



Administrative Office of the Courts
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FACTS ABOUT GEORGIA'S DRUG COURTS

1. **What is a drug court?**

A drug court is a special program given the responsibility by local judges to handle cases involving drug-using offenders through ongoing judicial intervention, comprehensive supervision, drug testing, evidence-based treatment and other related services. Immediate sanctions and incentives motivate participants to change their drug-use behavior.

2. **Why are drug courts beneficial?**

The drug court model has proven to be a relatively low cost but a highly effective method of assisting drug-dependent offenders to reclaim their lives through a collaborative approach that involves judges, district attorneys, public defenders, case workers, probation officers and treatment providers. Drug courts divert non-violent offenders from costly prison time and saving taxpayers money. They benefit society as a whole and free up police and other criminal justice system resources by reducing repeat drug offenses as well as other crimes committed by drug users trying to get money to support their drug habits. In Georgia, only non-violent offenders who have no history of drug dealing are eligible for drug court programs. Offenders are also required to pay for all or part of their treatment.

3. **How many drug courts are there in Georgia?**

The concept of drug courts was championed in Georgia by former Chief Justice Robert Benham. The state's first drug court was established in Bibb County in 1994. As of 2011, Georgia has 72 drug courts. Of these, 31 are adult felony drug courts, 1 felony drug & DUI court, 1 felony drug & mental health court, 18 DUI courts, 9 family dependency treatment courts, and 12 juvenile drug courts.

4. **Where are Georgia's adult drug courts located?**

<u>Judicial Circuit</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Counties Served</u>	<u>Court</u>	
Adult/Felony Drug Courts				
1	Appalachian	2005	Pickens, Gilmer, Fannin	Superior
2	Atlanta	1997	Fulton	Superior
3	Atlantic	2009	Bryan, Evans, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Tattnall	Superior
4	Augusta	2008	Richmond, Columbia, Burke	Superior
5	Bell-Forsyth	2004	Forsyth	Superior
6	Brunswick	1998	Camden	Superior
7	Brunswick	2010	Wayne	Superior
8	Chattahoochee	2007	Muscogee	Superior
9	Cherokee	2008	Bartow	Superior
10	Clayton	2009	Clayton	Superior
11	Cobb	2002	Cobb	Superior
12	Conasauga	2002	Murray, Whitfield	Superior
13	Coweta	1998	Carroll	Superior
14	Coweta	2010	Coweta, Heard, Meriwether, Troup	Superior
15	Dublin	1999	Laurens, Twiggs, Johnson, Treutlen	Superior

16	Eastern	2001	Chatham	Superior
17	Enotah	2002	Lumpkin, White	Superior
18	Griffin	2006	Spalding, Fayette, Upson, Pike	Superior
19	Gwinnett	2005	Gwinnett	Superior
20	Macon	2004	Bibb, Peach, Crawford	Superior
21	Mountain	2006	Habersham	Superior
22	Northeastern	2001	Hall	Superior
23	Ocmulgee	2003	Baldwin	Superior
24	Ogeechee	2004	Bulloch, Effingham	Superior
25	Pataula	2002	Quitman, Randolph, Terrell	Superior
26	Piedmont	2010	Banks, Barrow, Jackson	Superior
27	Stone Mountain	2002	DeKalb	Superior
28	Tallapoosa	2004	Polk, Haralson	Superior
29	Towaliga	2005	Butts, Lamar, Monroe	Superior
30	Waycross	2008	Brantley, Coffee, Ware, Pierce	Superior
31	Western	2004	Clarke, Oconee	Superior

Felony DRUG-DUI COURTS

1	Northeastern	2006	Dawson	Superior
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DUI COURTS

1	Atlanta	2007	Fulton	State
2	Atlantic	2011	Liberty	State
3	Augusta	2005	Burke	State
4	Augusta	2011	Richmond	State
5	Bell-Forsyth	2006	Forsyth	State
6	Blue Ridge	2005	Cherokee	State
7	Clayton	2007	Clayton	State
8	Cobb	2008	Cobb	State
9	Coweta	2004	Troup	State
10	Eastern	2003	Chatham	State
11	Flint	2009	Henry	State
12	Gwinnett	2005	Gwinnett	State
13	Atlantic	2011	Bryan, Evans, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Tattnall	State
14	Northeastern	2003	Hall	State
15	Ogeechee	2009	Bulloch	State
16	Rockdale	2007	Rockdale	State
17	Stone Mountain	2005	DeKalb	State
18	Western	2001	Clarke	State

FELONY DRUG-MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

1	Dougherty	2002	Dougherty	Superior
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FAMILY DEPENDENCY TREATMENT COURTS

1	Appalachian	2005	Pickens, Gilmer, Fannin	Juvenile
2	Atlanta	2003	Fulton	Juvenile
3	Cherokee	2008	Bartow	Juvenile
4	Cobb	2008	Cobb	Juvenile
5	Coweta	2007	Troup	Juvenile
6	Douglas	2008	Douglas	Juvenile
7	Eastern	2008	Chatham	Juvenile
8	Enotah	2008	Lumpkin, White	Juvenile
9	Northeastern	2006	Hall	Juvenile

JUVENILE DRUG COURTS

1	Alcovy	1998	Newton	Juvenile
2	Appalachian	2003	Pickens, Gilmer, Fannin	Juvenile
3	Atlanta	2010	Fulton	Juvenile
4	Bell-Forsyth	2008	Forsyth	Juvenile
5	Chattahoochee	2001	Muscogee	Juvenile
6	Cobb	2006	Cobb	Juvenile
7	Coweta	2006	Carroll	Juvenile
8	Dublin	2001	Laurens	Juvenile
9	Macon	2000	Bibb	Juvenile
10	Ocmulgee	2005	Baldwin	Juvenile

11	Rockdale	2009	Rockdale	Juvenile
12	Stone Mountain	2004	DeKalb	Juvenile

72 TOTAL DRUG COURTS as of 2/23/2011

5. *What is an adult misdemeanor drug offense?*

Misdemeanor drug offenses are possession of less than one ounce of marijuana, driving under the influence, or any other offense involving alcohol possession.

6. *What is an adult felony drug offense?*

Felony drug offenses involve possession of drugs such as cocaine, scheduled drugs such as opiates or amphetamines, or more than one ounce of marijuana, or obtaining drugs through fraud.

7. *What is a juvenile drug court?*

Juvenile drug court programs handle all juvenile drug offenses committed by eligible juveniles. However, if violence or possession for sale is involved, a juvenile will not be eligible for this program.

8. *What is a family dependency treatment court?*

A family dependency treatment court is a court devoted to cases of child abuse and neglect that involve substance abuse by the child's parents or other caregivers.

9. *Who determines whether the accused is eligible to participate in a drug court program?*

In Georgia, eligibility for drug court participation is typically made by the local District Attorney, based on the facts of each case. Often, an assistant DA is assigned to handle substance abuse cases, and works as part of the drug court team.

10. *What procedure is followed in Georgia drug courts?*

Pre-trial diversion: When defendants enter a drug court program on a pre-trial diversion basis, they are not asked to plead innocent or guilty. They enter immediately into the intervention program, including regular meetings with the judge. If they successfully complete the program, charges against them may be dismissed. If they fail to complete the program, they will be prosecuted on the original charge.

Post-plea sentencing: In these cases, the defendant enters a plea, but the judge agrees to defer imposing a sentence until an intervention program is completed. Upon successful completion, the judge may vacate the plea, and ask the DA to dismiss the case.

Post-adjudication: In these cases, the judge imposes a sentence but agrees to suspend it until completion of the intervention program, often as a condition of sentencing. Upon successful completion, the court may modify the suspended sentence.

For further information on drug courts please contact the Statewide Accountability Court Coordinator:
John Zoller at 404-463-1906.