**Program: Drug Courts**

**Agency:** Department of Justice  
**Bureau:** Office of Justice Programs

**Key Performance Measures**

- **Long-term Measures:** Measures under development
- **Number of drug courts that become operational**
  - 2001: 56, Actual: 49
  - 2002: 50, Actual: 46
  - 2003: 50
  - 2004: 55
- **Percentage of drug-court participants who remain arrest-free**

**Rating:** Results Not Demonstrated  
**Program Type:** Competitive Grants  
**Program Summary:**

Drug Court provides grants and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal governments to implement "drug courts." These courts break the cycle of substance abuse and crime by providing non-violent offenders with substance abuse treatment while keeping them under court supervision, including drug testing.

The assessment indicates that the Drug Court program has identified good long-term objectives: improving public safety and reducing recidivism in drug court communities. However it has not specified measures or timelines for these objectives. Additional findings include:

1. Annual performance measures are focused on outputs, i.e. the number of active courts, instead of grantees’ effectiveness or quality.
2. From a financial management standpoint, Drug Courts is one of the better managed programs in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), with few obvious weaknesses. Like other OJP programs, a fair number of grantees fail to submit required status reports or performance data. However, the limited number of grantees makes it possible to correct this problem by taking such actions as withholding funds from grantees who are non-compliant.
3. The program appears to have achieved its target recidivism rate over the last few years, though this only tracks offenders currently in the program. Independent studies of drug courts indicate that they provide an effective intervention to substance abusers who might not otherwise receive treatment, and generally result in lower recidivism rates. Still, more attention is needed to track how participants fare after they complete the program.

In response to these findings, the agency will:

1. Develop measures for the long-term goals of improving public safety and reducing recidivism.
2. Determine how many additional drug court programs are needed to reach these goals enough, which could be based on the optimal number of jurisdictions covered or the total offender capacity.
3. Improve grantees’ performance reporting.

**Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2002 Actual</th>
<th>2003 Estimate</th>
<th>2004 Estimate</th>
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<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
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