

Mohave County Probation's  
Adult Recovery Court  
Program is more effective and  
efficient at reducing  
recidivism than incarceration.  
It restores lives, promotes  
public safety, and strengthens  
communities.

## MOHAVE COUNTY ADULT RECOVERY COURT

Statistical Analysis  
September 2023

Hon. Rick A. Williams  
Mohave County Superior Court

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# Mohave County Adult Recovery Court Statistical Report September 2023

## An Overview

The first treatment court was launched in 1989 in Miami-Dade County, Florida as a response to the “war on drugs” and the large percentage of individuals being processed through the criminal justice system that had (1) a substance use disorder that contributed to criminal behavior; (2) a history of cycling through the criminal justice system one or more times previously; and (3) had been charged with non-violent crimes. The “traditional” criminal justice system was ineffective at reducing recidivism among this population. Over time, treatment courts have proven to be an effective way to intervene in the lives of these individuals and stop the ‘revolving door’ of the criminal justice system.

The Mohave County Adult Recovery Court (“ARC”) is a post-conviction treatment court whose participants are evaluated as a moderate-to-high risk of recidivism, and in moderate-to-high need of therapeutic services. ARC connects its participants with appropriate treatment services, taking into account the severity of the participant’s substance use disorder and mental and behavioral health needs. ARC promotes therapeutic interventions while holding participants accountable for their behaviors.

ARC started as a pilot program in Kingman in January 2012. Over time, the ARC program has expanded and now operates in Kingman, Bullhead City, and Lake Havasu City. ARC can accommodate up to 60-75 participants total, and averages approximately 45-55 clients at any given time. Currently, ARC has 48 participants.

Since January 2012, ARC has worked with 542 participants. During this time, 145 participants have successfully completed the program, resulting in a **27% graduation rate**. This is substantially lower than the national average, which is 56.5%.<sup>1</sup>

## Recidivism

The primary metric to determine the success of a treatment court is the recidivism rate. Of our 145 graduates, 30 have reoffended resulting in a subsequent misdemeanor or felony conviction.<sup>2</sup> The data reveals that **79% of our ARC participants have**

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<sup>1</sup> [2022 Painting the Current Picture – Adult Drug Courts Brief by National Drug Court Resource Center - Issuu](#)

<sup>2</sup> Data is compiled using AJACS and the Arizona Supreme Court’s public case access portal at [www.azcourts.gov](http://www.azcourts.gov). Results do not include charges that were filed but dismissed, offenses committed outside Arizona, or minor traffic infractions.

**remained crime free** since program completion. Put another way, ARC has an overall recidivism rate of 23%, which is significantly lower than the national average of 38%.<sup>3</sup>

Most of ARC’s participants enter the program after failing to comply with their terms and conditions of standard probation supervision. For many participants, the ARC program is an alternative to revocation proceedings followed by a prison sentence. As such, a comparison of recidivism rates for ARC and the Arizona Department of Corrections (“DOC”) deserves mention.

DOC calculates its recidivism rate based on the number of inmates that are re-incarcerated after committing a new felony offense within 3 years of release.<sup>4</sup> According to the Arizona Dept. of Corrections Rehabilitation & Reentry, Arizona DOC’s 3-year recidivism rate is 36.3%. By contrast, only 10 of ARC’s graduates committed a new felony offense within three years of program completion, resulting in **a 7% recidivism rate**. The data suggests that ARC is more effective at reducing recidivism – and thereby promoting and improving public safety – than imprisonment.

### **Cost Savings**

Another metric for determining the efficacy of treatment courts is cost savings compared to incarceration costs. In 2020, DOC estimated the annual average cost of incarceration as \$27,291 per inmate.<sup>5</sup> Multiplying this annual cost with the 48 participants we currently have in the program results in an incarceration cost of more than \$1.3 million per year.

ARC requires the involvement of a judicial officer, a treatment coordinator, three probation officers, and contract defense counsel.<sup>6</sup> The estimated annual costs are as follows:

Judicial Officer:	\$ 55,500 <sup>7</sup>
Treatment Coordinator/Probation:	\$199,312 <sup>8</sup>
Defense Counsel:	<u>\$ 23,979<sup>9</sup></u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$278,791</b>

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<sup>3</sup> [2022 Painting the Current Picture – Adult Drug Courts Brief by National Drug Court Resource Center - Issuu](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ADCRR 2-Pager 7.15.22 \(az.gov\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [adcr-percaptopreport\\_fy2020-final.pdf \(az.gov\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> An analysis of each treatment provider team member’s salary and their time invested in the ARC program might be necessary to evaluate the total estimated cost of the ARC program. This information is unavailable and so this report is intended to illustrate estimated costs to the criminal justice system only.

<sup>7</sup> This is based on an annual judicial salary of \$185,000, effective 1/1/24. 30% of each work week is devoted to ARC.

<sup>8</sup> Based on FY2022-2023 data provided by the Mohave County Adult Probation Department

<sup>9</sup> Based on FY2022-2023 data from the Office of Indigent Defense Services

The current average investment of court and probation resources for each ARC client is **\$5,808 per year**, which is substantially lower than the costs of incarceration.

ARC also tracks the number of drug-free babies delivered by participants. Since January 2012, ARC participants have given birth to **27 drug-free babies**. This results in a considerable impact to our community when considering the following:

- According to the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics, the cost of treatment for infants in US hospitals born exposed to opiates had climbed to \$572.7 million by 2016.<sup>10</sup>
- After adjusting for inflation, the average cost of a hospital stay for a substance-exposed newborn was \$7,800, nearly 7 times greater than other newborn stays in 2020.<sup>11</sup>
- According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the cost to society of one drug-exposed baby is \$750,000 by the age of 18.<sup>12</sup>

There are other benefits to ARC worth mentioning. ARC Participants perform community restitution or volunteerism hours. They resolve warrants and address court-ordered financial obligations. Participants obtain high school diplomas, maintain employment, and pay taxes. They have opportunities to earn trade certifications or college credits to increase their independence and preserve long-term recovery. Participants address what are often long-neglected medical and dental needs, reducing the likelihood of catastrophic and expensive medical issues down the road.

### **Going Forward**

Maintaining current data will enable ARC to analyze trends regarding graduation rates, recidivism rates, and cost savings going forward. For instance, we can determine if these rates are impacted by changes to ARC policies or available services, or events like the COVID-19 pandemic or Fentanyl epidemic. Maintaining and analyzing data on a regular basis will ensure that Mohave County's ARC continues to address the substance use disorders of criminal justice-involved people, promote public safety, and strengthen our communities, as effectively and efficiently as possible.

### **Acknowledgements**

The success of the Mohave County Adult Recovery Program would not be possible without the support of Presiding Judge Steve Moss and the Mohave County Superior Court, the leadership of Adult Probation Chief Alan Palomino, and the tireless efforts of

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<sup>10</sup> [Hospital costs for treating newborns in opioid withdrawal jumped to \\$572.7 million | CNN](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Data and Statistics About Opioid Use During Pregnancy \(cdc.gov\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Friday's letters: Drug Free Babies, traffic, school costs, Roberts \(heraldtribune.com\)](#)

Treatment Coordinator Susan Davidson and assigned recovery court officers Stefanie Carroll, Roman Cuevas, and Sarah Gonzales.

This program and its success would not be possible without the expertise and support of our community partners:

Arizona Dept. of Child Safety  
AZ@WORK  
Catholic Charities  
Community Medical Services  
Mohave County Dept. of Health  
Mohave Mental Health, Inc.  
Oxford House  
Rivyve  
Southwest Behavioral Health Services  
The Next Step  
Westcare

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Susan Davidson and Cassie Wheaton, my Judicial Assistant, for their assistance in compiling the data that made this report possible.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Adult Recovery Court program or the information contained in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at [riwilliams@courts.az.gov](mailto:riwilliams@courts.az.gov).

Sincerely,

Rick A. Williams  
Treatment Court Judge  
Mohave County Superior Court