus				
Yes	71.2	70.7	69.2	70.2
No	28.8	29.3	30.8	29.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
h. Links to other justice systems				
Yes	49.2	57.3	66.4	59.3
No	50.8	42.7	33.6	40.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
i. Task-relevant software				
Yes	33.9	37.8	35.5	35.9
No	66.1	62.2	64.5	64.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
j. Trial court case management system*				
Yes	22.0	41.5	54.2	42.3
No	78.0	58.5	44.9	57.3
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 16.62$ $p = .005$.**Note:** Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

To gauge the role training has in computer systems success in drug courts, the survey asked respondents about access to formal, court-supported technology training programs. A slight majority of drug courts indicated that such programs exist, but that where they do exist they are generally not mandatory.

Specifically, only in the medium- to large-size jurisdictions are training programs available to half or more of the drug courts (table 2h). When asked about training in general office applications, only 36 percent of small, 51 percent of medium, and 67 percent of large jurisdiction courts report that such training is available (figure 7). A similar situation is found with training for drug court-specific software, with 14 percent of small, 33 percent of medium, and 35

percent of large jurisdiction courts having such training available (figure 8). A statistically significant finding is that, whether for general or specific training, small jurisdiction courts are less likely to have any formal training programs in place.

Furthermore, programs are mandatory in less than 12 percent of these courts, regardless of court size. Only 9 percent of small, 4 percent of medium, and 5 percent of large jurisdiction courts require drug court team members to participate in training to learn general office applications of the software. Requirements for training in drug court-specific software fared little better, with 12 percent of small, 4 percent of medium, and 9 percent of large jurisdiction courts requiring these specific training programs.

Table 2h.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total n = 248 %
	Small n = 59 %	Medium n = 82 %	Large n = 107 %	
5. Access to formal, court-supported technology training programs?				
a. General office applications*				
Available	35.6	51.2	67.3	54.4
Mandatory	8.5	3.7	4.7	5.2
No training available	6.8	11.0	3.7	6.9
Do not know	3.4	1.2	0.9	1.6
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Missing	45.8	32.9	22.4	31.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Drug court-specific software applications**				
Available	13.6	32.9	34.6	29.0
Mandatory	11.9	3.7	9.3	8.1
No training available	10.2	13.4	6.5	9.7
Do not know	3.4	0.0	1.9	1.6
Skip	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Missing	61.0	50.0	47.7	51.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $\chi^2 = 8.70, p = .013$.

** $\chi^2 = 10.88, p = .02$.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 7.
Level of Training in General Office Applications

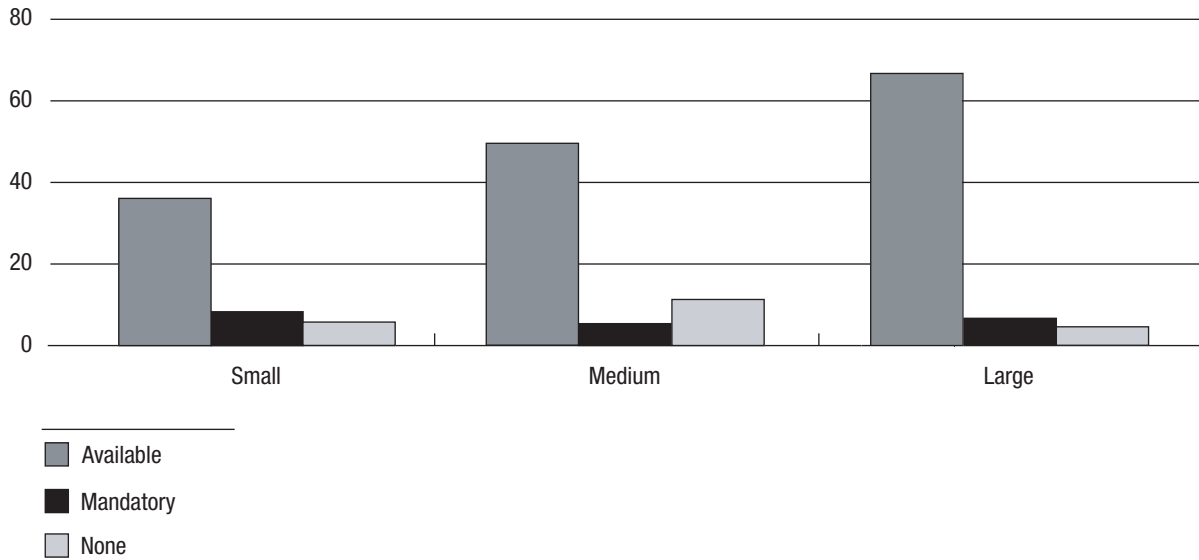
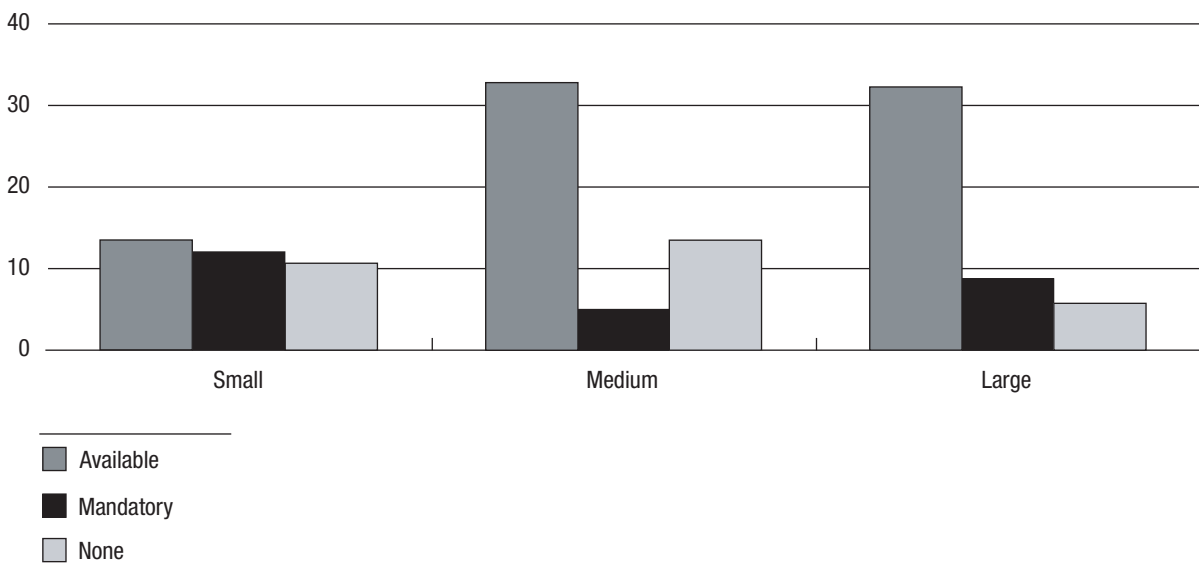


Figure 8.
Level of Training in Drug Court Software



Add these data on education and training to the details on the lack of court-specific programs, and it is easy to conclude that, although computers and basic programs are available, this hardware and software cannot be used effectively for drug court business.

Relying on In-House Automation Expertise

Another indicator of automation advancement is the presence of staff technology personnel, one or more employees whose primary responsibilities include data processing, programming, system administration,

and computer maintenance. However, only 29 percent of small, 29 percent of medium, and 40 percent of large jurisdiction courts have such expertise in-house (table 2i). Write-in comments like this one indicate drug courts borrow MIS personnel from other court functions or use student interns, even volunteers at times, just to achieve basic data entry and data processing. “We just want a good MIS so we can spend as little time as possible on reports and as much time as we can on treatment of our clients,” added one understaffed court coordinator.

Facing Automation Barriers

Courts were asked to identify the main barriers to further automating their drug courts. The barrier overwhelmingly cited was a lack of funding. In fact, 61 percent of small, 72 percent of medium, and 66 percent of large jurisdiction courts point to funding as the number one impediment to their automation development. In addition, 56 percent of small, 61 percent of medium, and 47 percent of large jurisdiction courts indicate difficulty in linking with other systems that support drug court team members as a prime barrier. The vast majority of the courts do not see the other items listed on the survey as being “main” barriers to further automating their drug court (table 2i). These included insufficient skills, a lack of guidelines specific to drug courts, a need to educate stakeholders, ongoing maintenance costs, unfamiliarity with State and/or national standards, and appropriate security controls to limit access.

Write-In Comments

The write-in comments for this section showed a wide range of concerns. Some respondents mentioned the current demand for technical personnel, noting that “Programmers are not available because they are so busy with other projects.”

Other comments, perhaps reflective of a certain desperation where automation is concerned, went so far as to suggest that the government go into the software development business. One respondent suggested that DCPO/American University develop a software package specific to drug courts.

Although identifying the need for tailored software is on target, the suggestion that the government should develop such software seems misguided. Comments such as these suggest that there may be a greater need for education, so that those having to rely on these systems will have a better understanding of the role of technology vendors, the use of various aspects of the procurement process to acquire technology, and how to deal with the private sector.

The write-in comments about additional barriers were categorized and are presented below.

Additional Barriers	Number of Comments Recorded
Lack of specific drug court software	15
Currently addressing barriers	13
Staffing issues	12
Insufficient or incompatible software	10
Lack of equipment	9
Lack of funding	6
Lack of training	2
Lack of political or administrative support	2
Accessibility of data	1
Population size	1
No existing barriers	1
Drug court is just beginning	1

Technical Assistance: Overwhelming Appeal for Support

As drug courts take on greater roles within their communities and serve larger client populations, they obviously take on additional responsibilities with more goals that must be achieved. The survey asked the respondents to identify the technical assistance that the courts need to fulfill

Table 2i.
Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Automation

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
6. Does your drug court have any employees whose primary responsibilities include data processing, computer maintenance, etc.?				
Yes	28.8	29.3	40.2	33.9
No	71.2	70.7	56.1	64.5
Missing	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
7. What are the main barriers to further automating your drug court?				
a. Insufficient skills				
Yes	25.4	31.7	25.2	27.4
No	74.6	68.3	74.8	72.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
b. Lack of guidelines specific to drug courts				
Yes	25.4	28.0	23.4	25.4
No	74.6	72.0	76.6	74.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
c. Need to educate stakeholders				
Yes	25.4	23.2	17.8	21.4
No	74.6	76.8	82.2	78.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
d. Ongoing maintenance costs				
Yes	33.9	28.0	35.8	32.8
No	66.1	72.0	64.2	67.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
e. Funding				
Yes	61.0	72.0	66.4	66.9
No	39.0	28.0	33.6	33.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
f. Not familiar with national/State standards				
Yes	16.9	12.2	10.3	12.5
No	83.1	87.8	89.7	87.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
g. Difficulty linking with other systems				
Yes	55.9	61.0	46.7	53.6
No	44.1	39.0	53.3	46.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
h. Designing appropriate security controls				
Yes	18.6	20.7	17.8	19.0
No	81.4	79.3	82.2	81.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

those vital goals. In fact, the survey team culled many technical assistance options from earlier drug court focus groups. The report on these focus groups identified “eight high-priority areas for direct technical assistance to jurisdictions with respect to development of monitoring, evaluation, and MIS capabilities.”³¹ From these areas, and based on consultation with experts in the field, a list of specific options was developed. The respondents were asked to rate these options from “extremely useful” to “not useful.”

The drug courts’ responses were forceful and clear.

Overwhelmingly, drug courts ranked every offered technical assistance option as useful. In fact, very few of the hundreds of respondents ranked any technical assistance option as not useful. As one obviously frustrated court coordinator wrote after answering with a long technical assistance wish list, “What day will (help) arrive???”

The greatest needs center around the basics of getting started on long-term automated productivity. The statistical results are shown in tables 3a and 3b and are discussed below.

Information Elements and Functional Requirements

One option listed on the survey was “Assistance in doing a comparison of the information elements being collected in your drug court with a set of recommended information elements and functional requirements.” For help with this “actual versus recommended” approach, 83 percent of small, 79 percent of medium, and 87 percent of large jurisdiction courts feel this help would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Needs Assessment

Help in conducting an MIS needs assessment that includes documenting existing procedures, determining functional requirements, and developing recommended solutions was also popular. Results show that 87 percent of small, 79 percent of medium, and 83 percent of large jurisdiction courts cite this as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Strategic Information Technology Plans

The development of a strategic information technology plan for the drug court would include an assessment of the staff’s technical capabilities and a plan for acquiring the technical skill sets that are not available in-house. Respondents indicated that 70 percent of small, 71 percent of medium, and 70 percent of large jurisdiction courts feel this activity would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

As tables 3a and 3b further illustrate, there are other areas where help is needed.

Defining the Scope of Work

When asked about help in defining the scope of work required to implement a technology plan, 76 percent of small, 70 percent of medium, and 71 percent of large jurisdiction courts rated this activity as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Model PowerPoint Presentation

Some 78 percent of small, 94 percent of medium, and 85 percent of large jurisdiction courts favored the development and maintenance of a template for a model Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation on drug court costs and benefits to use when making presentations to regional stakeholders.

Table 3a.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Technical Assistance

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
Rate the usefulness of technical assistance activities in these areas:				
1. Comparison of your information elements to recommended elements				
Extremely useful	20.3	22.0	21.5	21.4
Very useful	28.8	34.1	34.6	33.1
Useful	33.9	23.2	30.8	29.0
Minimally useful	10.2	9.8	5.6	8.1
Not useful	3.4	6.1	0.9	3.2
Missing	3.4	4.9	6.5	5.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2. Needs assessment				
Extremely useful	11.9	28.0	23.4	22.2
Very useful	35.6	30.5	28.0	30.6
Useful	39.0	20.7	31.8	29.8
Minimally useful	11.9	12.2	7.5	10.1
Not useful	1.7	3.7	5.6	4.0
Missing	0.0	4.9	3.7	3.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3. Development of a strategic information technology plan				
Extremely useful	13.6	20.7	13.1	15.7
Very useful	30.5	26.8	30.8	29.4
Useful	25.4	23.2	26.2	25.0
Minimally useful	22.0	17.1	17.8	18.5
Not useful	6.8	6.1	6.5	6.5
Missing	1.7	6.1	5.6	4.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4. Defining the scope of work to implement the technology plan				
Extremely useful	10.2	20.7	10.3	13.7
Very useful	27.1	22.0	29.0	26.2
Useful	39.0	26.8	31.8	31.9
Minimally useful	11.9	17.1	16.8	15.7
Not useful	11.9	6.1	7.5	8.1
Missing	0.0	7.3	4.7	4.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5. Development and maintenance of a PowerPoint® presentation on the drug court				
Extremely useful	28.8	40.2	32.7	34.3
Very useful	28.8	36.6	24.3	29.4
Useful	20.3	17.1	28.0	22.6
Minimally useful	15.3	2.4	6.5	7.3
Not useful	6.8	1.2	4.7	4.0
Missing	0.0	2.4	3.7	2.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 3b.
Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Technical Assistance

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total n = 248 %
	Small n = 59 %	Medium n = 82 %	Large n = 107 %	
Rate the usefulness of technical assistance activities in these areas (continued):				
6. Assistance and advice on establishing security				
Extremely useful	27.1	28.0	22.4	25.4
Very useful	32.2	35.4	25.2	30.2
Useful	27.1	22.0	34.6	28.6
Minimally useful	5.1	7.3	12.1	8.9
Not useful	8.5	2.4	1.9	3.6
Missing	0.0	4.9	3.7	3.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
7. Assistance and advice on selection of vendors and products				
Extremely useful	10.2	20.7	7.5	12.5
Very useful	20.3	18.3	16.8	18.1
Useful	33.9	29.3	35.5	33.1
Minimally useful	22.0	17.1	22.4	20.6
Not useful	13.6	7.3	11.2	10.5
Missing	0.0	7.3	6.5	5.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
8. Assistance in developing a drug court evaluation plan and on identifying an evaluator				
Extremely useful	16.9	20.7	20.6	19.8
Very useful	18.6	19.5	15.0	17.3
Useful	39.0	20.7	29.0	28.6
Minimally useful	11.9	20.7	15.9	16.5
Not useful	13.6	12.2	15.0	13.7
Missing	0.0	6.1	4.7	4.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Security Links To Ensure Privacy
When asked about help and advice on establishing appropriately secure links to exchange critical information with other criminal justice agencies and treatment providers, 86 percent of small, 85 percent of medium, and 82 percent of large jurisdiction courts rated this as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Vendors and Products
Respondents were asked to rate the need for assistance and advice selecting vendors

and products, including help preparing RFPs; selecting consultants, hardware, and software; and drafting and negotiating contracts with vendors. Responses indicated that 64 percent of small, 68 percent of medium, and 60 percent of large jurisdiction courts cite this activity as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Drug Court Evaluation Plans/Identifying an Evaluator
When asked about help to develop a drug court evaluation plan and identify an

evaluator, 75 percent of small, 61 percent of medium, and 65 percent of large jurisdiction courts rate assistance as useful, very useful, or extremely useful. Small jurisdiction courts gave this option a much higher rating than their colleagues in medium- and large-size jurisdictions. This differential in ratings was significantly different for small jurisdiction courts than for the other courts. Stated differently, the statistical analysis indicated that a strong relationship exists between size of jurisdiction and need for such assistance, and that this finding is extremely unlikely to have resulted from chance.

Overall Ranking of Technical Assistance Options

By assigning a weight to each response category, and taking an overall average for each activity, the relative importance of each activity could be assessed. The results of this weighting, which show activities from least useful to most useful overall, are displayed graphically (figures 9a and 9b).

Write-In Comments

Respondents had the opportunity to write comments and suggestions for this section. In response to the question of “Additional Assistance” the results were as follows:

Assistance Requested	Number of Comments Recorded
Drug court-specific software	7
Funding	4
Evaluation	3
Computer networks	2
Currently addressing problems	2
DCPO-required data elements	1

These write-in comments continue to show an emphasis on the need for adequate funding and software that meets the specific needs of drug courts.

Education and Training: Sharing and Expanding Successes

As with technical assistance, drug courts overwhelmingly underscored the need for educational assistance. Only a handful of the hundreds of respondents ranked any education and training options as not

Figure 9a.

Usefulness of Technical Assistance

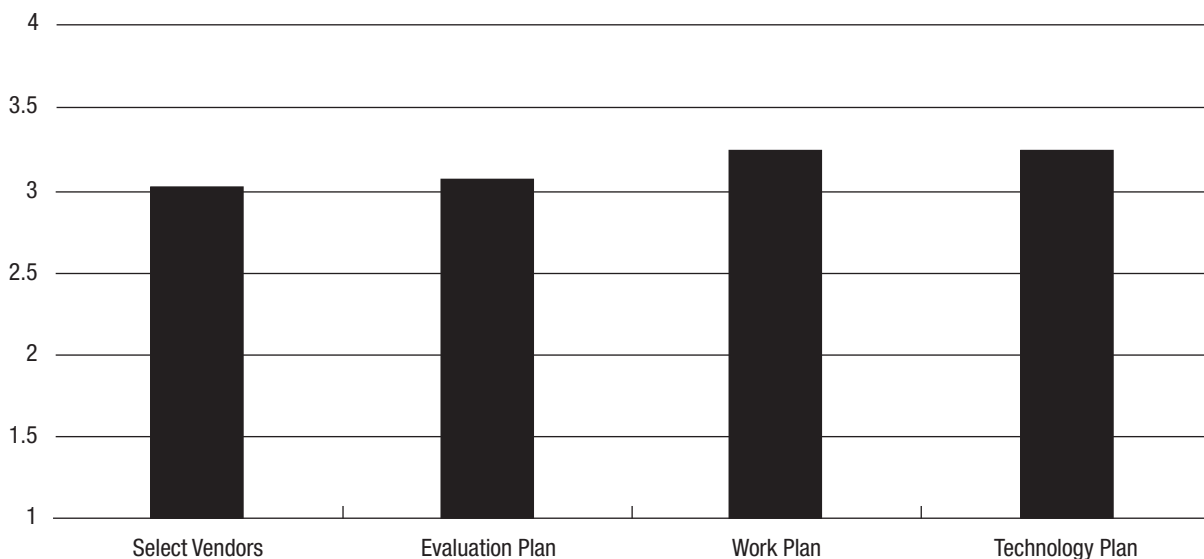
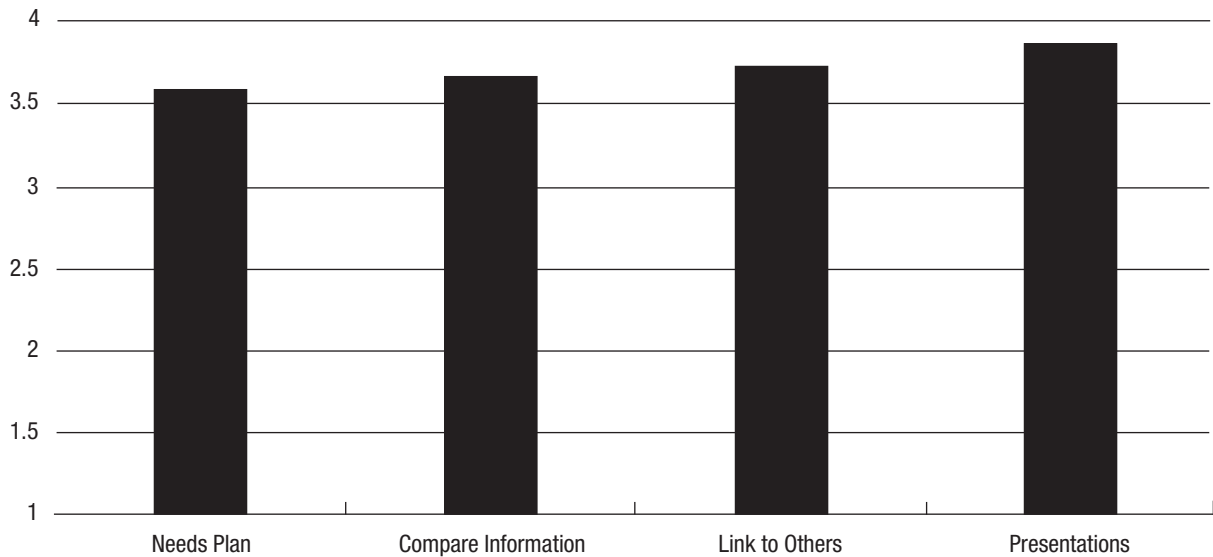


Figure 9b.

Usefulness of Technical Assistance



helpful (tables 4a and 4b). More important, respondents offered their views on the specific types of training they need most and the types of training delivery devices, such as videoconferences, videotapes, and pre-existing conferences, that they can access cost effectively.

**Information Management
“Add-On” Modules**

Respondents from 88 percent of small, 87 percent of medium, and 84 percent of large jurisdiction courts believe an information management component in future DCPO-sponsored workshops on planning and implementation would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Dedicated Topical Workshops

Even more respondents, 93 percent of small, 89 percent of medium, and 90 percent of large jurisdiction courts, thought workshops dedicated to the topics of drug court monitoring, evaluation, and MIS development would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Videoconferences

In recognition of limited travel budgets, respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of conducting videoconferences, or State or regional conferences targeted to specific monitoring, evaluation, and MIS issues. Respondents from 76 percent of small, 78 percent of medium, and 83 percent of large jurisdiction courts indicated that such conferences would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Software Orientation

Also rated highly was the option of conducting orientation sessions on specific software programs and their application to drug court MIS needs, with 83 percent of small, 91 percent of medium, and 81 percent of large jurisdiction courts reporting that these would be useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Table 4a.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Education and Training

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
Rate the usefulness of the following education and training programs:				
1. Information management component in future DCPO-sponsored workshops				
Extremely useful	20.3	22.0	26.2	23.4
Very useful	40.7	46.3	31.8	38.7
Useful	27.1	18.3	26.2	23.8
Minimally useful	5.1	6.1	8.4	6.9
Not useful	6.8	2.4	5.6	4.8
Missing	0.0	4.9	1.9	2.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2. Drug court monitoring, evaluation, and MIS development in a series of workshops				
Extremely useful	23.7	24.4	26.2	25.0
Very useful	37.3	48.8	40.2	42.3
Useful	32.2	15.9	23.4	23.0
Minimally useful	6.8	4.9	6.5	6.0
Not useful	0.0	2.4	2.8	2.0
Missing	0.0	3.7	0.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3. Drug court monitoring, evaluation, and MIS issues via videoconference				
Extremely useful	22.0	14.6	11.3	15.0
Very useful	20.3	30.5	32.1	28.7
Useful	33.9	32.9	39.6	36.0
Minimally useful	22.0	14.6	14.2	16.2
Not useful	1.7	2.4	2.8	2.4
Missing	0.0	4.9	0.0	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4. Orientation on specific software programs and their application to drug court needs				
Extremely useful	11.9	20.7	25.2	20.6
Very useful	39.0	42.7	26.2	34.7
Useful	32.2	28.0	29.9	29.8
Minimally useful	15.3	3.7	12.1	10.1
Not useful	1.7	1.2	4.7	2.8
Missing	0.0	3.7	1.9	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 4b.

Drug Court Assessment by Jurisdiction Size/Education and Training

	— Jurisdiction Size —			Total <i>n</i> = 248 %
	Small <i>n</i> = 59 %	Medium <i>n</i> = 82 %	Large <i>n</i> = 107 %	
Rate the usefulness of the following education and training programs (continued):				
5. Development and maintenance of a drug court request for proposals and contract database				
Extremely useful	10.2	14.6	16.8	14.5
Very useful	30.5	25.6	22.4	25.4
Useful	33.9	34.1	38.3	35.9
Minimally useful	16.9	17.1	12.1	14.9
Not useful	8.5	3.7	8.4	6.9
Missing	0.0	4.9	1.9	2.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
6. Development and maintenance of frequently asked questions about drug court MIS				
Extremely useful	18.6	18.3	16.8	17.7
Very useful	42.4	39.0	35.5	38.3
Useful	20.3	26.8	29.0	26.2
Minimally useful	11.9	9.8	15.9	12.9
Not useful	6.8	2.4	1.9	3.2
Missing	0.0	3.7	0.9	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
7. Development of an Internet listserver to automatically send e-mails to the drug court community				
Extremely useful	22.0	32.9	26.2	27.4
Very useful	49.2	29.3	31.8	35.1
Useful	22.0	25.6	27.1	25.4
Minimally useful	5.1	8.5	7.5	7.3
Not useful	1.7	2.4	4.7	3.2
Missing	0.0	1.2	2.8	1.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
8. Identification, description, and dissemination of information about well-functioning drug courts				
Extremely useful	23.7	24.4	29.0	26.2
Very useful	33.9	45.1	43.0	41.5
Useful	35.6	23.2	18.7	24.2
Minimally useful	5.1	4.9	5.6	5.2
Not useful	1.7	1.2	2.8	2.0
Missing	0.0	1.2	0.9	1.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Drug Court Request for Proposals and Contract Database

Responses show that 75 percent of small, 74 percent of medium, and 78 percent of large jurisdiction courts thought the development and maintenance of a drug court RFP and contract database could benefit the court by improving the development of technology projects.

Frequently Asked Questions

This item focused on whether it would be useful to develop and maintain a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about drug court MIS, with answers contributed by leading experts in the field. Of those responding, 81 percent of small, 84 percent of medium, and 81 percent of large jurisdiction courts rate this list as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Internet Listserver

A vast majority of courts would like to see development of an Internet listserv that would automatically send copies of e-mail notes on drug court technology issues and concerns to subscribers within the drug court community. Specifically, 93 percent of the small, 88 percent of the medium, and 85 percent of the large jurisdiction courts rated this activity as useful, very useful, or extremely useful.

Evaluation and Management Information Systems Best Practices

Some 93 percent of small, 93 percent of medium, and 91 percent of large jurisdiction courts noted that it would be beneficial to identify, describe, and disseminate information about well-functioning drug court evaluation and management information systems.

Overall Ranking of Education and Training Options

As was the case with technical assistance, by weighting categories and taking an overall average for each activity, the relative importance of each activity could be assessed. The results of this weighting, which shows activities from least useful to most useful overall, are shown in figures 10a and 10b.

Write-In Comments

Respondents had the opportunity to write comments and suggestions for this section. In response to the question of "Additional Assistance" the following were suggested:

Educational Option	Number of Comments Recorded
DCPO-required data elements	3
Miscellaneous	3
Evaluation	2
Software	2
Network/Internet	2
Security	1

These results show that, unlike the technical assistance options, there was not as much consensus on additional or alternative options that would help address education and training needs.

Background and Other Characteristics

The general profile of drug courts assembled through analysis of the survey responses and write-in comments shows that 69 percent were adult courts (table 5). Of the more than 250 courts that responded, the majority of courts serve adults in moderately large cities with populations of 100,000 to 1 million. In looking at the number of active participants in each drug court, 58 percent have 100 participants or fewer. In addition, the modal average, or the largest percentage programs in a single

Figure 10a.
Usefulness of Education and Training

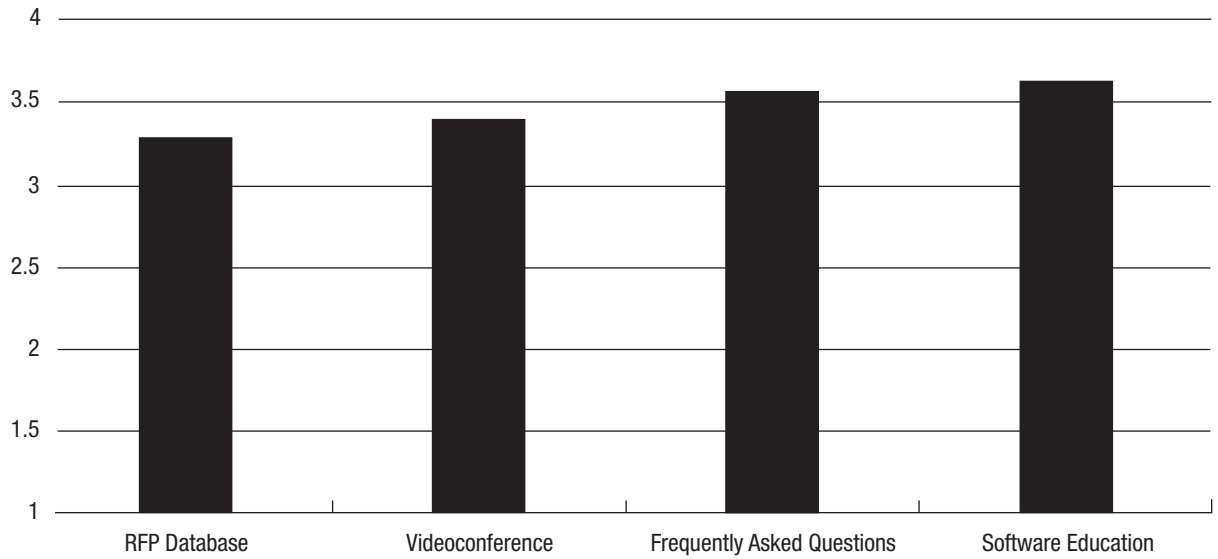
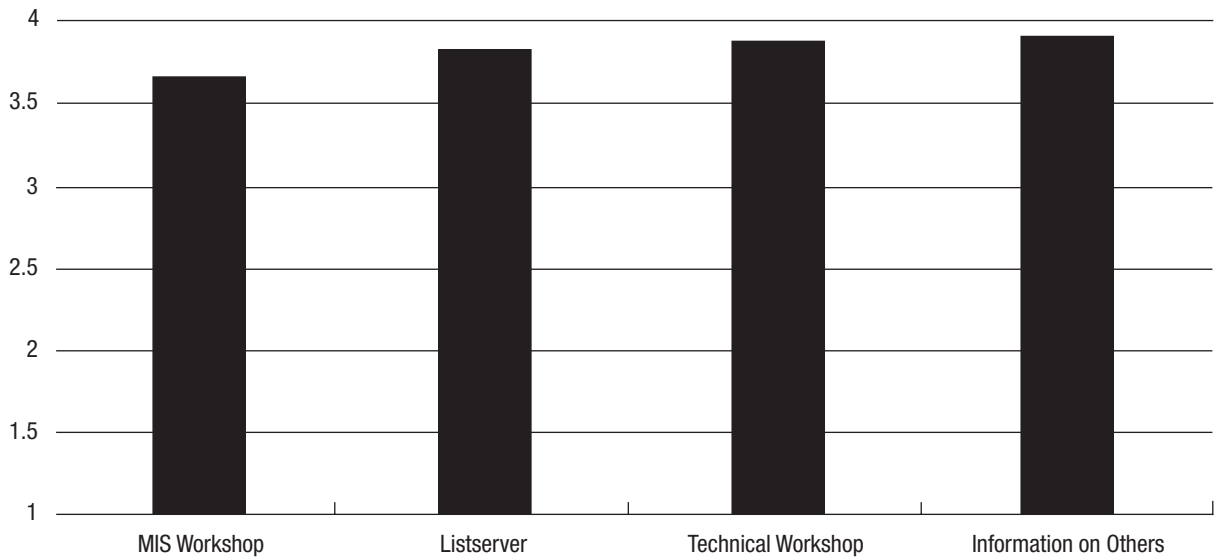


Figure 10b.
Usefulness of Education and Training



category, had 50 participants or fewer. Yet the “average,” as measured by the arithmetic mean, was about 200 active participants. This larger average results because the statistical mean is influenced or skewed by the 15 percent of programs that have more than 200 participants.

These findings raise an important issue. Because most drug courts are serving jurisdictions of 100,000-plus, one might expect that the majority of the drug courts would be handling a larger number of participants. But the majority of drug courts have 100 participants or fewer. This begs the question of why more of the programs are not handling larger numbers of participants. Several explanations come immediately to mind. Three possibilities are that

1. Not enough drug defendants are eligible and/or in need of the programs.
2. Treatment providers or other necessary services and facilities are not available to increase the size of these programs.
3. These courts lack the automation that would allow the teams to handle larger numbers of participants.

The first seems an unlikely causal explanation, knowing the explosive growth of the drug-related caseload, but other research may be in progress to answer this question. As to the lack of treatment resources, it is generally acknowledged to be a constant challenge for these programs. To be sure, others within most communities and certain Federal programs are seeking ways to address the availability of treatment. The third explanation, that the lack of automation is hindering these programs from serving larger numbers of participants, has not been generally acknowledged. However, data in this study would tend to support this explanation.

Significant correlations exist between several measures of the extent of automation and the number of active participants—that is, the larger the number of participants, the greater the extent of automation and the better the MIS support (table 6). For example, the results of questions about information elements entered into the computer show a significant correlation between the number of participants and several of these elements. These include information on screening and assessment, treatment services, and fees imposed and collected. Significant correlations also exist between the number of participants and other measures of automation, including how well the various functions are automated, and whether or not there is a court case and drug court MIS. As illustrated in table 6, an interesting additional finding is that a significant correlation also exists between the number of participants and whether the public defender is electronically linked to the drug court team.

More than 77 percent of the drug courts operating at the time of the survey had been in operation for at least 2 years. Almost 73 percent rely exclusively on contractual treatment providers for service, rather than having in-house treatment providers (table 5). Another 10 percent rely on both, bringing the total of programs that rely in some fashion on contractual treatment providers to 83 percent. The number of different providers varied, but the average or arithmetic mean was seven and the median, or the response at the midpoint of the distribution, was two. In this instance, the median of 2 is a much more representative indicator of the average number of providers because the arithmetic mean is inflated due to 2 courts with more than 130 providers each.

The Background section of the survey also included a question addressing how long

Table 5.
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Drug Court Background Characteristics

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Type of court		
Adult	176	69.0
Juvenile	48	18.8
Family	24	9.4
Tribal	4	1.6
Missing	3	1.2
Total	255	100.0
Years in operation		
One year or less	46	18.0
Two years or less	80	31.4
Three years or less	53	20.8
More than three years	68	26.7
Missing	8	3.1
Total	255	100.0
Population of jurisdiction served		
0–50,000	19	7.5
50,001–100,000	40	15.7
100,001–350,000	82	32.2
350,001–500,000	36	14.1
500,001–1,000,000	42	16.5
1,000,001 and above	29	11.4
Missing	7	2.7
Total	255	100.0
Number of active participants		
50 or less	90	35.3
51–100	59	23.1
101–200	54	21.2
201 or more	38	14.9
Missing	14	5.5
Total	255	100.0
Treatment provider		
In-house	39	15.3
Contractual	186	72.9
Both	25	9.8
Missing	5	2.0
Total	255	100.0
Number of providers, if contractual		
Mean	6.79	
Median	2.00	
Amount of time to elapse until judge received failed drug-testing results		
Minutes	48	18.8
One day	60	23.5
Two days	29	11.4
Three days	38	14.9
Four or more days	72	28.2
Missing	8	3.1
Total	255	100.0

Note: Percent totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 6.
Drug Court Description by Number of Active Participants

Question	— Number of Active Participants —				Total <i>n</i> = 241* %
	0–50 <i>n</i> = 90 %	51–100 <i>n</i> = 59 %	101–200 <i>n</i> = 54 %	201+ <i>n</i> = 38 %	
Screening and assessment information entered into computer					
Yes	52.6	60.7	76.9	66.7	62.6
No	47.4	39.3	23.1	33.3	37.4
$\chi^2 = 8.25, p = .041$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Treatment service information entered into computer					
Yes	61.3	64.3	80.4	86.1	70.4
No	38.8	35.7	19.6	13.9	29.5
$\chi^2 = 10.93, p = .012$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Fees imposed and collected entered into computer					
Yes	61.3	38.2	66.7	52.8	55.4
No	38.8	61.8	33.3	47.2	44.6
$\chi^2 = 10.43, p = .015$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Screening information is automated					
None	58.0	40.8	21.2	26.5	40.8
Partial	30.7	38.8	65.4	55.9	44.4
Complete	11.4	20.4	13.5	17.6	14.8
$\chi^2 = 25.22, p = .000$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Assessment information is automated					
None	51.7	42.6	21.2	28.6	38.9
Partial	35.6	36.2	55.8	54.3	43.5
Complete	12.6	21.3	23.1	17.7	17.6
$\chi^2 = 16.02, p = .014$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Treatment information is automated					
None	44.3	30.8	15.4	25.0	31.6
Partial	42.0	51.9	55.8	58.3	50.0
Complete	13.6	17.3	28.8	16.7	18.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Court management information is automated					
None	21.6	17.0	9.4	10.5	15.9
Partial	28.4	34.0	45.3	18.4	31.9
Complete	50.0	49.1	45.3	71.1	52.2
$\chi^2 = 12.71, p = .048$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Drug court MIS is automated					
None	41.4	39.6	17.3	28.9	33.5
Partial	36.8	28.3	61.5	55.3	43.5
Complete	21.8	32.1	21.2	15.8	23.0
$\chi^2 = 18.21, p = .006$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Public defender is linked					
Yes	26.1	53.7	48.6	56.5	44.1
No	73.9	46.3	51.4	43.5	55.9
$\chi^2 = 18.21, p = .006$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* This table includes data from all of the 241 respondents that provided the number of participants.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

on average it took to get a report to the judge about a failed drug test. The cross-tabulation on this question, done to see how well reporting test results correlates with other factors, produced some of the most interesting findings. The results

indicate that a high correlation exists between automation and rapidity of test results (tables 7a and 7b). There is also a significant correlation between courts that get rapid results and those that are characterized by two other factors: those that

Table 7a.

Drug Court Description by Efficiency of Drug Test Results to Judge

	— Drug Test Result Efficiency —			
	Minutes <i>n</i> = 48 %	One day <i>n</i> = 60 %	Two+ days <i>n</i> = 139 %	Total <i>n</i> = 247* %
Information entered into the computer				
Sanctions imposed				
Yes	60.6	70.3	57.6	62.4
No	39.4	29.7	42.4	37.6
$\chi^2 = 6.43, p = .040$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Incentives provided				
Yes	49.5	33.9	27.7	38.9
No	50.5	66.1	72.3	61.1
$\chi^2 = 8.76, p = .012$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GED or vocational certificate award				
Yes	46.5	53.1	30.8	43.9
No	53.5	46.9	69.2	56.1
$\chi^2 = 7.02, p = .030$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Management report capability				
Ability to produce reports to monitor overall operations				
Very good	18.4	3.1	14.9	13.2
Good	32.0	43.1	32.8	35.3
Fair	27.2	33.8	25.4	28.5
Poor	18.4	18.5	16.4	17.9
Very poor	3.9	1.5	10.4	5.1
$\chi^2 = 15.61, p = .048$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ability to produce reports for impact evaluations				
Very good	11.9	7.6	10.8	10.9
Good	27.7	34.8	33.8	31.5
Fair	23.8	34.8	18.5	25.4
Poor	32.7	16.7	20.0	24.6
Very poor	4.0	6.1	16.9	8.2
$\chi^2 = 18.76, p = .016$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ability to produce statistics on target populations served				
Very good	19.0	12.1	17.9	16.7
Good	32.0	37.9	22.4	30.9
Fair	17.0	37.9	22.4	24.5
Poor	25.0	6.1	22.4	18.9
Very poor	7.0	6.1	14.9	9.0
$\chi^2 = 22.95, p = .003$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* This table includes data from all of the 247 respondents that provided the test results time.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 7b.

Drug Court Description by Efficiency of Drug Test Results to Judge

	— Drug Test Result Efficiency —			Total <i>n</i> = 247*
	Minutes <i>n</i> = 48 %	One day <i>n</i> = 60 %	two+ days <i>n</i> = 139 %	
Automation level				
Judicial supervision is automated				
None	44.0	30.0	43.5	40.2
Partial	29.0	56.7	36.2	38.4
Complete	27.0	13.3	20.3	21.4
$\chi^2 = 13.02, p = .011$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Overall program evaluation is automated				
None	34.7	16.4	39.7	31.3
Partial	53.5	73.8	45.6	56.5
Complete	11.9	9.8	14.7	12.2
$\chi^2 = 11.68, p = .020$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Laptops available for member travel				
Yes	48.5	32.2	28.8	38.5
No	51.5	67.8	71.2	61.5
$\chi^2 = 7.89, p = .019$	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* This table includes data from all of the 247 respondents that provided the test results time.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

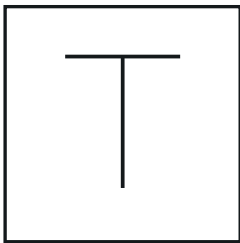
maintain data on rewards and sanctions, and those that have good management reporting capabilities.

However, the results of the data on the time it takes to get test results also show that some other factor must be at work, because some of the less automated courts also have rapid test reporting.³² A likely explanation is that those courts that put a high value on the importance of information in the drug court environment are the

same courts that establish the processes that will get them the critical data in a timely fashion. They seem to establish these processes whether or not their system is automated. This likely acknowledges that automation alone is not the answer. Rather, the issue is whether the drug court places a high value on information. Even those drug courts that do a good job now would be able to do it easier and faster with a good integrated automation system.

IV.

Summary of Findings



The detailed review of the survey results in section III showed that many drug court

processes are not automated. Without a doubt, computers are an integral part of the drug court environment. Although computers are widespread, survey results show that the automated support being provided to the drug courts by existing computer systems is inadequate. Therefore, drug courts are hampered in many ways. First, they cannot take advantage of productivity gains and success sharing that computer automation offers. Second, there is some evidence that courts cannot serve larger numbers of participants unless they are more fully automated.

Major Findings

The major findings of the survey are summarized in the following key points:

1. Although there is widespread access to personal computers, vital data are not

generally entered into automated systems, and there is not widespread, appropriately shared access to data among drug court team members. In fact, less than a quarter of the courts surveyed use automation to help judges interact with their caseload of defendants.

2. A strong correlation exists between automation and the time it takes for the judge to get failed drug test results. Because some of the less automated courts also have rapid test reporting, it seems that those courts that place a high value on the importance of information in the drug court environment are the same courts that establish the processes that will get them the crucial data in a timely fashion. The critical factor is the importance that the drug court places on the value of information.
3. An overwhelming majority of the drug courts surveyed expressed their willingness to use every technical assistance

option offered to acquire the proper automation, maintain the technology, and obtain the education necessary to generate regular productivity reports.

4. A lack of funding was the number one reason drug courts did not acquire the additional automation and training/technical assistance they need to improve the administration of drug court justice.
5. In addition to funding barriers, drug courts also listed difficulty with linking to other systems as a prime barrier to automation.
6. Even though most serve large jurisdictions, the majority of drug courts have 100 active participants or fewer. The largest drug courts, those with 200 or more participants, are highly automated with good MIS support. This and other survey results suggest that the lack of automation is hindering drug court programs from serving larger numbers of participants and providing the resultant benefits to their communities.
7. Drug courts clearly specified that they need technical assistance with all aspects of automation. These include help with “getting started” steps such as developing needs assessments and technology plans and preparing funding proposals for stakeholders.
8. Surveyed drug courts overwhelmingly expressed a desire for additional education and training that deal specifically with evaluation and management information systems. Targeted workshops and videotaped training sessions dedicated to monitoring, evaluation, and MIS development rated highly among surveyed courts.
9. Difficulty with data entry and sharing are not a result of drug court indiffer-

ence to the need to provide regular evaluation information. Indeed, less than half of the drug courts surveyed rated their current systems as good or very good at providing information for evaluations.

10. Less than 15 percent of all surveyed courts report that they have completed the automation needed to produce reports for overall program evaluation. It is telling that this is about the same percentage of drug courts that have the largest number of active participants (200 or more).

Other Results

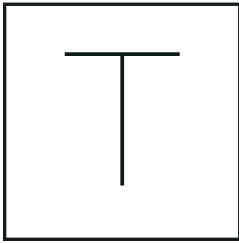
1. **Access to computers.** Although computers are prevalent in drug courts, most are not located in areas conducive to regular, effective data entry and sharing. Furthermore, most drug court team members, particularly pretrial services personnel and treatment providers who must keep the judges regularly apprised of drug court activity and participant statuses, do not have shared access to data and data-updating capabilities. This problem is multifaceted, as is illustrated by one respondent who commented, “These different types of information are entered by different team members into their own PCs in whatever format they choose. There is no connection between PCs at this time.”
2. **Survey result differences.** Generally, there was no statistically significant difference in survey results of different types of courts or among courts in existence for different durations. The major statistically significant difference in results was among courts serving different jurisdiction sizes. A few of the drug courts in the largest jurisdictions do have sophisticated systems that they rate highly. Surprisingly, sometimes

courts in the largest jurisdictions fare the worst in information entry, access, and sharing.

3. **Recidivism tracking.** About 60 percent of the programs can track recidivism while offenders are in the program, a clear measure of program success. Less than a third of surveyed drug courts can report on vital defendant recidivism rates postgraduation.
4. **Internal technical personnel.** Only between 30 to 40 percent of drug courts can rely on their own experienced MIS personnel to guide data entry, processing, and programming.
5. **Access to court-specific software.** A minority of drug court teams have access to trial court management systems and software programs tailored to specific court tasks.
6. **Training.** A majority of drug courts surveyed indicated that automation training programs for specific software or technologies are not available. In instances where training is available, it is generally not mandatory. This is a particularly telling statistic because proper training is crucial to the creation, use, and effective maintenance of an automated MIS.

V.

Recommendations



The results of this survey clearly show that the automated support being provided to

the drug courts by existing computer systems is inadequate.³³ The respondents also identified several initiatives that, if adopted, would help improve the monitoring, evaluation, and MIS capabilities of drug courts. Although the data were collected in summer 1999, the findings are as important today as when the survey was initially conducted because they provide the only empirical evidence of user training and technical assistance needs.

DCPO and training and technical assistance providers have continued to develop and present programs and solutions responsive to the needs described in this report. However, to some extent, those programs and solutions reflect the fact that training and technical assistance project staff have worked collaboratively throughout the project with DCPO staff, project partners,

and other technical assistance providers and experts in the field to address the requirements of the drug court community. It would have been surprising if survey findings and recommended responses to the findings were contrary to DCPO's understanding of the field's needs and requirements, because the field was the same source for determining resource needs throughout the grant period. This report provides statistical evidence of the lack of hardware, software, evaluation, and MIS expertise among drug court staff and an agenda for addressing these needs.

Without technology, it is difficult for drug courts to link the information about their results with the goals of the court. It is also difficult to produce the reports and evaluations needed to persuade stakeholders to allot more funding for technology. This is obviously a vicious cycle that should be addressed to ensure continued and enhanced court success.

To break this cycle and to ensure future information sharing, the drug court field should consider six broad recommended initiatives, which are detailed below.

Recommendation 1

Confront the main barriers to drug court efforts to gather and maintain information through effective automated means.

The top two barriers to further automation cited by survey respondents were lack of funding and difficulty linking with other systems. Some ways of addressing these barriers are discussed below.

- **Lack of funding.** Although identifying a complete solution to this barrier is beyond the scope of any one entity, this major barrier might be mitigated in part by providing several forms of assistance identified as useful by drug courts.
 - One such tool identified in this study is a model presentation on drug court costs and benefits. By taking data from available cost/benefit analyses conducted throughout the country, and by using modern computer graphics software such as Microsoft PowerPoint® or Harvard Graphics, these facts can be integrated into stakeholder presentations that can help generate vital funding.
 - Another tool would be to develop an MIS/evaluation listserv to update the field on developments as they occur, to provide a forum for practitioners to discuss issues, and to pose and answer peers' questions.
 - An online clearinghouse of frequently asked questions about drug court MIS and evaluation that

would feature answers by leading experts in the field would also be helpful.

- **Difficulty linking with other systems.** Providing training and technical assistance can also be instrumental in helping drug court personnel deal with the security, privacy, and access issues that arise when automating a system with shared information. Subject matter trainings could be conducted, including a workshop on linking drug court information systems to court information systems.

Recommendation 2

Respond to the call for specialized educational programs by developing workshops that address high-priority issues.

- A first workshop should focus on program monitoring and process evaluation and provide illustrations of output reports from a real MIS to illustrate what can be accomplished through awareness and planning.
- A second workshop should address using technology to enhance drug court operations. It should include the application of existing audio, video, data, and telecommunications products and tools including testing, monitoring, and mapping technologies. The aim should be to improve the ability of the drug court team to make the highest quality decisions and to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of drug courts.
- A third workshop on linking drug court information systems to court information systems should explore the barriers to system interface, including the privacy and security issues inherent in

integrated justice information systems. Subject matter faculty should include representatives from jurisdictions in which the court and drug court systems are already integrated.

Recommendation 3

Provide technical assistance that addresses areas identified as needing special attention.

Survey respondents identified the following areas for training.

- Information technology strategic planning, including staffing issues.
- Comparing data being collected with recommended data elements and functional requirements.
- Conducting information system design and development and/or acquisition, including help preparing RFPs; selecting consultants, hardware, and software; and drafting and negotiating contracts with vendors.
- Defining the scope of work to implement the technology plan.
- Making the business case to the funding agency.
- Establishing appropriately secure links to exchange critical information with other criminal justice agencies and treatment providers.
- Developing a drug court evaluation plan and selecting an evaluator.

Recommendation 4

Respond to the call for a specially tailored software package for drug courts by designing programs that help develop intelligent consumers of technology.

There should be a multiple approach to this recommendation.

- First, there should be more education about the use of technology, its acquisition, and the proper role of government in this process. These issues should be included in the workshops discussed in recommendation 2. These workshops should help drug court members become intelligent consumers of technology by dealing with questions such as
 - What is the role of management vis-à-vis technology as distinct from the roles of MIS personnel?
 - What are the appropriate roles of technology vendors?
 - Why and how do we deal with private-sector technology vendors?
- Second, initiatives should be undertaken that illustrate the steps needed to develop a system and demonstrate best practices for MIS systems. These initiatives might include a case study documenting the development and operation of a drug court MIS.
- Third, building on this case study and work done by SEARCH—including an assessment report of four public domain drug court software systems and an “information audit” report,³⁴ which identify needed information elements for a drug court MIS—an initiative should be undertaken to develop a set of common requirements for such software packages and/or a model RFP that includes the specific requirements of such a package.

Recommendation 5

Focus on the role of systems training in successful automation projects.

Drug courts should explore ways to focus on the role of systems training in successful automation projects. Because proper training is so important to the success of these projects, serious consideration should be given to various methods of training. Also, there should be an exploration of the means of encouraging this training, either by making training mandatory or by rewarding those who have the training in a timely manner.

Recommendation 6

Develop a research agenda for drug court best practices.

There is a need to identify the best practices that have been developed for drug courts in particular, and courts in general, with regard to the use of performance measures and technology and automation components.

Appendix 1

Drug Court Needs Assessment of
Evaluation and Management
Information Systems, May 1999

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Drug Courts Program Office
Washington, D.C 20531
May 4, 1999

Dear Drug Court Judge:

The Drug Courts Program Office (DCPO), in collaboration with SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, The Justice Management Institute, the Center for Court Innovation and Cashman & Associates, and with the advice and cooperation of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the American University Drug Court Clearinghouse, is planning technical assistance and education and training programs in the area of management information systems and evaluation for Drug Courts.

Our goal is to provide Drug Court programs across the country with the specific resources and knowledge to collect the data necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate Drug Court programs. For this program to be successful, it is important that we receive guidance from your Drug Court team. We have enclosed a survey to assist in this process.

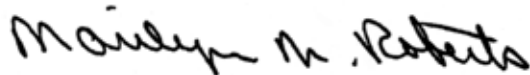
Please request input from your entire Drug Court team and have the survey completed by someone familiar with the *management* of the Drug Court. One survey, reflecting the input of the entire team, should be mailed or faxed by May XX, 1999 to:

Cashman & Associates, Inc.
3101 Flemming Road
Middletown, OH 45042
Fax (513) 425-0147

Since many of the questions are "multiple choice," the time that is required to complete the four-page survey should be **about 15 minutes**.

Once the surveys are collected and analyzed, we will draft a plan and share the results with you. We appreciate your cooperation in returning this information and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Marilyn M. Roberts
Director

cc: Drug Court Coordinator

Drug Court Needs Assessment of Evaluation and Management Information Systems

Note: Throughout this questionnaire, the term "Drug Court" refers to the entire Drug Court Team, i.e., the court itself plus treatment and other service providers as well as Pretrial, Probation, DA, PD, etc.

A. Management Information

1. Does your Drug Court use any computers?

Yes No

If no, skip to A-3

2. Please indicate the type of information currently being routinely entered into your computer system. (Check all that apply. If you're not sure or don't know, put the letters DK next to the item.)

- Screening and assessment outcomes
- Criminal history
- Treatment services (i.e. type, duration, intensity, status)
- Drug testing: frequency and outcomes
- Compliance/Non-compliance information
- Status hearing outcomes
- Sanctions imposed
- Incentives provided
- Information to monitor client progress
- Fees imposed and collected
- Bench warrants issued/executed
- GED or vocational certificate award
- Employment status
- Living arrangements
- Re-arrest or conviction while in the Drug Court program
- Re-arrest or conviction after graduation from the Drug Court program
- Drug-free status after graduation from the Drug Court program
- Employment status after graduation from the Drug Court program
- Other (Please describe.) _____

3. Please rate your Drug Court's ability to automatically produce management reports in order to provide information for the following purposes. (Circle the appropriate response.)

- a) Making fully-informed decisions on individual cases

Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

- b) Monitoring/Managing the Drug Court's overall operations

Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

- c) Impact evaluations of the Drug Court's overall effectiveness in meeting its goals

Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

- d) Maintaining statistics on target populations served

Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

- e) Cost and benefit analyses for stakeholders (i.e. city or county commissioners, state legislators, community leaders, etc.)

Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

4. Is the computer database that supports the Drug Court a separate system or is it a part of a larger court or county system? (Check one.)

- Separate
- Integrated with larger system
- Don't know

B. Automation

1. Please indicate the extent to which each function is supported by automation.

	None	Partial	Complete
Screening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treatment Case Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Probation Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court Case Management (docketing & scheduling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug Court MIS (including sanctions, rewards)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Judicial Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduation/Program Separation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Program Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-Program Recidivism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do the members of the Drug Court team have access to computers? (Check all that apply.)

- No
- In central, shared areas
- On their desks
- In the courtrooms
- Laptops available for travel
- Other (Please specify.) _____

3. Do you have a communications network that allows team members to communicate or share information via computer?

- Yes No

If yes, who is linked?

- Judge
- Court Coordinator
- Treatment provider(s)
- Pretrial Services
- Probation
- Prosecutor
- Public Defender
- Other (Please specify.) _____

4. Which of the following capabilities do you have? (Check all that apply.)

- Word processing
- Personal calendar
- E-mail
- Internet access
- Database management
- Spreadsheet
- Anti-virus
- As appropriate for job function, links to other justice system databases, i.e., arrest records, criminal histories, court dockets, etc.
- Task-relevant software, i.e., screening program for intake or pretrial services officers, case management software for court administrator, etc.
- Main trial court case management system
- Other (Please specify.) _____

5. Do Drug Court team members have access to formal, court-supported technology training programs for the following? If so, is the training mandatory? (Check all that apply.)

	Available	Mandatory
General office applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug Court specific software applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Does your Drug Court have any employees whose primary responsibilities include data processing, computer maintenance, programming, etc.?

Yes No

7. What are the main barriers to further automating your Drug Court? (Check all that apply.)

- Insufficient skills
- Lack of guidelines specific to Drug Courts
- Need to educate stakeholders
- Ongoing maintenance costs
- Funding
- Lack of familiarity with national and/or state standards
- Difficulty linking to other systems that support Drug Court team members
- Designing appropriate security controls to limit access
- Other (Please specify.) _____

C. Technical Assistance

Please rate the usefulness to your Drug Court of the following technical assistance activities that can be provided. (Circle the appropriate response.)

1. Assistance in doing a comparison of the information elements being collected in your Drug Court with a set of recommended information elements and functional requirements.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
2. Assistance in conducting a management information system needs assessment which includes documenting existing procedures, determining functional requirements and developing recommended solutions.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
3. Assistance and advice on developing a strategic information technology plan for the Drug Court which includes an assessment of the staff's technical capabilities and a plan for acquiring the technical skill sets that are currently not available in-house.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
4. Assistance in defining the scope of work to implement the technology plan.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
5. Develop and maintain a model "PowerPoint" presentation on Drug Court costs and benefits for presentations to city or county councils, state legislators or community groups.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
6. Assistance and advice on establishing appropriately secure links to exchange critical information with other criminal justice agencies as well as with treatment providers.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
7. Assistance and advice on selection of vendors and products, including help on preparing Requests for Proposals; on selecting consultants, hardware and software; and on drafting and negotiating contracts with vendors.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
8. Assistance in developing a Drug Court evaluation plan and on identifying an evaluator.

 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
9. Additional Assistance (Please specify.) _____

D. Education and Training

Please rate the usefulness to your Drug Court of the following education and training programs that can be provided. (Circle the appropriate response.)

1. Incorporate a dedicated information management component in future Drug Court Program Office (DCPO)-sponsored workshops on planning and implementation.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
2. Develop a series of special DCPO workshops that focus on Drug Court monitoring, evaluation and management information system development.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
3. Conduct videoconferences or in-state or regional conferences targeted to specific monitoring, evaluation and management information system issues.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
4. Conduct orientation on specific software programs and their application to Drug Court management information system needs.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
5. Develop and maintain a database of Drug Court RFP's (Requests for proposals) and contracts used for technology projects.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
6. Develop and maintain a list of "Frequently Asked Questions About Drug Court Management Information Systems" with answers by leading experts in the field.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
7. Develop an Internet "Listserver" which will automatically send copies of e-mail notes on Drug Court issues and concerns to subscribers within the Drug Court Community.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
8. Identify, describe and disseminate information about well-functioning Drug Court management information systems.
 Extremely useful Very Useful Useful Minimally useful Not useful
9. Additional Assistance (Please specify.) _____

E. Background

1. Categories of persons eligible to participate in the Drug Court program: (Check all that apply.)
 Adult
 Juvenile
 Family
 Tribal
2. Please specify your primary "target population."

3. How many months has it been since the Drug Court accepted its first client?

4. Please check the approximate population of the jurisdiction served by the Drug Court:
 0 – 50,000
 50,001 – 100,000
 100,001– 350,000
 350,001– 500,000
 500,001– 1,000,000
 1,000,001 and above
5. Number of persons who are currently active participants in the Drug Court program:

6. Our treatment provider is:
 In-house
 Contractual
 If contractual, number of providers: _____
7. Within what amount of time does the Drug Court judge usually receive negative drug test information? (Check one.)
 Minutes 1 day 2 days
 3 days 4 or more days

Contact Information

Please review the information below and correct any errors or omissions. Check the box indicating the primary contact person for your court:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judge's Name, address
Telephone and Fax
Numbers go here
Via mail merge | <input type="checkbox"/> Court Administrator
Name and address,
Telephone and Fax
Numbers go here
Via mail merge |
|--|---|

- If the person completing the survey is not one of the listed contacts, please provide additional contact information:

Name _____ Position _____

Court Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return all **five** pages in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Or fax to: (513) 425-0147

Cashman & Associates, Inc.
 3101 Flemming Road
 Middletown, OH 45042
 Phone (513) 423-7523

Please return this survey no later than June 4, 1999

Comments, suggestions and remarks:

Appendix 2

Write-In Comments

Management Information

Question 1. Does your Drug Court use any computers?³⁵

Survey respondents added these explanations:

- We use Provider Plus and are looking to convert to new county system.
- Just for minute orders.
- We are working on getting data entry assistance on each of the unidentified items (rearrest while in the program, rearrest, drug-free status, and employment status postgraduation).
- Some by participants and probation.
- No MIS system but some computers for word processing and e-mail only. Our calendaring/docketing mainframe used for all juvenile cases is used for drug court cases. We are currently planning a case management system to be used in addition to this. We developed an application in Power Builder for dependency case management and may modify for drug court.
- Two systems: probation and treatment.

Question 2. Please indicate the type of information currently being routinely entered into your computer system. *(Check all that apply.)*

In addition to selecting from the 18 options included in the survey, respondents added the following comments:

- We intend to enter followup information for graduates. We do not have graduates at this time. (2)
- Treatment plans and discharge summaries.
- For rearrest, drug status, and employment status postgraduation, we have

the capacity and are just in the beginning stages of data collection.

- Probation department enters criminal history data and tracks the rearrest after graduation.
- The provider keeps all records.
- Incentives and fees are not applicable.
- Rearrest, drug-free status, employment after graduation will be applicable, but not at this time.
- This information is available, but not on computer.
- We have not been established long enough to have postgraduation information.
- We do not have drug court-specific software. We have two computers.
- We use the Iowa Court Information System.
- Demographic information (drug-free children, number of children, race, date of birth, ZIP Code).
- Drug of choice, drug history, race, marital status, family size.
- Children unification.
- Drug-free babies.
- Track family relationships (e.g., reunification and healthy births).
- Program level changes.
- Mental health issues.
- Most of captured information is under treatment and tracking.
- Most information is in narrative form only on probation and social services systems.
- Complete database of Social Security number, date of birth, case number,

- judge, case specialist, date of entry, phase, date of completion/termination.
- Mental health history.
 - Most information is in narrative form only.
 - Urine and medical screens; individual, group, and family sessions; court appearances per month; and case management sessions.
 - Information is not kept in one system. Drug testing results, assessment information, fees collected, and arrest information are maintained in separate systems. Other data elements are entered into a Microsoft Access database created in-house, which is in use on case managers' and the drug court judges' desktops as of 5/21/99. We also collect data on past drug use, education status, number of dependents, dependent living status, changes in employment status, and changes in education status.
 - Information to monitor client progress (some); rearrest or conviction after graduation (within 3 months).
 - Attendance at status reviews.
 - All outgoing correspondence.
 - General demographics; judge hearing case; pertinent dates.
 - New system will incorporate almost all of the above.
 - All information is tracked in a written chart.
 - Employment status is not updated.
 - The local university does a followup survey on graduated youth.
 - All postgraduation information: we do not have the programming necessary to do this.
 - Drug testing: partial and in aggregate only; compliance: partial and in aggregate only; status hearing: BR-15 only; sanctions imposed: BR-15 only; drug-free postgraduation: in process; employment status: in process; demographics; aggregate outcomes; existing status; drug-free babies born; family reunification; resumption of child support; referral information.
 - These different types of information are entered by different team members into their own PCs in whatever format they choose. There is no connection between PCs at this time.
 - We do not have software yet, although we have computers. We do not have a program. All checked information is a part of the weekly
 - Program is so new there are no graduates, yet. We plan to include this in the database.
 - We track jail time only on sanctions imposed, and meetings with counselors and probation officers are also tracked.
- Question 3.** Please rate your drug court's ability to automatically produce management reports in order to provide information for the following purposes. (*Check the appropriate response.*)
- Respondents provided the following additional comments:
- All paper reports.
 - Cost and benefit analyses are not done.
 - All information on paper.
 - We share the ability to track criminal history with the rest of the court. There is no MIS for the drug program individually.
 - No automated system.

- We cannot automatically produce any management reports.
- Our ability to produce management reports is poor due to the fact that all information is not included in one system, nor do the various information systems communicate with each other at this time.
- Individual casework is done by hand or verbally, as are maintaining statistics on target populations.
- System does not have capacity to generate automated reports. However, system collects all necessary data and easily translates into aggregate statistical analysis.
- These are rated very poor since we do not have a lot of data in the system. Also, we are still working with the vendor to get some useful reports from the system.

Question 4. Is the computer database that supports the drug court a separate system or is it part of a larger court or county system? (*Check one.*)

Respondents added these comments:

- Separate, but equal to the county system.
- Integrated, but a separate track.
- Computer system not used.
- We have two databases: one for the clinic (separate) and one for the court (integrated). There is data on both.
- We are using Drug Court PC+ and have much data entered but are having technical difficulties with statistics outputs. This is being addressed.
- Treatment provider has some information on separate systems.
- Access 2.0.

- We are using three systems and they are both separate and integrated.
- Currently working on a software program specifically designed for this project.
- No database is available. There is currently a proposal to implement a drug court database. That has not been done yet.
- Kentucky has been granted an MIS grant and will soon be upgrading and integrating systems.
- Treatment (Department of Public Health), the court, police department, and probation have different systems. DPH—billing system; treatment—small database on treatment history; criminal justice agencies—use court management system for bench warrant, arrest, etc.
- We are currently working on a software program specifically designed for this project and separate from our larger system.
- Our current Drug Court Information System was created in-house and lacks depth. We are currently in a holding pattern; the Louisiana State Supreme Court, along with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, is in the process of implementing a statewide drug court information system using the Baltimore/Washington HIDTA software package.
- We also use a statewide database.
- Will be a separate server/database that links to and receives downloaded information from other systems.
- No database. Separate system does our reports on MIS and the integrated system is ICON MIS which is statewide in Colorado.

- Separate, but working on integration.
- Utilize more than one.
- Local information is sent to the State office. The State office can pull any information on local program from their database.
- All databases are separate now.
- Both really. We have a client/service database; an aggregate supplemental database in process of partial integration with county system; an assessment/followup database in development and a screening/monitoring database separate from the court and database. The district attorney's office has its own database as well. Program cost and budget information separate.
- Clerk of circuit court is integrated.
- It is many different little databases, not yet one main drug court database.
- There is no database. We have requested same from American University several times.
- Court case management is done on a separate program. (2)
- Overall program evaluation and post-program recidivism are on separate systems.
- The indicated items are supported through automation, but all items are not maintained in one central database. This makes querying data possible but time consuming.
- New system will incorporate almost all.
- Court case management is on the general court system.
- Information is entered in an "after the fact" manner. The system is not used to assist team members or the judge in their daily duties. The system is merely storing the information so that it can be used for evaluation purposes.

Question 2. Do the members of the drug court team have access to computers? *(Check all that apply.)*

Survey respondents provided additional comments on computer coverage, including:

Automation

Question 1. Please indicate the extent to which each function is supported by automation.

In addition to rating automation in 10 different drug court functions, survey respondents also noted the following:

- We are working on screening and assessment.
- Postprogram recidivism is not applicable.
- When PC+ is working correctly, we'll be able to do these items (screening, assessment, treatment case management).
- Laptop used in courtroom by drug court officer.
- Only the judge and court coordinator.
- Drug court team does not have access to the database system. They have access to the LAN and other court information systems, but not the drug court system.
- One laptop is available.
- Probation and coordinator have access. We hope to expand to treatment providers next year with the enhancement grant.
- Each member is on their own system. We must copy and fax information from one to the other.

- Bail commissioner and judge have laptops. State's attorney and public defender have desktops. Social worker may also have a desktop. Service providers handwrite reports, but could do better to e-mail them. They would be legible and timely, if they did so.
- Court staff and clinic staff have access to computers.
- The drug court has its own LAN.
- In the drug court office.
- We only have two members.
- Only the drug court specialist has a computer that is set up for the drug court use.
- We currently operate through JOLTS (Juvenile Online Tracking System). It's a statewide computer system.
- AODS program is in central areas and the courtroom computers are for court system contacts.
- Clerical computers are in the central area and probation officers have desktops.
- Probation and the judge have desktops.
- Case management access is already existing with department case tracking systems (probation/social service). Judges (felony/misdemeanor) have no computer access. PCs on order.
- Limited availability.
- Only when contacting me or a probation staff.
- Judge and coordinator only have laptops.
- Most members have access to computers.
- There is a larger system probation officers use (on their desks); a system the courtroom clerks use (in the courtroom); and a system the judge uses (in his chambers). All are independent, nonintegrated.
- Team members have computers in their offices (Tribal Court and Public Safety Department).
- Each case manager has a desktop PC connected to our recently installed network (4/1/99). However, not all judges have PCs attached to the network at their immediate disposal. Case managers are located in a satellite office. A central shared area within the courthouse for them to be able to log on and retrieve data would be helpful.
- Probation has desktops.
- At the drug court office, which is located a block from the courthouse, we have computers. The treatment coordinator, however, has his system linked to this one. There is a separate computer system used by prosecutors, public defenders, etc., which shows arrest records and court information.
- Laptops are available for travel for probation officers and program director.
- Agency specific systems, not shared.
- Working toward putting computers in the classrooms.
- Will Beta test a new MIS in June. Team will have access in offices and courtroom, through PCs and laptops.
- Some team members have computers on their desks. The computers in the courtrooms are for clerks only and only for general family court calendaring system.
- Also, remote access.
- Currently, only the resource coordinator has a computer. The court will be

receiving new computers by fall 1999. A total of 10 computers to be used by the judge, courtroom staff, and case managers.

- Drug court coordinator's staff uses a separate MIS. Reports now court staff and probation use a Colorado State system—ICON.
- But do not have access to database.
- Central computers are for probation for record checks of clients and secretary has computer. One laptop is shared for screening and assessment.
- Some do, some don't.
- The computers are not linked with treatment providers, DA, and judge.
- Separate databases. We are seeking funding to link treatment to the court.
- Some have access to computers. Some on their desks; judges in the courtrooms, and a few laptops.
- Computers are being installed in the courtrooms.
- On desks, but no programs.

Question 3. Do you have a communications network that allows team members to communicate or share information via computer? If yes, who is linked?

In addition to explaining which drug court members were linked, survey participants noted:

- This is the main problem with our system. The MIS software provided by American University is designed for networks and we are unable to network at this time.
- Only the treatment providers who are in-house.
- Drug court members cannot communicate via computer.

- Substance abuse administrator is also linked. We are all on the county e-mail system.
- Judicial branch, employees in MIS, and alternative sanctions are also linked.
- We are linked by a county e-mail system.
- We will have a new system in the fall and all will be linked.
- Case managers and court-appointed special advocates are also linked.
- Multijurisdictional judges and coordinators are linked.
- Mental health specialist is also linked.
- Yes, through JOLTS.
- Limited to these areas only (treatment provider, pretrial services, and probation).
- Treatment providers are only linked to each other.
- Data entry person is also linked.
- Perinatal, mental health, CPS, social services are also linked.
- Court management system can be accessed by the drug court team. Access database is not on the network. This needs development.
- Not as of yet.
- Director of alcohol and drug program is also linked.
- Administrative Office of the Courts, Courtnet, Sustain are also linked.
- Use various systems for various reasons with various access abilities.
- Jail is also linked.
- Connected to access drug test results and criminal information only.

- Treatment liaison person. Communicate through e-mail.
 - One is ordered and the following people will be linked (judge, court coordinator, treatment provider, prosecutor, public defender).
 - Department of Social Services and County Council are also linked.
 - Case managers are also linked. (3)
 - Communication via the computer network is nonexistent. Our system lacks Internet access and e-mail which would enable increased efficiency and timeliness.
 - Planned linkage (calendar year 2000).
 - Program evaluator is also linked.
 - Court administrator and clerks are linked. (2)
 - Court coordinator, counselors, and coordinators are connected to Douglas County District computer system.
 - Substance abuse evaluators and State administrative offices are also linked.
 - New system will link court administration, district attorney, PD, treatment, detention, and clerk's office.
 - Some e-mail is available.
 - Treatment providers are work in progress; onsite case managers, health services providers, and drug testing laboratory are also linked.
 - Not yet. However, we plan to have the network system up and running by fall 1999.
 - Department of Alcohol and Drug Services, mental health, jail, and Department of Corrections are also linked.
 - TASC.
 - Information shared through e-mail. Other members do not have access to database. Public defender is networked through secretary.
 - Case managers, assessors, and related court staff are also linked.
 - Remote printing is also linked.
 - E-mail only between systems; process evaluator/committee coordinator and project administrator are also linked.
 - The only linked computer system is the clerk of the circuit court's system that can be viewed by the judge, PD, State's attorney, etc., but they cannot enter information.
 - Just started putting system together. Three of the team are now connected. Research planner and assessment specialist/case manager are also linked.
 - Drug testing center is also linked.
 - Judge and court coordinator are currently linked. Treatment provider, probation, and prosecutor are currently linked. Soon, all of the above will be linked (3 months).
 - Circuit is networked except juvenile. Hope to have juvenile online by 1/00.
 - The network is expected to become operational in September 1999.
- Question 4. Which of the following capabilities do you have? (Check all that apply.)**
- In addition to selecting from 10 software/task options, including task-relevant software, survey participants noted:
- We do not have a direct link to other justice system databases. Assessment software used by case management.
 - Database management and spreadsheet, if necessary. Do have PC and drug court software.

- E-mail is available within the courthouse only.
 - Drug court data access.
 - Drug court PC+ NT Server and database.
 - Links to other justice system databases are currently under development.
 - Probation and district attorney only have links to other justice system databases, and the treatment providers are the only ones with task-relevant software.
 - Links to other justice system databases are only in the in-court system.
 - Links to other justice system databases through the Tiburon system.
 - E-mail is limited to the office. We have links to other justice system databases for arrest records only. Not all of us have these functions.
 - Working on software specific to drug court.
 - Mainframe case management system.
 - NCIC system is also available.
 - Task-relevant software relates to screening and assessment only.
 - Personal calendar (some); e-mail (some); spreadsheet (coordinator); links to other justice system databases (coordinator and probation); main trial court case management system (coordinator).
 - Some word processing capabilities.
 - Case management is done manually typed and filed in the juvenile individual case record.
 - Probation has older computers using two and three systems to enter and receive data.
 - Statistical analysis software (SPSS).
 - We will have e-mail soon. Our links to other justice system databases are on a whole other computer system. We do have task-relevant software for drug court personnel. Prosecutors, public defenders, and other court personnel have access to the main trial court case management system, as do our drug court screens.
 - Only the program director has spreadsheet capabilities.
 - Spreadsheet, not yet.
 - All except treatment providers are county employees and as such have access to capabilities checked.
 - Some staff have word processing capabilities and some access to family court system, but not to any criminal justice links.
 - Paradox is the database management system used and Quattro Pro is our spreadsheet program.
 - Some have only internal e-mail and the judges only have Internet access.
 - Can access DOC records, all district courts information.
 - Only the district attorney has access to other justice database links and task-relevant software.
 - E-mail is internal only.
 - Personal calendar and database management are partial.
- Question 5.** Do drug court team members have access to formal, court-supported technology training programs for the following? If so, is the training mandatory? *(Check all that apply.)*
- In addition to indicating that training programs are not generally available, survey participants also noted:

- Computer training for employees is not available, although computer training for the statewide drug court system, when implemented, will be.
- Will have training for a new MIS.
- Drug court specific software applications are mandatory for some persons.
- Preparing to make operational; still in initial connection phase.

Question 6. Does your drug court have any employees whose primary responsibilities include data processing, computer maintenance, programming, etc.?

Write-in responses to provide detail on court MIS personnel included:

- Don't know.
- Yes, for data processing.
- Staff borrows from data processing personnel of team members.
- Yes, for data processing, but no for computer maintenance and programming.
- Employees are not dedicated to the drug court, but are available.
- Yes, through 6/30/99, plus volunteer help.
- Data processing only.
- County is too small.
- Data entry, mainly.
- Each office has its own employees.
- Support from Main Queen's Supreme Court Office.
- Student interns.
- Beginning 7/1/99, we will have .5 FTE dedicated to our system.
- Employees are in the treatment agency.

- Data processing: yes; computer maintenance and programming: no.

Question 7. What are the main barriers to further automating your drug court? (Check all that apply.)

In addition to ranking lack of funding and networking difficulty at the top of their barriers list (from a list of eight barriers), drug court survey respondents noted specifically:

- We need to expand our data entry capabilities to gather more data related to evaluation and achievement of our drug court goals.
- Database program development that meets our unique needs.
- Funding in place; enhancements being implemented currently.
- Current database is insufficient; awaiting New York statewide MIS.
- Lack of equipment (computers, laptops, etc.).
- Developing a good drug court software program for juveniles that can work on a PC or LAN.
- Programmers are not available because they are so busy with other projects.
- Getting a truly useful program. My understanding is that what is available is too cumbersome and more trouble than helpful.
- Family court database and drug court databases are not compatible.
- We need software that is drug court specific.
- Need for integrated criminal history information access and continued access to current addresses for participants after leaving drug court.

- No programmer to set up such a system.
- Staff person recently hired (received grant) but needs to be trained.
- Numerous data collection instruments and variety of database programs.
- Some information is restricted by statute, i.e. criminal history information, certain case related information, certain treatment information is protected by privacy concerns.
- Small population.
- Need computer training.
- Our drug court team consists of several separate agencies/groups. "Court" personnel (judge, state attorney, public defender, and pretrial) are on same system. Drug treatment is provided by a private group and case management is provided by the Florida Department of Corrections. Most answers pertain to the "Court."
- The 16th Circuit has implemented a robust system. Software designed by HIDTA-Baltimore called HALTS. It is questionable how critical this technology is to our rural circuit or to our specific efforts of having in-house lab and in-house treatment. Department of Justice has put the horse behind the cart! Technical assistance should have been the focus prior to awarding grants for MIS implementation.
- No PCs.
- Suggest that DCPO/American University develop a software package specific to drug courts to include data needs for required reports, status changes regarding treatment, urinalysis, sanctions, employment, education, etc., and the capability to refine software to meet jurisdictional needs.
- We are awaiting our Supreme Court finalizing a statewide drug court MIS.
- Combination of expertise, collaboration, and funding.
- Availability of staff time.
- Need network.
- Building wiring does not currently allow intranet communication between drug court team members.
- Lack of technical assistance particular to the development of MIS for a juvenile drug court.
- Not up and running yet.
- A specific software program should be developed to keep data which the DCPO and American University requires in their reports.
- Grant availability; funds available 6/99.
- Time/resources.
- Philadelphia Treatment Court Automation Process has been combined effort with the Focis Network of the courts, a CSAT-funded program. Automation and training is anticipated to be finalized by August 1999.
- Adequate system identified to use in drug court.
- Time. We are currently doing system evaluation. (2)
- Inability to develop database that is thorough, yet user friendly.
- Lack of equipment.
- State system does not have drug court specific capabilities.
- Making software statewide compatible.
- None required.

- Our presiding judge doesn't support it, but he's gone in 6 months.
- Beta test—June. Online and finalized by September.
- Database/MIS system in development currently (specific for family court/drug court).
- Grant money was just released and we are awaiting a larger courtroom to accommodate all the computers.
- We are not linked to a network and we do not have a program for client charts.
- Politics—having to rely on JIC (Court Computer Shop) and DHSS (social service agency) to assist with design and integration.
- Program development and costs.
- Lack of funding for personnel to operate and set up a system.
- We have not purchased any hardware or software yet due to no Federal funds being sent.
- Appropriate software.
- Time and staff.
- Physical space; juvenile officer being moved into new building. Makes running lines “iffy”.
- No software.
- Personnel to enter data.

Technical Assistance

When asked to rate the usefulness of the following technical assistance activities, survey respondents entered these additional comments.

Question 1. Assistance in doing a comparison of the information elements being collected in your drug court with a set of

recommended information elements and functional requirements.

- Not sure what this means.
- Currently using GAO/AU dataset.

Question 2. Assistance in conducting a management information system needs assessment that includes documenting existing procedures, determining functional requirements, and developing recommended solutions.

- No comments.

Question 3. Assistance and advice on developing a strategic information technology plan for the drug court that includes an assessment of the staff's technical capabilities and a plan for acquiring the technical skill sets that are currently not available in-house.

- No comments.

Question 4. Assistance in defining the scope of work to implement the technology plan.

- No comments.

Question 5. Develop and maintain a model PowerPoint® presentation on drug court costs and benefits for presentations to city or county councils, State legislators, or community groups.

- No comments.

Question 6. Assistance and advice on establishing appropriately secure links to exchange critical information with other criminal justice agencies and treatment providers.

- Hotly debated local issue.

Question 7. Assistance and advice on selection of vendors and products, including help preparing requests for proposals; selecting consultants, hardware, and

software; and drafting and negotiating contracts with vendors.

- Too late.

Question 8. Assistance in developing a drug court evaluation plan and identifying an evaluator.

- Too late.
- Already have one.

Question 9. Additional assistance. *(Please specify.)*

- We are trying to help people not just function.
- Money to provide ongoing services for troubleshooting and training.
- We need software and we need our computers connected.
- What day will you arrive???
- Evaluating current automation system to maintain state-of-the-art capability.
- Developing a tracking program for recidivism.
- I wish this tech support was available previous to our implementation that was required to be in compliance with an MIS system through our Federal drug court enhancement grant.
- We are awaiting a grant request to do all of this.
- Funding for model system would be beneficial.
- Ability to track participant performance week-to-week throughout their time in program to see if there are patterns to when relapse and frequency of sanctions occur so that we know when additional resources are needed.

- Assistance in evaluating current system with recommendations for any needed changes.
- Would like more discussion on the DCPO required data elements as a minimum dataset for drug courts.
- OCA is putting together a technical support team from Albany, with core support from each drug court office.
- Funding.
- Development of freeware which can be adopted to local needs.
- What program to use for evaluations.
- How to coordinate data collection/data entry/summary so as to avoid duplication of efforts and to serve multiple purposes.
- Obtaining the software.
- Develop PC-based drug court MIS software in the public domain that meets national drug court MIS standards and is updated as standards are revised.

Education and Training

When asked to rate the usefulness of the following educational and training options, survey respondents entered these additional comments.

Question 1. Incorporate a dedicated information management component in future Drug Court Program Office (DCPO)-sponsored workshops on planning and implementation.

- Family court's needs are entirely different from criminal.

Question 2. Develop a series of special DCPO workshops that focus on drug court monitoring, evaluation, and management information system development.

- Too late.

Question 3. Conduct videoconferences or State or regional conferences targeted to specific monitoring, evaluation, and management information system needs.

- No comments.

Question 4. Conduct orientation on specific software programs and their application to drug court management information system needs.

- If we had the money to buy the software.
- Too late.

Question 5. Develop and maintain a database of drug court requests for proposals and contracts used for technology projects.

- No comments.

Question 6. Develop and maintain a list of “Frequently Asked Questions About drug court Management Information Systems” with answers by leading experts in the field.

- No comments.

Question 7. Develop an Internet “Listserver,” which will automatically send copies of e-mail notes on drug court issues and concerns to subscribers within the drug court community.

- No comments.

Question 8. Identify, describe, and disseminate information about well-functioning drug court management information systems.

- Too late.

Question 9. Additional assistance. *(Please specify.)*

- Training for team members on sharing data, security information, evaluation outcomes, etc.
- Technical assistance without the availability of equipment (purpose lost).

- Software programs in Visual Basics; willing to work for government rates to make generic MIS systems specific to individual drug courts.

- Project does not have Internet access, however, project coordinator would use personal ISP.

- We do not currently have Internet access.

- We have a lot of other areas that need work first.

- Better define minimum datasets. DCPO data survey was difficult and some of the data they wanted was not useful or not available in the format requested.

- We have requested additional assistance (someone to come to our location) several times. No one has ever responded.

- We need a national minimum dataset for all drug courts.

Background

Question 1. Categories of persons eligible to participate in the drug court program. *(Check all that apply.)*

- We may be adding a juvenile component. (2)
- Our family court is combined with our juvenile court.

Question 2. Please specify your primary “target population.”

- No comments.

Question 3. How many months has it been since the drug court accepted its first client?

- No comments.

Question 4. Please check the appropriate population of the jurisdiction served by the drug court.

- No comments.

Question 5. Number of persons who are currently active participants in the drug court program.

- No comments.

Question 6. Our treatment provider is (In-house or contractual). If contractual, number of providers (are):

- In-house is with the county.
- We do not have a specific contract.
- County AOD and private providers.
- Includes one halfway house.
- Referred out to no specific provider, but there are two that are most commonly used.
- State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Officer is treatment provider.
- Seven residential providers and five outpatient providers.
- Noncontractual referral network.
- Onsite case management staff use approximately 130 community-based treatment providers (not contractual).
- Outside, noncontractual.
- Too many to list.
- Residential and some outpatient.
- Multiple providers; contracted with ADM office.
- County health care agency for outpatient.

Question 7. Within what amount of time does the drug court judge usually receive negative drug test information? (*Check one.*)

- Future plan will provide information in 24–48 hours.

- Probation and counselors receive the results within 1 day.
- Weekly court reviews.
- Probation receives this information within approximately 3 days.
- This is very problematic.
- Same day, if judge requests it.
- Clients come back every 2–4 weeks and we can get results back within minutes if we use the rapid test.
- Minutes if done in court and 2 days if done by the provider.
- Drug court judge receives immediate notice on all positive drug screens.
- Same day for onsite testing and 2–8 days for testing at treatment programs.
- Onsite laboratory.
- On court dates, however, if a defendant absconds from program, information within 1 day.
- Agencies volunteer their services.
- Usually at next status conference, but available on demand.
- In court, within minutes and 4 or more days in treatment facility.
- A month.
- Court is held weekly. Test results are available the same day, but the client may not appear in court until several days after submitting sample.

General Comments, Suggestions, and Remarks

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments, suggestions, and remarks on the final page of the survey. These are as follows:

- Our drug court is 1 year old. The current staff consists of one service coordinator who is also the administrative drug testing person and does any other tasks needed.
- We use the access program. We are standardizing nomenclature throughout the State to better report progress and developmental opportunities.
- The San Diego Drug Superior Court is in the process of developing an evaluation system in collaboration with San Diego State University and alcohol and drug services.
- The entire juvenile court has a new MIS system (JEMS–Juvenile Enterprise Management System). But as that is just being rolled out, its availability and applicability vary widely.
- This response reflects the fact that we are less than 8 months in the development and implementation of our juvenile drug court. More importantly we are attempting to develop our own management information system. We are presently attempting to acquire technical assistance to assist us.
- Assistance and education on management information systems and evaluation is long overdue.
- I did not receive a request to complete this survey, so my colleague from the Sixth Municipal District gave me a copy of hers.
- As of this time, each case in our drug court is processed manually. We would appreciate any suggestions or recommendations that you may have in regards to software packages, etc.
- We just want a good MIS so we can spend as little time as possible on reports and as much time as we can on treatment of our clients. We have no desire to become entangled in numbers and paperwork.
- We are creating automated reports and should be operational by 8/1/99.
- We are close to implementing a comprehensive, integrated system for drug court. I attempted to respond with pre- and postsystem answers.
- CCI is currently developing a specialized family treatment court MIS system for this project.
- Most of my responses are based on expected capabilities of our drug court information system (DCIS) which is still under construction and targeted for implementation by the end of this summer.
- We are in the process of converting to a new computer system. Currently, we keep information in at least four separate databases: criminal records, evaluation information, information on participants, and urinalysis records. The goal is to integrate all these databases into one system accessible to all.
- Most of the automated information about drug courts is kept at the State office. They have the ability to collect information from their computer about each drug/treatment court.

Notes

1. U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Courts Program Office, *Looking at a Decade of Drug Courts*, and updates, 1999 and 2000 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Courts Program Office, June 1998), p. 2. This report was prepared by the Office of Justice Programs' Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University. Hereafter, *A Decade of Drug Courts* report. Available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/dcpo/decade98.htm and <http://gurukul.ucc.american.edu/justice/publications/decade1.htm>. See also *Drug Court Activity Update: Summary Information on All Programs and Detailed Information on Adult Drug Courts*, June 20, 2001, available at <http://gurukul.ucc.american.edu/justice/publications/allcourtactivity.pdf>.
2. Of the 340 drug courts that were operational as of mid-1999, 257 responded to the survey, for a response rate of 75.59 percent.
3. Interview with the Honorable Jo Ann Ferdinand, Brooklyn Treatment Court, Brooklyn, New York, February 16, 1999. The court has more than 550 active participants. See also John Feinblatt and Greg Berman, *Informed Decisions: Technology in the Courtroom* (New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation, 1999). Available at www.courtinnovation.org/pdf/info_deci.pdf.
4. John S. Goldkamp, "Miami's Treatment Drug Court for Felony Defendants: Some Implications of Assessment Findings," *Prison Journal* 74 (2): 110-57, 1994.
5. Adele Harrell, *Drug Courts and the Role of Graduated Sanctions*, Research Preview series (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, August 1998). Available at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/fs000219.pdf>.
6. *A Decade of Drug Courts* report, pp. 1, 6.
7. *Ibid.*

8. Letter from Ed Brekke, Court Administrator, Los Angeles Superior Court, May 9, 2000.
9. Barry Mahoney, *Drug Court Monitoring, Evaluation, and Management Information Systems* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Court Programs Office, May 1998), p. 1. Hereafter, Mahoney. Available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/dcpo/monitor/welcome.html.
10. Ibid.
11. U.S. General Accounting Office, *Drug Courts: Overview of Growth, Characteristics, and Results*, GAO/GGD-97-106 (Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, July 1997), p. 69. Hereafter, GAO report. Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/dcourts.pdf.
12. Ibid., pp. 90-91.
13. Ibid., p. 87.
14. Ibid., p. 86.
15. *Drug Court Training and Technical Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Courts Program Office, 1998), pp. 27-29. Available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/dcpo/drugetta.htm.
16. SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, commissioned Cashman & Associates, Inc., to conduct the survey. Other organizations that worked in partnership with SEARCH to conduct this study were The Justice Management Institute and the Center for Court Innovation. Also involved through their advice and cooperation were the Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. A copy of the survey, which was sent to the 340 drug courts operational in mid-1999, is included as appendix 1.
17. This report on drug courts has implications for the handling of many other types of cases, especially those that require critical data to be available during courtroom operations.
18. These reports were prepared by SEARCH and are pending publication by DCPO. Robert Gibson and Owen M. Greenspan, "Public Domain Drug Court Software: Functions and Utility," and Owen M. Greenspan, "Supporting the Drug Court Process: What You Need To Know for Effective Decisionmaking and Program Evaluation."
19. Mahoney, *supra* note 9, pp. 10-12.
20. The survey is included in appendix 1.
21. Chi-square is a statistical test frequently used to determine if there is an association or correlation between several different variables. The significance level indicates the level of confidence that the results did not occur by chance and that there really is an association between the variables.
22. Due to missing data from several courts regarding population size, the total number of courts reported in the tables is 248.
23. Mahoney, *supra* note 9, p. 12.
24. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
25. See appendix 2.
26. SEARCH Group, Inc., *Report of the National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration*, NCJ 177601 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, June 1999). Available to download at www.search.org/publications/integrated-justice.asp.

27. David J. Roberts, *Integration in the Context of Justice Information Systems: A Common Understanding* (Sacramento: SEARCH Group, Inc., April 2000). Available at www.search.org/integration/pdf/integration%20definition.pdf.
28. GAO report, *supra* note 11, p. 86.
29. National Center for State Courts, *Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System*, NCJ 161569 (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, July 1997), p. 13. Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/161569.pdf. See also Comprehensive Public Information Programs Subcommittee, *Holding Courts Accountable: Counting What Counts* (Williamsburg, VA: National Association for Court Management, Spring 1999).
30. Lawrence P. Webster with Stephen A. Bouch, et al., *Planning, Acquiring, and Implementing Court Automation* (Williamsburg, VA: National Center for State Courts, 1993), p. 82.
31. Mahoney, *supra* note 9, pp. 21–22.
32. These courts place the kind of value that we would like to see courts generally place on this type of critical information.
33. This report on drug courts has implications for handling many other types of cases, especially those that require critical data to be available during courtroom operations.
34. These reports were prepared by SEARCH and are pending publication by DCPO. Robert Gibson and Owen M. Greenspan, “Public Domain Drug Court Software: Functions and Utility,” and Owen M. Greenspan, “Supporting the Drug Court Process: What You Need To Know for Effective Decisionmaking and Program Evaluation.”
35. Editor’s note: These write-in comments are presented as received, and were not edited for content or style.

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