

Drug Court on the Prairie

Presented By:

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Ellis County Drug Court

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Det. Brian Shannon, Ellis County Sheriff's Office

Det. JB Burkholder, Hays Police Department

Dr. Paul Lucas, Evaluator

What is a Drug Court?

- ▶ The concept of treatment courts was created in 1989, first starting in Florida as a remedy to the growing epidemic of drug addiction and jail overcrowding due to addicts spending time incarcerated. Ellis County held it's first drug court on August 30, 2018.
- ▶ The goal is to combat the addiction while having an alternative to jail for participants.
- ▶ Nationwide, there are currently more than 3,000 drug courts serving 150,000 people each year.
- ▶ Drug court participants complete an intensive regimen of treatment, supervision, random urinalysis testing, and attendance in court in front of the judge in order to not only beat their addiction but have the support to maintain their sobriety and not be a drain on community resources.

What is a Drug Court?

- ▶ Ellis County Drug Court participants must complete multiple requirements in a series of five phases and have the potential of being in the Drug Court for fourteen months or longer.
- ▶ They have intensive supervision from their probation officers, random UAs multiple times a week and intensive substance use treatment. Mental health and medical services are available for referral for those with underlying issues.
- ▶ Ellis County Drug Court meets bi-weekly and is for higher risk and higher needs offenders. The participant will stand directly in front of the judge in the court and discuss their progress, treatment, goals, and any setbacks. Their achievements are celebrated in open court with their peers, and setbacks are addressed with additional treatment, assigned tasks or sanction if appropriate.
- ▶ Participants are given the foundation and support to long term recovery.

Why Drug Court?

- ▶ Treatment courts are the single most successful intervention in our nation's history for leading people living with substance use and mental health disorders out of the justice system and into lives of recovery and stability.
- ▶ Instead of viewing addiction as a moral failing, drug courts view it as a disease. Instead of punishment, treatment is offered. Instead of indifference, there is compassion.
- ▶ The current practice of incarcerating addicts instead of helping them combat their addiction simply is not working.
- ▶ The history of treatment courts has shown that supervision, structure, and evidence-based treatment is a far more successful approach to substance use than incarceration and punishment.

Why Drug Court?

- ▶ Nationally, these courts save up to \$13,000 for every individual they serve and return as much as \$27 for every \$1 invested.
- ▶ They improve education, employment, housing, and financial stability. They promote family reunification, reduce foster care placements, and increase the rate of mothers with substance use disorders delivering fully drug-free babies.
- ▶ Treatment courts refer more people to treatment than any other intervention in America, and those people are more successful in recovery because they remain in treatment long enough to be successful.
- ▶ The average national completion rate for treatment courts is nearly 60%, more than twice the rate of people on probation with substance use disorders without treatment court intervention. 75% of treatment court graduates do not reoffend.

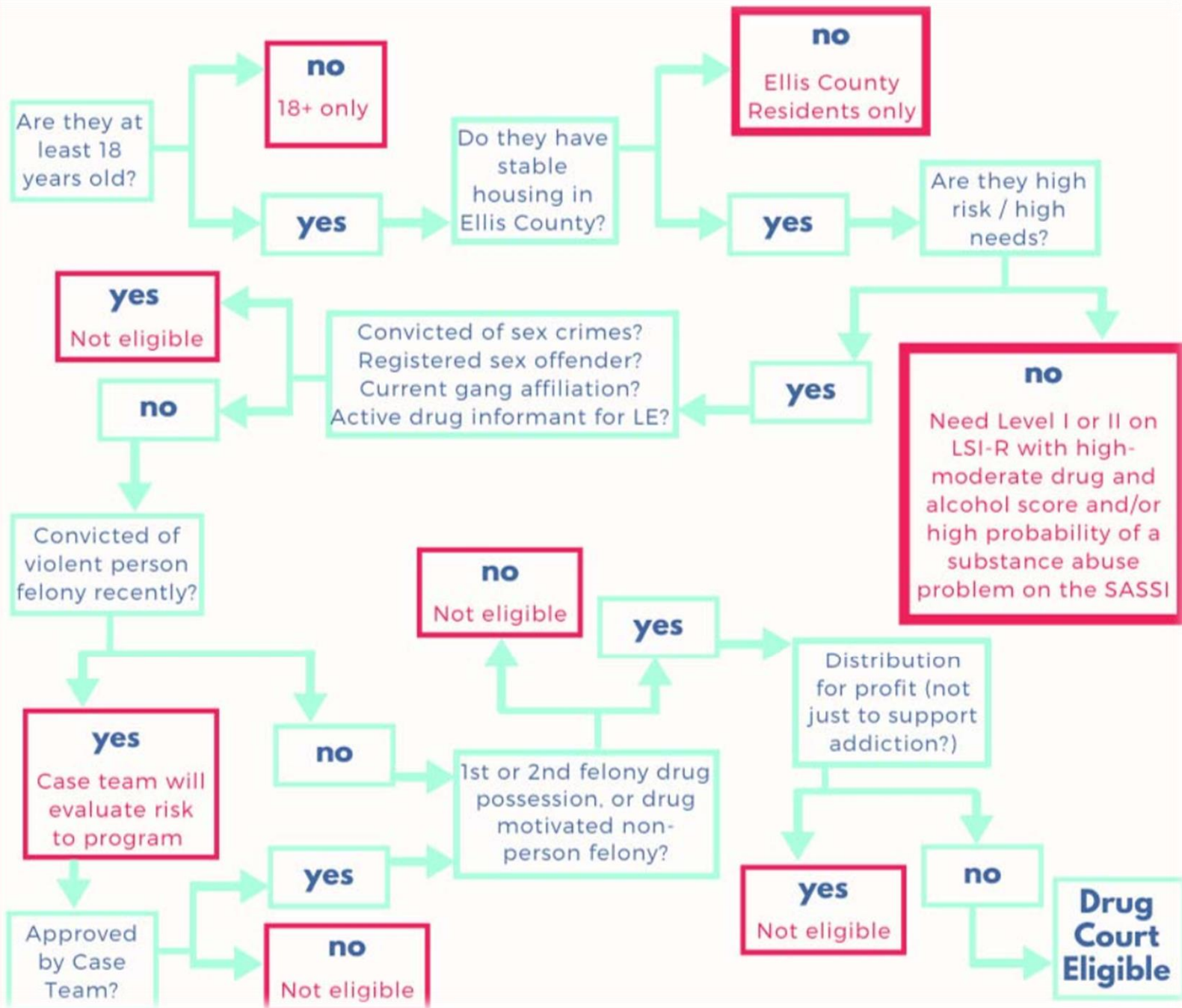
The National Epidemic

- 70,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 2019
- 2/3 of all fatal drug overdoses in the US are due to opioids.
- 65% of all US inmates have a substance use disorder
- \$80 billion annually is spent in the US on incarceration
- 20.2 million American adults (1 in 10) have a substance use disorder
- People are more likely to be incarcerated than treated.

Who Can be in Drug Court?

- ▶ High Risk – High Needs offenders with a felony conviction and a high probability of a substance use disorder
- ▶ Must be non-violent and live in Ellis County
- ▶ Cannot be a registered sex offender or be a drug distributor for profit (consideration given for small time distributors supporting their own habit)
- ▶ Most Senate Bill 123 eligible offenders who live in Ellis County are eligible and placed in drug court.

ARE THEY ELIGIBLE FOR ELLIS COUNTY DRUG COURT?



Drug Court Phases

- ▶ Ellis County Drug Court is divided into five phases:

Acute Stabilization – Phase 1 (requires 14 days sober to advance)

Clinical Stabilization –Phase 2 (30 days sober to advance)

Pro Social Habilitation – Phase 3 (45 days sober to advance)

Adaptive Habilitation – Phase 4 (60 days sober to advance)

Continuing Care – Phase 5 (90 days sober to advance)

Participants in Ellis County Drug Court will spend a minimum of 14 months in the program, and longer if they have not met the basic requirements of the program to advance to the next phase.

Incentives - Sanctions

Incentives given for when all requirements have been met

- ▶ Gift cards
- ▶ Verbal Praise
- ▶ Phase advancement

Sanctions include:

- ▶ Community service
- ▶ Extra UAs or extra reporting
- ▶ Writing an essay to share with the court
- ▶ Jail sanction

Roles of the Drug Court Team

Drug Court Judge

Drug Court Coordinator

Prosecutor

Defense Attorney

Treatment Provider

Evaluator

Intensive Supervision Officers

Treatment Provider

Mental Health

Case Manager

Law Enforcement

Success Story - Mark

Success of Ellis County Drug Court

- ▶ Graduates: We've graduated 21 participants from the Ellis County Drug Court since it began in August of 2018.
- ▶ We know of only three that have been arrested for new cases since their graduation. 86% Success Rate
- ▶ We are continuing to grow and develop our program to be efficient and effect, and are developing an after care program to better serve our later phase participants and graduates of the program.

Costs

In 2018 we asked the Ellis County Commission for \$30,000 in start up funds. We have more than half of that money left nearly three years later.

In 2019 we were awarded a federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Administration. Funding is used for treatment, housing assistance for participants, cab vouchers, payment for defense attorney services, office supplies, medical check-ups and the entire wage of our part-time drug court case manager, Nick Eiden. This funding is available until October 2022 and can be renewed upon application.

Gift card incentives, which are not covered by the federal grant, cost the court \$650 in 2018, \$2990 in 2019, and \$1665 in 2020. Generous donations from organizations including the Ellis County Bar Association have helped fund these gifts to our hard-working participants.

Additional Resources

www.nadcp.org

www.ndci.org

**ELLIS COUNTY
DRUG COURT**



RISE TO RECOVERY