

Government
of CanadaGouvernement
du Canada

Canada

Français	Contact Us	Help	Search	Canada Site
NCPS Home	About Us	What's New	Your Region	Newsroom

[Home](#) > [Virtual Library](#) > [Features](#)

National Crime
Prevention
Strategy
[About Our Programs](#)
[Funded Projects](#)
[Virtual Library](#)

- [Resource Centre](#)
- [Electronic Resources](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Related Links](#)
- [Mailing List Registration Form](#)

[Research & Evaluation](#)
[Applying for Funding](#)
[Just for You](#)

[Virtual Library](#)

Toronto Drug Treatment Court

- [How TDTC Works](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Completion of Drug Treatment](#)
- [DTC is a proven success](#)
- [For more information](#)

The Drug Treatment Court (DTC) is a special court within the legal system that emphasizes treating rather than incarcerating drug addicts. This special court provides and supervises substance abuse treatment for non-violent offenders who are either addicted to drugs or abuse drugs.

Toronto Drug Treatment Court (TDTC) is the first DTC to be established in Canada. It began operating in December 1998. The TDTC offers an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders addicted to heroin, cocaine or opiates. The program aims to improve an addict's social stability and reduce the criminal behavior associated with substance dependency.

The program relies on the collaboration of judges, Crown Prosecutors, duty counsel, police officers, probation officials, treatment staff, community/court liaison staff and other court officials. Community agencies, which provide specialized substance abuse treatment and ancillary services such as housing, health services and job training.

This is an innovative approach in Canada aimed at helping drug offenders break the cycle of drug addiction, criminal behavior and jail. Drug-addicted offenders are given the opportunity to turn their lives around.

DTCs have also been established in the United States, Jamaica, Bermuda, Brasil, Ireland, Scotland and Australia. In the U.S., such programs have been in existence since 1969 and report re-offending rates of about 3% as well as significant cost savings to taxpayers.

How TDTC Works

Participation in the program is completely voluntary. Prospective participants are engaged as soon as possible after their arrest, following consultation with their lawyer. With the agreement of the Crown, the TDTC judge, and the treatment program, successful applicants begin treatment immediately. They also attend TDTC court sessions on a regular basis, where the judge reviews their progress in consultation with the TDTC treatment team.

A system of graduated incentives and sanctions is applied, which encourages continued compliance with the program. A panoply of sanctions and incentives are applied - sanctions ranging from verbal reprimand to expulsions and -- incentives ranging from verbal commendations to a reduction in court appearances. Participants initially attend court sessions twice a week; they attend less often as they learn to manage their drug use and take control of their lives.

Participants also must follow a structured outpatient program designed to reduce their dependence on drugs. Working closely with a case manager, participants are subject to random drug tests, take part in individual and group counseling, and receive appropriate medical treatments such as methadone maintenance. Program staff works with partners in the community to address other needs, such as safe housing, stable employment and training opportunities.

Eligibility

Non-violent offenders charged with drug related offence are eligible. The Crown must determine that the offence was motivated by addiction and not committed solely for financial gain.

Offenders who involve anyone under the age of 18 in the commission of their crimes are also ineligible. Offenders who sold drugs adjacent to a schoolyard, for instance, will not be considered for TDTC.

Completion of Drug Treatment

An offender participates in TDTC for approximately one year, or until he or she demonstrates control over the addiction, finds stable housing, and begins a job or training program. Upon successful completion of the program, an offender typically receives a non-custodial sentence.

If unsuccessful, an offender will be sentenced as part of the regular court process.

DTC is a proven success

The first three years of the Toronto DTC has demonstrated that program retention rates are directly related to how long a participant stays engaged in treatment. The retention rates for the Toronto DTC range from 36.6% after thirty days to 51.4% after ninety days.

The success of DTCs can be measured not only in terms of dramatic reductions in criminal behaviour by those engaged in the program but also by a significant reduction in drug use. These positive developments benefit not only the criminal justice domain, but spill into the health field. Participants in DTCs demonstrate a significant improvement in their physical and mental health resulting in cost savings to the health care system. These success factors apply not only to "graduates" but also to those who while they are unable to complete the program are often able to secure employment and stable housing, in addition to reducing their drug use and ending their criminal activities.

For More Information:

Duty Counsel's Office
(416) 594-9300

Crown Prosecutor's Office
(416) 973-9752
(416) 954-9041

Toronto Drug Treatment Court Website
www.torontodrugtreatmentcourt.ca

The TDTC is a pilot demonstration project funded by the Government of Canada's National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention.

Last updated: 2003-06-04



[Important Notices](#)