

**The Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court (WDTC) Vision: To break the cycle of drug use, criminal behaviour and incarceration by establishing a partnership between courts, treatment agencies and social service agencies.**

The WDTC works to close revolving doors in the criminal justice system. Offenders are often trapped in a cycle of drug use, arrest, incarceration, release and re-arrest on new charges. Drug addiction and criminal behaviour are strongly linked. People with untreated addictions commit relatively large numbers of crimes and have high rates of re-offending.

WDTC helps break the cycle by providing intensive court-monitored case management with emphasis on treatment and community supports for non-violent offenders who are addicted and want to quit using illicit drugs.

WDTC increases public safety by addressing root causes of crime:

- It monitors and supports offenders as they work to end their dependence on illicit drugs
- It reduces numbers of crimes committed to support drug dependence
- It reduces the harm people cause themselves and others through their drug use

WDTC helps reduce the economic burden of substance abuse. Costs of law enforcement, prosecution and incarceration associated with substance abuse in Canada are estimated at \$9 billion annually.



Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court (WDTC) maintains strong partnerships with Manitoba's justice system, community groups, support services and other stakeholders.

For more information about WDTC, please contact:

**Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court**  
**204-945-5001**

Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court receives support from the Drug Treatment Court Funding Program, part of Canada's National Anti Drug Strategy.



**Promoting public safety by tackling the root causes of crime**

## What is a drug treatment court?

A drug treatment court is a special court that works to redirect drug-addicted offenders into programs of treatment and supervision, instead of keeping them in jail.

The court is supported by a program consisting of addiction recovery services, social service agencies and individual case planning. The Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court (WDTC), launched in 2006, is similar to programs in many other parts of the world.

## Why do we need drug treatment courts?

Conventional criminal justice strategies have not been able to bring about a significant reduction in re-offending rates or the demand for and flow of drugs into our communities. Drug treatment courts monitor and support offenders to make changes that will enable them to avoid further criminal activity.

Drug treatment courts have proven to be both tough and effective. Offenders who come before the WDTC participate in treatment plans that typically are longer and more rigorous than the sentences they might receive in a conventional court.

Statistics show that DTC participants substantially decrease their drug use and have lower re-offending rates than other offenders.

## Does WDTC work like other courts?

The WDTC judge is in charge of the court, but makes decisions in consultation with a team of experts that includes the Crown, defence counsel, the program manager and the case manager. All WDTC participants must plead guilty to their charges and work with the WDTC team to design an effective rehabilitation plan.

## Who is eligible for WDTC?

WDTC is available to offenders charged under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (possession, possession for purposes of trafficking, trafficking) or with non-violent Criminal Code offences. To be eligible, offenders must be dependent on drugs and their criminal behaviour must have been caused or motivated by their addiction.

Gang members or offenders who used a weapon in committing an offence are not eligible for WDTC.

## How does someone get their case into the WDTC?

Participation is voluntary. A lawyer may submit a potential case to Crown counsel, who then screens the case to ensure the candidate meets the WDTC criteria. The Crown's screening includes seriousness of offences, other outstanding charges and risk to the community. WDTC staff will also assess each referral from the Crown for program suitability.

## What do WDTC programs involve?

Each participant works with a WDTC case manager and service providers to develop a comprehensive and realistic case management plan that includes:

- regular court appearances
- periodic and random drug testing
- client-centred treatment for substance dependence
- counselling
- life skills training
- employment training
- job placement

## How can WDTC make sure participants follow their programs?

Participant progress is carefully monitored with regularly scheduled court appearances, frequent drug testing and close supervision from the WDTC team.

Incentives and sanctions may be used to ensure program compliance:

- Incentives may include positive feedback, reduced court appearances, progression to next program phase and successful program completion
- Sanctions could include more frequent court appearances, community service work, warrants, bail revocation and expulsion from the program

## When does a WDTC program finish?

To successfully complete the program, participants must:

- Complete all treatment specified
- Establish and maintain a lifestyle that supports recovery and rehabilitation
- Show active engagement in the community through employment, education, volunteering and other structured activities
- Not engage in further criminal activity
- Continue to abstain from illicit drug use
- Receive a recommendation for graduation from the WDTC team

At the end of the WDTC program, the Crown will recommend a non-custodial sentence with probation conditions that take into consideration the nature and severity of the participant's original charges.