



## KING COUNTY DRUG DIVERSION COURT SERVICES

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### King County Drug Diversion Court (KCDDC)

#### Who is eligible?

Adults charged with specific felony property (e.g. vehicle theft or burglary) and other drug-related crimes in King County Superior Court can choose Drug Court as an alternative to mainstream case processing. [KCDDC Eligibility Criteria](#) is agreed by the KCDDC Executive Committee and published on the KCDDC website. Individuals charged solely with drug possession are handled at the District or Municipal Court level instead.

**KCDDC is designed to support success for individuals with the most significant challenges.**

1. **KCDDC provides comprehensive resources to remove barriers to treatment access and engagement.** Most participants who enter KCDDC are experiencing homelessness, are unemployed, and are using substances daily. Resources and case management are available on a drop-in basis in an office attached to the KCDDC courtroom in the King County Courthouse.

From day one, drug court participants can gain access to these services:

- Case management
  - Peer support available 365 days a year
  - 12 months of transitional housing
  - Substance use disorder and mental health treatment (including inpatient, outpatient and medications for opioid use disorder)
  - ORCA bus pass
  - Cell phone
  - Basic clothing and hygiene supplies
  - Emergency food bags
  - Assistance obtaining WA State ID
  - Eyeglasses
  - Education and employment support
  - Medicaid enrollment and medical/dental referrals
  - Driver relicensing assistance
  - Narcan for opioid overdose reversal
  - Family and couples counseling if interested
  - Parenting support
2. **KCDDC provides a high level of structure, monitoring, accountability, and support to effectively address substance use disorder.** KCDDC's design is based on 30 years of national research (the Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards) about how to operate an effective Drug Court. KCDDC has clear requirements including frequent, random urinalysis drug testing, treatment attendance, community service hours, and in order to graduate, engagement in at

least 20 hours per week of a productive activity such as employment. The court and case managers provide monitoring, support, and encouragement. Participants earn praise and tangible incentives to reinforce their effort and recognize their accomplishments. If they are out of compliance, they receive a sanction from the court to help them get back on track. KCDDC sanctions and incentives are based on science and national best practice recommendations. Sanctions include a wide range of consequences aside from jail that encourage ownership and accountability. KCDDC's standard adult track is a minimum 10-month program, with the average participant completing in 16 months. Participants must demonstrate substantial periods of abstinence and compliance and meet specific milestones to progress through the program phases and successfully graduate. With the unique mix of support and accountability that KCDDC provides, the majority of participants who opt in to KCDDC graduate and when they do, they earn a felony dismissal.

3. **KCDDC works to improve public safety and prevent future crime.** When participants enter KCDDC, the behavior they are engaging in to finance their addiction (such as vehicle theft and burglary) is negatively impacting others in the community. KCDDC helps participants stop using drugs/alcohol and stop committing crimes associated with their addiction. KCDDC has been shown to reduce recidivism, decrease substance use, decrease homelessness, and increase employment. **90% of KCDDC participants have no new felonies at 36-month follow-up** (and 73% have no new crimes at any level, including no new misdemeanors) per Washington state DSHS analysis. That is not just KCDDC graduates – it is all participants. KCDDC has a beneficial impact on recidivism whether or not a participant graduates. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) classifies drug courts as an evidence-based intervention for reducing crime and concludes drug courts produce a return on investment 100% of the time.
4. **The life changes that participants make in KCDDC have positive ripple effect on their families and communities.** Recidivism statistics demonstrate that KCDDC works, but what is not captured in the data are the powerful personal stories of KCDDC participants and their families and children whose lives have been transformed by their drug court participation. Many KCDDC participants are parents of minor children. In this context, KCDDC has an upstream impact, helping to break what is often a generational cycle of substance use and criminal legal involvement. When parents successfully graduate from KCDDC, the results are life-changing for both them and their children. Drug courts prevent adverse childhood experiences associated with parental substance use, parental incarceration, and foster care. There are countless ways in which KCDDC participants and graduates give back to our community. Many become substance use disorder counselors, peer specialists, or other service-oriented professionals. Others give back in more personal ways such as volunteering in their children's schools, helping neighbors, becoming a sponsor, or giving support and encouragement to others seeking recovery.
5. **Victims receive compensation for the restitution they are owed.** In 2023, with strong support from the KC Executive and KC Council, KCDDC implemented a Drug Court Restitution Fund. Victims receive up to \$7,500 for court ordered restitution as a participant progresses through the KCDDC program phases. The Restitution Fund allows victims to be reimbursed more fully and more quickly than they would typically be without the assistance of the Fund. At the same time, the Fund removes barriers for drug court participants, allowing them to focus on their recovery and ensuring financial obligations will not prevent successful program completion.

More information is available on the [KCDDC website](#).