

Performance Measurement and Program Evaluation For Drug Courts

Fred L. Cheesman II, Ph.D.

The National Center for State Courts



Module 3: Process Evaluation

- A case study, non-experimental, descriptive, and investigative
- Generally uses simple statistical measures such as percentages, measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), and cross-tabulation analysis



Process Evaluation

- Addresses whether the program was implemented and is providing services as intended
- Allows an assessment of the reasons for successful or unsuccessful performance, and provides information for potential replication



Process Evaluation

- Focuses on how a program was implemented and operates
 - **Program History**: Identifies procedures undertaken and the decisions made in developing the program including key actors
 - **Program Operation**: Describes how the program operates, the services it delivers, and the functions it carries out. Provides an analysis of output data
 - **Target Population**: Provides a “snapshot” of the program and its participants that is compared to the intended target population



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

1. How was the program developed?
 - Who was involved?
 - What were their aims and agendas?
 - How and why were initial decisions governing the policies and procedures of the drug court made?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.) (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

2. What are the policies and procedures of the drug court?
- How have they changed over time and why?
 - Are there policies governing:
 - The criteria used to determine eligibility?
 - When referrals to drug court occur?
 - Program requirements?
 - When sanctions may be applied?
 - Is there a drug court manual?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.) (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

3. What is the size and nature of the total population eligible for drug court?
 - How are screening and referral functions carried out?
 - How many people are referred to drug court?
 - How many are accepted, and why are some rejected?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

(Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

4. What are the characteristics of the program participants, in terms of their:
 - demographics,
 - substance abuse problems,
 - and criminal histories?

5. What are the characteristics of available treatment interventions? What treatment and other services are participants getting?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.) (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

6. What:

- are the major case processing steps?
- happens to participants in drug court?
- is their treatment regimen?
- is the means for monitoring progress (e.g., urinalysis test results, point accumulations)?
- happens when there is back sliding or a relapse?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

(Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

7. Who are the staff and what are their responsibilities?
8. What is the drug court's annual budget and sources of funds?
9. How is the drug court governed?
 - Is there an advisory board or governing task force; if so, who serves and what are their responsibilities?
 - What are the roles of the judge, prosecutor, and defense counsel?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

(Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

10. What is the extent of coordination and collaboration with other agencies such as probation, parole, treatment providers, social services, etc. What information is routinely made available to and/or required by these agencies?
11. What local conditions (court caseloads, community attitudes, local culture, etc.) affect the drug court?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.) (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

12. How long do participants stay in the drug court?
 - Who drops out, at what point, and why?
 - How many participants (number and percentage, BJA), with what characteristics, graduate from drug court?

13. What percentage of drug court clients are arrested while in the program and what are their charges (BJA)?



Drug Court Process Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

(Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

- Process evaluations should address compliance with Office of Justice Programs' 10 Key Components of a Drug Court
- Performance benchmarks are provided for each key component



Key Component #3

Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program

Performance Benchmarks:

1. Eligibility screening is based on established written criteria. Criminal justice officials or others (e.g., pretrial services, probation, TASC) are designated to screen cases and identify potential drug court participants



Key Component #3 (Cont.)

Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program

Performance Benchmarks:

2. Eligible participants for drug court are promptly advised about program requirements and the relative merits of participating
3. Trained professionals screen drug court-eligible individuals for alcohol or drug problems and suitability for treatment



Key Component #3 (Cont.)

Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program

Performance Benchmarks:

4. Initial appearance before the drug court judge occurs immediately after arrest or apprehension to ensure program participation
5. Court requires that eligible participants enroll in AOD treatment services immediately



Using the Results of the Process Evaluation

- Have all the intended services been provided?
- Have the services been provided as intended?
- What services not currently provided should be added to the program?



Using the Results of the Process Evaluation

- Did the program reach the intended “target” population?
- Did the program widen the “net” of defendants who were supervised by the court or who received criminal justice sanctions (targeting)?
- What problems were encountered in program implementation, operation, and performance?
- How were these problems resolved?

