



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUSTICE PROGRAMS OFFICE

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project

**Good Beginnings:
Development and Maintenance of
Drug Court Alumni Groups**

Prepared by:

**Elizabeth Costello
Robyn Johnson**

March 2002

This report was prepared by the Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University, Washington, D.C. This project is supported by Grant No. 98-NU-VX-K018, awarded by the Drug Courts Program Office, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice to American University. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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PART ONE:

OVERVIEW

I. Introduction

Drug court graduations might more appropriately be termed “commencements.” For as much as these ceremonies mark the successful completion of a rigorous treatment program, they also signal a beginning for the graduates they honor: new lives as sober, crime-free members of society. Recovery is a lifelong condition, one that can only be maintained -- especially in its early stages -- with a great deal of support.

In recognition of this fact, many drug courts have formed alumni groups and many other drug courts have expressed an interest in doing so. Alumni groups can provide drug court graduates an opportunity to obtain support for sober living, a chance to do the service work that can be a key to ongoing recovery, and a way to stay connected to the organization that helped them get their start on the road to sobriety.

In response to numerous requests for information from drug court programs for guidance in starting and sustaining an alumni group, the Office of Justice Programs’ Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University (DCCTAP) compiled information from existing drug court alumni programs on topics of most frequent interest. What follows is a compilation of information provided by over 50 drug court programs regarding their alumni activities: organization; logistics; activities; enrollment; funding; and other issues relevant to drug court alumni associations.¹ The report also includes discussion of unanticipated issues encountered as well as plans for improvement of alumni activities in the future. In addition, Section VII provides a summary of advice existing alumni programs offer to drug court colleagues contemplating development of alumni program components.

The drug court alumni programs reported represent drug courts from all parts of the United States, though nearly half are situated in California and New York. There is also considerable variety in the length of time the alumni groups connected to the responding drug courts have been in existence. The oldest is the alumni association from the Clark County, Nevada, Drug Court in Las Vegas, Nevada, which was implemented in October 1993; the newest, which was formed in October 2001, is the North Kentucky Drug Court alumni group in Covington, Kentucky. The numbers of graduates participating in these programs also varies, as does the point in time in which they first become involved with alumni activities (See Chart II-1.)

Several drug courts have conducted evaluations of the impact of alumni activities on recidivism and relapse. The results of these evaluations have reinforced the positive role that alumni groups can play in helping graduates stay sober. (See Chart II-15).

There is no “right” way to operate a drug court alumni group; a group’s particular characteristics will potentially depend upon the size, location, and resources of the drug court

¹ This report reflects responses to a June 2001 survey conducted by the DCCTAP of drug court programs which indicated they had alumni activities underway as well as a variety of additional materials compiled by the DCCTAP relating to drug court alumni activities.

itself. Therefore, this document is not intended to serve as a “how-to” manual for instituting and maintaining a drug court alumni association. Rather, it is a snapshot of the various activities and issues drug court alumni groups are currently addressing, strategies they have found useful, and their plans for improvement. It is presented in the hope that the experiences of those jurisdictions that have launched drug court alumni groups will prove beneficial to those who seek to do so.

The following is a summary of the information drug court alumni programs provided. Detailed responses to specific issues are provided in a series of charts in Part Two. In addition, Part III, “Frequently Asked Questions” , provides responses from representatives of the reporting programs to common questions raised regarding drug court alumni activities. Part IV provides examples of materials published by drug court programs. A list of the individuals who coordinate the activities of the drug court alumni associations represented in this report is included in the Appendix.

II. Formation and Organization

A. Catalyst for Formation

Most (80%) drug court alumni associations formed for the purpose of providing a support network and/or aftercare service for alumni. Approximately 30% of the current programs were established at the initiative of the alumni; an additional 25% were developed by the treatment providers. Frequently, alumni and treatment providers worked jointly to establish the program. In one program (Josephine Co., Oregon), the initial catalyst for the alumni group was a recovering addict who was not a drug court participant. (See Chart II-3).

B. Funding Sources

Approximately 30% of the responding programs indicated that no special funds or existing positions had been designated to provide support for the alumni program activities. Several programs, however, expected resources to be allocated shortly. One third of the programs rely on alumni volunteers for services and contributions to support alumni activities; approximately one quarter of the programs also receive support from the treatment agency. Many programs are tapping into a wide variety of other funding sources to support drug court alumni activities, including: participant fees; donations from community fundraisers; contributions from drug court team members; and contributions from local vendors. For a number of years, the San Joaquin Co. Drug Court Alumni Association in Stockton, California, has received a donation from Kaiser Permanente, which includes funds for an alumni coordinator. (See Chart II-6).

C. Designated Alumni Activity Coordinators

Slightly over half (53%) of the responding programs have a designated alumni activity coordinator and several are anticipating one being designated. For two of these programs, the alumni coordinator is an alumni volunteer. Services for the alumni coordinator for the remaining programs is generally paid through the court or treatment agency and generally spends between 5 – 25% time on alumni activities. For several of the older and/or larger programs, however – Rochester, for example – the coordinator spends considerably more time on alumni-related activities, including newsletter preparation, grant writing, coordination of community projects, and alumni outreach. (See Chart II-6).

III. Alumni Group Structure and Logistics

A. Alumni Program Organization

Most of the responding drug courts describe their alumni groups as formal organizations that hold regular meetings. In most cases, drug court staff members and/or alumni volunteers undertake the responsibility for organizing and facilitating the meetings. (See Chart II-2.) Meeting agendas are typically put together by those charged with organizing the meeting, or are based on suggestions from group members. (See Charts II-8 and II-9.) There is a general consensus that the alumni group should have a significant amount of autonomy, so that the group members feel a sense of ownership and are therefore more likely to participate regularly. The drug court can often support the group, however, by designating a staff person to serve as liaison and, if possible, providing office space where the alumni group can work and store files and other materials. (See Section II-6.)

B. Meeting Organization and Content

Approximately half of the responding drug courts report that their alumni group meetings are based on an agenda. (See Chart II-9.) Meeting topics in most programs include discussion of drug court issues and alumni involvement. Approximately one third of the programs invite guest speakers from time to time. Almost half of the groups keep meeting minutes. In addition, approximately one third of the alumni groups produce a newsletter, and almost all maintain lists of alumni addresses and telephone numbers. (See Chart II-5.)

C. Meeting Places and Times

Responses to the survey indicate that alumni group meetings are held in a variety of venues. By far, the most common location in which alumni groups meet is at a treatment agency connected with the drug court; that is the case in over half of the drug courts. Other locations include: the courthouse; local restaurant; alumni's homes; local community center; local church; probation department; and public library. (See Chart II-11.)

The most common times for alumni association meetings appear to be weekday evenings, although 15% meet on weekday days. These meetings most often occur on a monthly basis, a frequency that doesn't crowd participants' schedules but is still often enough to sustain member interest. (See Chart II-12.)

IV. Alumni Group Materials and Activities

A. Materials Developed

The survey responses describe a host of materials developed by alumni groups that ranges from newsletters and brochures to logos, T-shirts, videotapes, a mentoring program, graduation handouts, and even a special drug court medallion that is distributed to graduates of the Camden County Drug Court in Camden, New Jersey. (See Section II-7.)

B. Activities Conducted and Services Provided

Respondents were presented with a menu of possible activities and services that might be provided to alumni and requested to indicate which of these activities their program conducted and which appeared to attract the greatest and fewest numbers of alumni.

Most drug court alumni groups sponsor activities such as informal get-togethers, family picnics, and holiday parties. As might be expected, these social functions tend to attract the greatest number of participants. In addition, alumni groups often provide services to the drug court itself by mentoring new drug court clients, acting as 12-step sponsors, arranging AA/NA meetings, speaking at graduations, and sitting on relapse prevention panels. In several programs, alumni are available to talk with participants who are having difficulty with the program. Members of drug court alumni associations can also “give back” to the community at large by, for example, addressing public school students on the topic of substance use and abuse. A summary of the range of activities conducted by alumni associations is provided below with an indication of those activities which appear to attract the most/fewest alumni participation. (See also Chart II-13 (a-e) for more detailed information on specific activities conducted by the responding programs.)

The most frequently conducted alumni activities include: informal get-togethers; periodic meetings; picnics; fundraising for community causes; and relapse prevention services. The activities which appear to attract the greatest number of alumni are: periodic meetings; picnics; and holiday parties.

The following is a summary of the frequency with which drug court alumni associations are conducting various activities and services and the relative interest alumni appear to express in them.

Chart I-1: Alumni Activities and Services: Frequency Reported

Activity/Service	Not Conducted	Not Currently Conducted but plan to conduct	Conducted	Attract Greatest no. of alumni	Attract Fewest no. of alumni	Neither positive nor negative impact on alumni involvement
Informal get-togethers for alumni	25%	5%	56%	7%		7%
Periodic meetings	8%	5%	63%	21%	3%	--
Picnics for alumni and families	15%	15%	51%	19%	-	-
Holiday parties	23%	23%	28%	23%	3%	-
Alumni newsletter	36%	31%	22%	8%	-	3%
Mentoring to new alumni	20%	25%	40%	10%	5%	-
Mentoring to drug court participants	9%	21%	43%	21%	3%	3%
Networking opportunities for alumni	32%	24%	34%	5%	5%	-
Networking opportunities for drug court participants	37%	22%	32%	7%	-	2%
Representing drug court program at community functions	19%	22%	36%	14%	7%	2%
Providing speakers on drug court issues	17%	22%	35%	13%	5%	-
Resume preparation for alumni	73%	8%	24%	-	3%	-
Resume preparation for drug court participants	60%	8%	18%	-	3%	-
Job readiness preparation for alumni	71%	5%	35%	-	-	5%
Job readiness preparation for drug court participants	55%	13%	24%	3%	5%	-
Job placement opportunities for alumni	55%	8%	31%	3%	-	5%
Job placement for opportunities for current participants	53%	26%	18%	2%	2%	2%
Fundraising for drug court	50%	25%	18%	2%	2%	2%
Fundraising for other community causes	63%	25%	83%	-	2%	2%
Educational programs for local schools	55	28%	13%	2%	2%	-
Relapse prevention service for alumni	10%	26%	57%	10%	3%	-
Relapse prevention services for drug court participants	26%	13%	49%	10%	-	2%
Emergency hotline services for alumni	54%	10%	28%	5%	-	3%
Emergency hotline services for drug court participants	57%	11%	22%	5%	-	3%
Volunteer service for the drug court (please describe)	39%	10%	39%	7%	-	5%
Community service activities	39%	17%	30%	8%	3%	3%
Special functions conducted	43%	7%	36%	14%	-	-
Other	100%	-	-	-	-	-

C. Fundraising

Fundraising is yet another activity in which some drug court alumni groups engage. The purposes of the fundraising activities alumni associations have engaged in has generally been for drug court (graduation, etc.) and alumni group functions. (See Charts II-2 and II-8.)

D. Participant Dues

None of the alumni associations that responded to the survey requires dues, though voluntary donations from members are accepted. And, though some survey respondents indicated that their alumni groups had received monies from community organizations and grants, many reported that they were not aware of any outside sources of funds for drug court alumni groups. (See Chart II-6 and II-7.)

E. Administrative Responsibility for Funds Collected

Most programs have not dealt with the issue of creating a formal structure for collecting and depositing funds. Those programs that collect funds deposit them in a special account maintained by either the organization or the designated alumni representative. (See Chart II-7.)

V. Attracting and Retaining Participants

A. Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Participants

One of the most difficult tasks for any newly formed drug court alumni association is attracting new members and retaining current ones. The DCCTAP survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had found any one or more of various listed strategies effective in attracting alumni to alumni activities. Forty-four programs submitted a response to the question, noting the utility of these various strategies as follows:

Alumni telephoning other alumni	75%
Alumni arranging transportation for other alumni	52%
Contact of drug court judge with alumni group	45%
Employing drug court alumni to coordinate alumni activities	27%
Special ceremonies recognizing alumni	30%

“Special ceremonies” have included recognizing alumni at drug court graduations, an alumni picnic, an annual dinner, and a bar-be-que. (See Charts II-13 (a-e).)

A. Strategies for Increasing Alumni Participation

Survey respondents were also asked to share effective strategies for increasing membership in the alumni group. The most oft-cited strategies involved word-of-mouth advertising by current members and having frequent activities that include refreshments. Other strategies were persistence in contacting alumni, publicizing events, and mandating participation for soon-to-be graduates. (See Section II-14.)

VI. The Role of the Drug Court Judge

The drug court judge's involvement with the alumni group naturally varies from program to program and judge to judge. Of the 38 survey respondents who addressed the question of the extent of the judge's participation, almost half (47%) indicated that the judge was involved in the formation of the alumni group, and 26% stated that the judge plays a role in the conduct of alumni activities. In five (13%) of the responding programs, the judge attends all alumni functions. Fifteen programs (40%) stated that the judge attends some events, but only four (10%) programs reported that the judge sits in on some alumni group meetings.

The consensus among survey respondents appears to be that the judge should be invited and encouraged to participate in alumni group activities, but that the absence of judicial involvement should not affect the group's operations. (See Section II-4(a) and (b).)

VII. Problems Encountered and Their Resolutions

The DCCTAP survey asked respondents to describe the most serious problems they had encountered in developing and sustaining their alumni organizations and how these problems were resolved. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate any unanticipated issues that had arisen and how those were addressed. Their answers appear in the three charts that follow.

A. Problems Encountered in Developing the Alumni Association and Their Resolution

The most frequent problems noted were: getting participants to attend alumni activities, maintaining contact with graduates, including updated contact information. Strategies for addressing these issues included: making attendance at alumni events a required component of drug court participation; publishing a newsletter; and involving alumni in drug court program activities. For most programs, these issues haven't been fully addressed but, rather, are a topic warranting continued attention.

Chart I-1: Most Serious Problems Encountered in Developing Alumni Association and Strategies for Resolving Them

State	City	Court Name	Most Serious Problems Encountered in Developing Alumni Association	Strategies For Resolving Them
AZ	Yuma	Adult Drug Court	Attendance	Made it mandatory for phase III and IV
CA	Richmond	Supervised Treatment and Recovery	Keeping it going	Need to choose someone to monitor
CA	El Monte	Rio Hondo	Alumni vs. Staff: who is in charge?	By-laws
CA	Santa Ana	Central Justice Center	Funding	--
CA	Riverside	Superior Court for the County of Riverside	Structure and by-laws are necessary. Make sure to follow through with activities.	Establish meeting times to meet the needs of the board members.
CA	El Cajon	East County Drug Court	Commitment	Include current drug court upper phase clients
CA	Vista	North County Drug Court	Initially, getting it off the ground.	More alumni meetings were scheduled in order to give them more time to get organized.

State	City	Court Name	Most Serious Problems Encountered in Developing Alumni Association	Strategies For Resolving Them
CA	Stockton	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	Forming it was not a problem, getting structure and a format in place was.	We used the by-laws from the LA County Drug Court Alumni Association to give us structure. Getting materials from other drug courts is very helpful.
CA	Big Bear Lake	Big Bear Lake Superior Court		Hired alumni coordinator & began newsletter
IL	Peoria	Peoria County Drug Court	Financial issues; engaging clients	Treatment center assists alumni group financially until they can be self-supporting.
IN	Fort Wayne	Allen County Drug Court	Getting the word out to past graduates and current program participants.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mail letters. 2. Have alumni speak at graduation. 3. TV interviews of alumni
IN	Indianapolis	Marion County Drug Treatment Diversion Program	Maintaining contact with graduates - change of address/phone	
KY	Lexington	Fayette Drug Court	Attendance	Court ordered attendance
KY	Covington	N. Kentucky Drug Court	Graduates hopefully go on with their lives & attend AA/NA groups regularly	Keep in touch
KY	Bowling Green	Warren County Drug Court		Encouraging those few that a lot of work will fall on them in the beginning
NJ	Camden	Camden County Drug Court	Getting people interested in attending after Drug Court is over	We built attendance into treatment phases in order for them to be interested early
NV	Las Vegas	Clark Co. Nevada Drug Court	Getting new graduates from the program to make a commitment to get involved on a consistent basis.	This has not yet been resolved but we are working on it.
NV	Reno	2nd Judicial District Court	Getting alumni to participate; however, our program is so new we wait patiently for the momentum to grow	Keeping at it

State	City	Court Name	Most Serious Problems Encountered in Developing Alumni Association	Strategies For Resolving Them
NY	Lackawanna	Lackawanna City Court Drug Court	Employment obligations; family obligations w/ability to attend regularly	Different groups of individuals must meet different days/times
NY	Syracuse	Syracuse Community Treatment Court	Keeping grads interested, keeping in contact	Unresolved
OH	Hamilton	Butler Co. Drug Ct	Getting a care group together after graduating	Engaging clients before program completion.
OH	Cleveland	Cleveland Municipal Court	Getting people to come to meetings	Still working on it
OH	Akron	Akron Municipal Court	Participation--clients seem interested at graduation, however they do not return for Alumni meetings	We currently have alumni calling past graduates. We also try to have past graduates speak at graduations.
OR	Roseburg	Douglas County Drug Court	Developing was easy-- finding the time and money to sustain it is more difficult.	
OR	Grants Pass	Josephine County Drug Court	Lack of interest, lack of leadership skills, graduates who get tired and move on. Individuals who are working are not available to attend.	Not resolved.
OR	Portland	Multnomah County Circuit Court	Attendance; keeping number of participants increasing	Hopefully the membership will help
TX	Austin	Travis County Drug Court	Alumni being more self-motivated and lack of leadership.	Not resolved; may vote people into office.
UT	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake County Third District Drug Court	Finding graduates who have the time and motivation to be involved and devoting staff time to organization and conducting meetings.	Outreach efforts to graduates. Finding staff to volunteer to attend meetings.
WA	Olympia	Thurston County Drug Court Program	Eliciting on-going interest	Persevering, marketing, contacting by phone, mail

B. Problems Encountered in Sustaining the Alumni Association and Strategies for Resolving Them

Most respondents noted that the same problems encountered in forming the alumni association continued once it was formed. Sustaining the alumni association has therefore required continual efforts to promote attendance and “new recruits.” Other issues encountered, however, related to scheduling meetings and other events convenient for alumni and developing a stable, consistent program of alumni activities. Strategies for addressing these issues have included: continual telephone and other contact with alumni; assigning alumni various responsibilities consistent with their interests (e.g., job bank, entertainment, mentoring, etc.); and publicizing a regular schedule of meetings. However, most programs continue to address these issues.

Chart I-2: Problems Encountered in Sustaining the Alumni Association and Strategies for Resolving Them

State	City	Court Name	Most Serious Problems Encountered in Sustaining Alumni Association	Strategies for Resolving Them
CA	El Monte	Rio Hondo	Attendees	Initially counselor and court order – now, voluntary
CA	Santa Ana	Central Justice Center	Funding	--
CA	Riverside	Superior Court for County of Riverside	Alumni attend as after-care	Attendance has not been an issue
CA	Vista	North County Drug Court	Getting new recruits.	All members of the team encouraging attendance as often as possible.
CA	Stockton	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	Alumni involvement--must have chosen not to get involved in this group either by choice or they cannot due to work and/or family commitments.	Not resolved - Still have a low number of active participation by alumni. We've added more events, fundraisers and social activities with slight increase only.
ID	Boise	Ada County Drug Court	Regular attendance	Give alumni a job. Entertainment committee. Alumni panel. Activities, etc. Mentoring.
IL	Peoria	Peoria County Drug Court	Clients get 2-3 years of sobriety and start to live more productive lives and distance themselves from Drug Court.	Continue to encourage and remind clients.
IN	Fort Wayne	Allen County Drug Court	Increase attendance	Send out a reminder letter

State	City	Court Name	Most Serious Problems Encountered in Sustaining Alumni Association	Strategies for Resolving Them
IN	Indianapolis	Marion County Drug Treatment Diversion Program	Meeting scheduling needs of alumni; sustaining interest	
KY	Lexington	Fayette Drug Court	Attendance	Court ordered attendance
NJ	Camden	Camden County Drug Court	Getting people interested in attending after drug court is over	We have tried to encourage them to get involved early.
NV	Las Vegas	Clark Co. Nevada Drug Court		Not yet resolved
NV	Reno	2nd Judicial District Court	The various programs we are developing and the businesses that will grow from our efforts will sustain growth	
NY	Rochester	Rochester Drug Treatment Court	Very hard to recruit new members & get consistent attendance.	Many individual contacts, phone calls.
NY	Syracuse	Syracuse Community Treatment Court	Time and personnel to monitor and devote to it.	Unresolved.
NY	Brooklyn	Brooklyn Treatment Court	Getting members to make and keep a commitment to attend meetings on a regular basis.	On-going
OR	Roseburg	Douglas County Drug Court	It has been difficult and sporadic for our group, due to the lack of coordinator time in developing activities.	
OR	Portland	Multnomah County Circuit Court	Attendance; keeping number of participants increasing	Staff involvement; I act as support and contact staff to organize/facilitate.
TX	Austin	Travis County Drug Court	Attendance	Still working on it.
UT	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake County Third District Drug Court	Keeping a stable core of participants.	Not really resolved, but in Phase III of program attendance at one alumni group meeting was required.
WA	Olympia	Thurston County Drug Court Program		Have weekly meetings at least initially to create continuity.

C. Unanticipated Issues and Their Resolution

Among the unanticipated issues noted by respondents that had arisen since their drug court alumni associations were formed have included: having initial leaders move on to other activities; needing knowledge of how to conduct meetings and oversee an organization; determining who qualifies to be a member of the alumni association; and sustaining the momentum for the organization. The most frequent strategies for addressing these have included: developing by-laws and/or other rules to apply to association functions and continual recruiting.

Chart I-3: Unanticipated Issues and Their Resolution

State	City	Court Name	Unanticipated issues Emerging since Drug Court Alumni Association was first Developed	Strategies for Resolving Them
CA	Napa	Napa County Drug Court	How to run group.	Time
CA	Santa Ana	Central Justice Center	None	
CA	Riverside	Superior Court of the County of Riverside	Board members improving their lives by education and careers cut down on involvement and resulted in unequal participation with members	Recruiting volunteers, dictating responsibilities
CA	El Cajon	East County Drug Court	There are none at this point	
CA	Stockton	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	Low attendance; some apathy and indifference on the part of a few attendees; elected officers not following through with their duties.	Not all is resolved yet --Still working on increasing membership and maintaining good relations among members and officers.
CA	Big Bear Lake	Big Bear Lake Superior Court	Who can be a member?	Clarified in by-laws
ID	Boise	Ada County Drug Court	Some alumni discussing how they had gotten away with things during the drug court program.	Resolved with staff and other alumni.
IL	Peoria	Peoria County Drug Court	Alumni want to speak weekly to county jail inmates as a possible referral source to drug court.	Sheriff has been reluctant. Clients continue to write letters to sheriff telling how drug court has helped them.
IN	Fort Wayne	Allen County Drug Court	No major unanticipated issues as yet.	

State	City	Court Name	Unanticipated issues Emerging since Drug Court Alumni Association was first Developed	Strategies for Resolving Them
KY	Lexington	Fayette Drug Court	Lack of interest	Made mandatory as part of their conditional discharge—minimum of 6 meetings
NY	Syracuse	Syracuse Community Treatment Court	Surprised that most graduates were not interested.	
NY	Brooklyn	Brooklyn Treatment Court	Did not realize that it would be as difficult as it was to attract and maintain members.	Ongoing
OH	Cleveland	Cleveland Municipal Court	Confidentiality management group--no incidents--just concern for liabilities of court	
OH	Akron	Akron Municipal Court	Lack of participation	Working with treatment counselor to increase participation
OR	Grants Pass	Josephine County Drug Court	Graduates who were leaders did so much they tired and moved on.	New people took over role.
TX	Austin	Travis County Drug Court	Sobriety	Cannot show up drunk or high.
UT	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake County Third District Drug Court	There is a loss of momentum after initial excitement of group establishment has worn off.	No permanent solution has been found. The staff took over the outreach, promotion efforts.
WA	Olympia	Thurston County Drug Court Program	Lack of interest in attending/participating	Made it mandatory that Phase 3 participants attend at least once per month.

VIII. Planned Improvements

Programs were asked to indicate any improvements they planned to make in their alumni activities during the coming year. The most frequent improvements noted focused on providing aftercare support and relapse prevention components. Other improvements noted included: sponsoring more social activities; including speakers at meetings; publishing a periodic newsletter; sending out minutes to alumni to keep them informed of the association's activities; developing more structure for alumni meetings; altering meeting times; and increasing the range of activities conducted, including community service programs.

The following is a summary of the improvements planned by the responding programs

Chart I-4: Planned Improvements to Alumni Association

State	City	Court Name	Planned Improvements
AZ	Yuma	Adult Drug Court	We are in the process of implementing the relapse prevention panel.
CA	Richmond	Supervised Treatment and Recovery	Better organization
CA	Santa Ana	Central Justice Center	Include more aftercare support groups
CA	Riverside	Superior Court of California in and for the County of Riverside	A scheduled calendar of events, monitor participants, involvement with other drug courts, activities with other drug courts, more mentoring of juvenile drug court participants.
CA	Chula Vista	San Diego Superior Court - South Court	Implement aftercare program.
CA	El Cajon	East County Drug Court	Sending minutes to all alumni letting them know of current issues.
CA	Stockton	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	"3 Signatures required." We recently opened a checking account that allows the Alumni Coordinator and officers more freedom with their fundraiser money. We want to get them more involved in community speaking; for example, talking to middle school and high school students.
CA	Big Bear Lake	Big Bear Lake Superior Court	Increase newsletter circulation; increase alumni membership
IA	Des Moines	Intensive Supervision Court Program	Still in the early stages of program activity.
ID	Boise	Ada County Drug Court	We continue to expand and change our whole program as we grow.
IL	Peoria	Peoria County Drug Court	More social activities--currently have only a yearly picnic. Sponsor mentor exchange.
IN	Fort Wayne	Allen County Drug Court	1. Judge has agreed to attend. 2. Promotional event for drug court participants (active).
KY	Bardwell	1st Circuit Drug Court	More social activities; monthly/bi-monthly speaker meetings

State	City	Court Name	Planned Improvements
KY	Lexington	Fayette Drug Court	Develop more of a curriculum
KY	Bowling Green	Warren County Drug Court	Can't say as of yet. We're just getting started.
NV	Las Vegas	Clark Co. Nevada Drug Court	Begin process of formalizing treatment. Elect officers. More community and Program involvement. Recruit more graduates.
NV	Reno	2nd Judicial District Court	We started with a Monday group that included the court services coordinator and a vocational rehab counselor. We were primarily doing problem solving and would invite special guests. The Alumni decided they wanted to develop a recovery group that includes drug court participants if they desire.
NY	Rochester	Rochester Drug Treatment Court	Start new projects; it is easy to get into a comfortable rut and not be creative. After 4 years, things can become very routine so we need to keep new ideas flowing.
NY	Syracuse	Syracuse Community Treatment Court	Re-organize, develop new ideas to assist alumni, find out what they are really interested in.
NY	Brooklyn	Brooklyn Treatment Court	Move activities to attract members. Invite more guest speakers on issues that affect alumni members. Try to develop relationships with members. Monthly phone calls by relevant case manager to encourage alumni to attend.
OH	Hamilton	Butler Co. Drug Ct.	Having the judge more active in alumni discussion in open court. Have the alumni have an active role in reviews and plea and sentencings. Have alumni commit to current drug court participants.
OH	Cleveland	Cleveland Municipal Court	We are planning to give responsibilities to members to enlist attendance/participation. They will start calling each other starting July or August 2001.
OH	Akron	Akron Municipal Court	We currently have developed a new form that participants fill out at graduation and, if they are interested in becoming an Alumni, current Alumni will phone them. We would like to have a mentoring program developed for new drug court clients and those who are having difficulty in the program.
OR	Grants Pass	Josephine County Drug Court	We will reevaluate alumni group.
OR	Portland	Multnomah County Circuit Court	Membership program
TX	Austin	Travis County Drug Court	Recognition event.
UT	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake County Third District Drug Court	Changing meeting times. More recreational activities. I would like to explore the idea of connecting alumni group with 12-step fellowship meetings held at treatment facility, either the meetings or activities.
WA	Olympia	Thurston County Drug Court Program	Presentations in the community. Newsletter, program in the schools, more activities in community

Good Beginnings: Development and Maintenance of Drug Court Alumni Groups. OJP Drug Court 19 Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project. American University. March 2002.

IX. Advice to Others

Respondents were also asked to note any advice they would offer to peers in other jurisdictions contemplating formation of a drug court alumni organization. The most common advice focused on: the need to be patient; the desirability of involving participants in alumni activities prior to graduation; and, if at all possible, to designate an individual to be responsible for coordinating program development.

The following is a summary of the respondents' comments.

Chart I-5: Advice to Others

State	City	Court Name	Advice to others interested in establishing a drug court alumni group
AZ	Yuma	Adult Drug Court	Be patient. Make it mandatory for those in the last phase; then it's easier for them to continue.
CA	Richmond	Supervised Treatment and Recovery	Start early. Choose someone to be the chair at meetings. Don't overwhelm one person with all the responsibility.
CA	El Monte	Rio Hondo	Do it.
CA	Ukiah	Superior Court of California, County of Mendocino	None; we are so new.
CA	Napa	Napa County Drug Court	Send them to alumni group 3 months prior to graduation
CA	Santa Ana	Central Justice Center	1. Start involvement prior to graduation. 2. Have Alumni speak to current participants
CA	Auburn	Placer County Drug Courts	Designate special staff position.
CA	Riverside	Superior Court of California in and for the County of Riverside	It is rewarding and beneficial.
CA	Chula Vista	San Diego Superior Court - South Court	That it be structured.
CA	El Cajon	East County Drug Court	Encourage participation.
CA	Vista	North County Drug Court	Make sure that they have as much contact with current clients as possible. Have them elect officers.
CA	Stockton	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	Try to get active participants involved before they complete drug court. Have a structured meeting and format in place, encourage involvement and have "speaker" meetings.
CA	Big Bear Lake	Big Bear Lake Superior Court	Hire a graduate to build alumni & structure
IA	Des Moines	Intensive Supervision Court Program	"Just do It." Very important for clients - (Support Group)
ID	Boise	Ada County Drug Court	For me it has been in addition to regular duties - So volunteer time. Structure to the group has been helpful. I'm waiting for the time that the group will have strong enough members to be self-sustaining.
IL	Peoria	Peoria County Drug Court	Be patient; building group can be slow. Talk to other treatment programs with alumni groups. Have clients in alumni groups speak.
IN	Fort Wayne	Allen County Drug Court	Be patient, allow the group to evolve.
IN	Indianapolis	Marion County Drug Treatment Diversion	Be patient, it takes time to develop interest.

State	City	Court Name	Advice to others interested in establishing a drug court alumni group
		Program	
KY	Lexington	Fayette Drug Court	Make it mandatory part of aftercare.
KY	Bowling Green	Warren County Drug Court	This program will take time. It will have to be a program of attraction & not promotion.
MA	Haverhill	Haverhill District Court	Start early in planning and get input from Phase II drug court members
NJ	Camden	Camden County Drug Court	Begin ASAP with first graduating class. We waited or didn't think about it until we had been in existence two years. Keep Drug Court employees involved.
NV	Las Vegas	Clark Co. Nevada Drug Court	Involve the Judge & other court staff if possible. Formalize the organization
NY	Lackawanna	Lackawanna City Court Drug Court	Working Alumni/Mentor program around drug court status hearings appears to be helpful; hold meetings after work hours.
NY	Rochester	Rochester Drug Treatment Court	Just do it. Change as new ideas & needs arise. Each group will have its own style.
NY	Syracuse	Syracuse Community Treatment Court	Try to get a volunteer to organize--someone other than the "regular staff."
NY	Brooklyn	Brooklyn Treatment Court	Invite active clients to attend alumni meetings (during final phase of treatment mandate attendance; help them develop the routine; send out monthly reminders by mail or telephone.)
OH	Hamilton	Butler Co. Drug Ct.	Commit to the alumni program then be patient. Numbers will not always be good.
OH	Cleveland	Cleveland Municipal Court	Require attendance at meetings before graduation. A small group can still be excellent and have good ideas and be valuable to all who attend.
OR	Grants Pass	Josephine County Drug Court	Hire a part-time alumni coordinator, have regular meetings and fundraisers, get people involved early, have counselor involved for a relapse group, involve team members.
OR	Portland	Multnomah County Circuit Court	I firmly believe the best way to gain momentum in alumni attendance is to establish mentor/buddy relationships with "current" clients 1-2 months prior to graduation.
TX	Austin	Travis County Drug Court	Start early; introduce the idea to clients as they enter the program.
WA	Olympia	Thurston County Drug Court Program	Meet consistently, promote involvement

PART TWO:

DETAILED INFORMATION ON DRUG COURT ALUMNI PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

I. Information Relating to Program Organization

- Chart II-1: Alumni Enrollment and Related Information**
- Chart II-2: Organization of Drug Court Alumni Activities**
- Chart II-3: Catalyst for Forming the Alumni Association**
- Chart II-4: (a) – (b) Role of Drug Court Judge in Alumni Activities**
- Chart II-5: Drug Court Alumni Association: Organizational Activities**

II. Information Relating to Program Operations

- Chart II-6: Resources Provided for Drug Court Alumni Activities**
- Chart II-7: Dues Requirements**
- Chart II-8: Focus of Alumni Meetings**
- Chart II-9: Development of Agenda for Alumni Meetings**
- Chart II-10: Facilitation of Alumni Meetings**
- Chart II-11: Drug Court Alumni Association: Meeting Times**
- Chart II-12: Drug Court Alumni Association: Meeting Places**
- Chart II-13: (a) – (e) Range of Alumni Activities Conducted and Services Provided**
- Chart II-14: Strategies for Attracting Alumni**
- Chart II-15: Evaluation Activities**

PART THREE:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PART IV:

**SAMPLE MATERIALS DEVELOPED BY DRUG
COURT ALUMNI GROUPS**

- **Buffalo, New York**
- **Josephine County (Grants Pass), Oregon**
- **Los Angeles, California**
- **Riverside, California**
- **Rochester, New York (The Clean Slate)**
- **Salt Lake City, Utah**

APPENDIX

Resources

- (1) “How to Develop and Sustain a Drug Treatment Court Alumni Group.”
Prepared by Sherry Lintz. Special Projects Coordinator, Rochester
Drug Treatment Court. November 2000**

- (2) Drug Court Alumni Activities Program Coordinator/Contacts**

(2) Drug Court Alumni Activities Program Coordinator/Contacts

Yuma, Arizona

Yolanda Valenzuela, Drug Court Coord.
Adult Drug Court
405 S. Main St.
Yuma AZ 85364
Tel: (520) 329-2210 Fax: (520) 329-1037

Riverside, California

Patricia Smith, Substance Abuse Counselor
Superior Court of California in and for the
County of Riverside
3646 9th #1
Riverside CA 92501
Tel: (909) 955-5242 Fax: (909) 222-0396

Napa, California

Connie Millimaki, DC Coordinator
Napa County Drug Court
PO Box 566; 701 School St.
Napa CA 94559
Tel: (707) 226-1248 Fax: (707) 226-8011
e-mail: a4bl@pacbell.net

San Diego, California

Darrell Shisher, Alumni President
San Diego Superior Court - South Court
1255 Imperial Ave., Suite
San Diego CA 92101-7440
Tel: (619) 425-4489 Fax: (619) 418-1708

Stockton, California

Audrey French, Alumni Coordinator
Superior Court of San Joaquin County
222 E Weber Ave., Rm. 265
Stockton CA 95202
Tel: (209) 468-9458 Fax: (209) 468-3320

Auburn, California

Larry DeMates
Placer County Drug Courts
1512 B Ave.
Auburn CA 95603
Tel: (530) 889-7272 Fax: (530) 889-7293

Fresno, California

Ramona Drake, Director
Fresno Superior Court
1100 Van Ness
Fresno CA 93701
Tel: (559) 237-8337
e-mail: fdc@mhsinc.org

El Cajon, California

Roxy Walnum, Resource Manager
East County Drug Court
1357 Broadway Suite 100
El Cajon CA 92021
Tel: (619) 441-3467

Ukiah, California

Ronda Leonard, Substance Abuse Therapist
Superior Court of California, County of
Mendocino
425-B S.Orchard St
Ukiah CA 95482
Tel: (707) 468-3466 Fax: (707) 463-5696

Des Moines, Iowa

Richard Bates, Supervisor
Intensive Supervision Court Program
910 Washington
Des Moines IA 50314
Tel: (515) 242-6619

Peoria, Illinois

Linda L. Earley
RN, CADC, Misa I
Peoria County Drug Court
c/o White Oaks Co.; 3400 New
Peoria IL 61614
Tel: (309) 692-6900 Fax: (309) 689-3086

Indianapolis, Indiana

Bruce L., President
Marion County Drug Treatment Diversion
Program
200 East Washington St., 1221
Indianapolis IN 46204

Bardwell, Kentucky

Vista, California

Melissa King, President
North County Drug Court
1376 Bonair Rd #3
Vista CA 92084
Tel: (760) 726-5919

Boise, Idaho

Marreen Baker, Drug Court Coordinator
Ada County Drug Court
304 N 8th St. Suite 442
Boise ID 83702
Tel: (208) 388-8117 Fax:(208) 388-8119
e-mail: dcbakerma@adaweb.net

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Karen Moore, Director
Allen County Drug Court
226 Wallace St.
Fort Wayne IN 46802
Tel: (219) 449-7134 Fax: (219) 449-7295

Owensboro, Kentucky

Lora McCarty, Treatment Coordinator
Daviness County Drug Court
Judicial Ctr, Rm 381, 100 E
Owensboro KY 42303
Tel: (270) 687-7014 Fax: (270) 687-7015
e-mail: LoraMCCarty@mail.aoc.state.

Covington, Kentucky

Phyllis Teeters, Drug Court Coordinator
1st Circuit Drug Court
214 Front St
Bardwell KY 42023
Tel: (270) 628-0390 Fax: (270) 628-0487
e-mail:
phyllisteeters@mail.aoc.state.ky

Bowling Green, Kentucky

Tommy Minix, Case Specialist
Warren County Drug Court
1001 Center Street, Suite 105
Bowling Green KY 42101
Tel: (270) 746-7042 Fax: (270) 746-7044

Haverhill, Mass.

Marjorie P. Goldbaum
Drug Court Clinician (Alumni)
Haverhill District Court
44 Marsh Ave.
Haverhill MA 01830-2120
e-mail: commonwork@aol.com

Reno, Nevada

Terry Gilmartin, Court Services Coordinator
2nd Judicial District Court
75 Court St. #243
Reno NV 89501
Tel: (775) 328-3880 Fax: (775) 328-3851
e-mail: tgilmart@mail.co.washoe.nv.us

C. Houston Ebert, Treatment Coordinator
N. Kentucky Drug Court
230 Madison Avenue
Covington KY 41011
Tel: (859) 292-6643 Fax: (859) 292-6703
e-mail: notebert@mail.aoc.state.ky.us

Lexington, Kentucky

**Connie Reed, Treatment
Coordinator**
Fayette Drug Court
149 N. Limestone Street
Lexington KY 40507
Tel: (854) 246-2501 Fax: (854) 246-2503
e-mail: ConnieR@mail.aoc.state.ky

Camden, New Jersey

William Hample, Probation Officer
Camden County Drug Court
40 N. 5th Street, Box 1928
Camden NJ 08101
Tel: (856) 225-8728

Las Vegas, Nevada

Ricky McGee, Counseling Manager
Clark Co. Nevada Drug Court
800 S. Valley View Blvd.
Las Vegas NV 89107
Tel: (702) 252-8342 Fax: (702) 252-8349
e-mail: Rmcgee@choicesdc.com

Brooklyn, New York

Leroy West Spicer, Case Manager
Brooklyn Treatment Court
Brooklyn Treatment Court;
Brooklyn NY 11201
Tel:(718) 643-5621 Fax: (718) 643-5666

Syracuse, New York

Kim Kozlowski, Program Coordinator
Syracuse Community Treatment Court
511 S. State St. Rm. 206
Syracuse NY 13088
Tel: (315) 477-2795
Fax: (315) 422-9583
e-mail: kkozlows@courts.state.ny.us

Buffalo, New York

Jack O'Conner, Director, Medicaid Reform
Buffalo City Court
ECDSS 95 Franklin St. Rm.
Buffalo NY 14202
Tel: (716) 858-6104 Fax:(716) 858-6904
e-mail: IOCONN@DSS1.co.erie.NY

Lackawanna City, New York

Anthony Anderson, Alumni Coordinator
Lackawanna City Court Drug Court
18 Deerfield
Buffalo NY 14215
Tel: (716) 894-0858

Rochester, New York

Sherry Lintz, Special Project Coordinator
Rochester Drug Treatment Court
Hall of Justice, Rm. 6
Rochester NY 14614
Tel:(716) 428-4130Fax: (716) 428-4267
e-mail: slintz@courts.state.ny.us

Hamilton, Ohio

Hamilton, Ohio
Artie Sanders, Coordinator
Butler Co. Drug Ct.
116 South 2nd. Street
Hamilton OH 45011
Tel: (513) 785-5732 Fax:(513) 785-5728

Huron, Ohio

Hope Factor, Drug Court Coordinator
Akron Municipal Court
P.O. Box 1501
Huron OH 44309
Tel: (330) 996-2225 Fax: (330) 375-6414

Portland, Oregon

Craig Willadson, Court Liaison
Multnomah County Circuit Court
InAct, Inc., 310 SW 4th
Portland OR 97204
Tel: (503) 228-9229 Fax:(503) 228-9558

Austin, Texas

Lisa Ciminelli, Chemical Dependency
Travis County Drug Court
205 W. 9th St.
Austin TX 78701
Tel: (512) 708-4898 Fax: (512) 708-4643
e-mail: lisa.ciminelli@co.travis.tx.us

Olympia, Washington

Ellen Goodman, Administrator
Thurston County Drug Court Program
2000 Lakeridge Dr., SW Bldg. 2
Olympia WA 98502
Tel:(360) 657-2482 Fax:(360) 754-4060
e-mail: goodmae@co.thurston.wa.us

Dayton, Ohio

Robert Offutt, Drug Court Manager
Montgomery County Juvenile Court
14 West Fourth Street
Dayton OH 45402
Tel:(937) 496-6838 Fax:(937) 496-6842
e-mail: OffuttR@montcnty.org

Roseburg, Oregon

Evelyn Nores, Drug Court Coordinator
Douglas County Drug Court
1036 SE Douglas, Justice Bldg.
Roseburg OR 97470
Tel: (541) 957-2441 Fax:(541) 957-2461

Salt Lake City, Utah

Melissa Boase, Programming and Services
Salt Lake County Third District Drug Court
431 S. 300 E., Suite 200
Salt Lake City UT 84111
Tel:(801) 799-8485 Fax: (801) 799-8493
e-mail: mboase@co.slc.ut.us