The National Association of Drug Court Professionals

2012 National Drug Court Month Field Kit

May 2012

Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion

Visit All Rise on Facebook to track National Drug Court Month activity!
www.Facebook.com/AllRise.org
Dear Colleague,

Each year, National Drug Court Month shines a light on the collective impact of Drug Courts, DWI Courts and Veterans Treatment Courts. National Drug Court Month is our greatest opportunity to celebrate our work and the countless lives saved, families reunited, and communities made safer. National Drug Court Month is also a time for us to show all policymakers – local, state and national – that Drug Courts are a Proven Budget Solution. We must leave no doubt that Drug Courts are a necessary investment to save money and cut drug abuse and crime.

This May, Drug Courts around the country will honor National Drug Court Month by holding events with the theme “Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion.”

National Drug Court Month will culminate with a national celebration during the 18th Annual NADCP Training Conference in Nashville, TN (May 30-June 2).

From your court to the nation’s capitol, this year’s National Drug Court Month will unite the Drug Court community, the public, and policymakers; we will leave no doubt that Drug Courts are an essential component of criminal justice reform.

NADCP has created a website to make it easy for you to access resources, track National Drug Court Month media, upload pictures, and inform us of your activities. As you prepare for National Drug Court Month, please be sure to visit http://www.NADCP/NDCM-2012.

In addition, NADCP will highlight your accomplishments all month long in the media, on our website and on Facebook (www.Facebook.com/AllRise). Please send us all of your National Drug Court Month news for us to share!

This National Drug Court Month Field Kit contains a wealth of resources to help your program celebrate National Drug Court Month.

I hope you find this Field Kit helpful as you prepare your National Drug Court Month events. For questions, please contact Chris Deutsch, Director of Communications, at 571-384-1857 or cdeutsch@nadcp.org.

Let’s once again All Rise and make the 2012 National Drug Court Month our biggest ever.

Sincerely,

West Huddleston, III
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
Contents

NDCM Checklist
Webinar: How to Plan a Successful National Drug Court Month
Event Ideas
Talking Points
Invite Your Member of Congress to an Event!
   - Sample Invitation to Members of Congress
Schedule a Meeting with Your Member of Congress
   - Sample Meeting Request
NDCM Proclamation
PSA’s
Media Guide
   - Tips on Contacting the Media
   - Write It Up in a Press Release
   - Sample Press Release
   - The Media Advisory
   - Sample Media Advisory
   - How to Write an OpEd
   - Sample OpEd
NADCP Info Form
Photo Release Form

Judge Calvin Murashige and three proud graduates of the Kaua’i Drug Court
National Drug Court Month Checklist

March

- Register for the free NADCP Webinar on National Drug Court Month 2012
  - Wednesday, February 22 @ 2:00 PM EST
  - [www.NADCP.org/NDCM-2012-Webinar](http://www.NADCP.org/NDCM-2012-Webinar)
- Schedule Commencement Ceremony for May
- Invite your Members of Congress to your Commencement Ceremony
- Schedule other National Drug Court Month events
- Prepare a proclamation for your local and state policymakers

April-May

- Notify NADCP of your National Drug Court Month events including total number of graduates expected
- Assemble talking points for your media outreach to include relevant local and national statistics
- Prepare a media kit
- Send NADCP media clips and pictures for posting on Facebook and for use during 18th Annual NADCP Training Conference
- Send ALL media clips to your state and elected officials
National Drug Court Month Event Ideas

Most Drug Courts typically hold a commencement ceremony during National Drug Court Month. But there are many types of events you can schedule in addition to a commencement that will generate media interest in your program and foster community support. Here are a couple of events Drug Courts have successfully used in the past. **Elected officials can be invited to attend all of these events!**

1) **District Meeting with Member of Congress:** Schedule a meeting with your Member of Congress while they are home for Constituent Work Week (May 1-4, May 21-25). Have your Drug Court judge and a graduate attend the meeting and educate them on why they should support Drug Courts, or thank them for their support (instructions on Page 11).

2) **Community Clean-Up:** Clean up a park, a street, a highway or a school. Invite past Drug Court graduates to join and encourage all court staff, law enforcement, probation etc to join in.

3) **Community/Alumni Picnic:** These are perfect opportunities for your participants to meet and talk with past graduates, as well as a way to foster community support. Offer free food and invite the public to come learn more about their local Drug Court.

4) **School Assembly:** Many Drug Courts do outreach in local schools. This is a great way for you participants to give back and to spread a positive message to youth in the community.

5) **5K Run:** Another fun community event that could turn into an excellent tradition and fundraising opportunity.

6) **Softball Game:** A couple years ago there was a great story about a softball game between local law enforcement and Drug Court participants. The game was covered by the local press and was a tremendous success.

7) **Donation Drive:** This can be done all month long. Choose a local food bank or charity and help them raise donations. This can also be used to get local businesses involved with your court.

8) **Fundraiser:** Many Drug Courts have associated non-profits. National Drug Court Month is an excellent time for a fundraising event.
Talking Points

National Drug Court Month

This May, Drug Courts around the country are honoring National Drug Court Month by holding events with the theme “Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion.”

National Drug Court Month is an annual national celebration of Drug Courts coordinated by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

National Drug Court Month shines a light on the collective impact of Drug Courts, including DWI Courts and Veterans Treatment Courts, highlighting the countless lives saved, families reunited, and communities made safer by these programs.

National Drug Court Month sends a message to all policymakers – local, state and national – that Drug Courts are a Proven Budget Solution and must be expanded.

Drug Courts

Drug Courts save money, cut crime and serve veterans in need of substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Drug Courts are a critical component of criminal justice reform.

Drug Courts are the nation’s most successful criminal justice program.

Drug Courts have bipartisan support in Congress.

There are over 2,600 Drug Courts in the United States.

Drug Courts serve over 130,000 seriously addicted, prison-bound individuals a year.

Since 1989, Drug Courts have served over 1 million seriously addicted people.

Drug Courts save up to $27 for every $1 invested.¹

Drug Courts save about $13,000 for every individual they serve.\(^2\)

75% of Drug Court graduates are never arrested again.\(^3\)

The Government Accountability Office recently released a report finding that Drug Courts save money and reduce substance abuse and crime.

Drug Courts are the nation's most effective strategy in reducing recidivism - especially among drug-addicted offenders with long criminal histories.

**Veterans Treatment Courts**

The first Veterans Treatment Court launched in January, 2008 in Buffalo, NY following increasing numbers of veterans on city court dockets with substance abuse and mental health issues. Since its inception, not one veteran has been rearrested.

- 1 in 5 veterans has symptoms of a mental disorder or cognitive impairment\(^4\)
- 1 in 6 veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom suffers from a substance abuse issue\(^5\)
- Research continues to draw a link between substance abuse and combat-related mental illness
- Research indicates that combat related PTSD can lead directly to aggressive behavior and domestic violence.
- Combat veterans with PTSD experience high rates of family dysfunction.
- Currently 107,000 homeless veterans and 76% have a substance abuse or mental health disorder.\(^6\)

Veterans Treatment Courts are working with local law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure that veterans are identified upon arrest, partnering with local Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, VA Regional Offices and collaborating with Veterans Service Organizations/State Department of Veterans Affairs to connect veterans with the benefits and services they have earned.

Veterans Treatment Courts evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans with diagnosed substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

\(^2\) Ibid.
Veterans Treatment Courts build upon military camaraderie by allowing participants to go through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated and have common past experiences and through the use of volunteer veteran mentors.

Veterans Treatment Courts are working with local law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure that veterans are identified upon arrest, partnering with local Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, VA Regional Offices and collaborating with Veterans Service Organizations/State Department of Veterans Affairs to connect veterans with the benefits and services they have earned.

Veterans Treatment Courts are supported by the nation’s leading Veterans Service Organizations including American Legion, VFW, AMVETS, Marine Corps League,

**DWI Courts**

There are over 2 million drivers with three or more Driving While Impaired (DWI) convictions in the United States. Every year more than half of the alcohol-impaired fatalities involve a driver with a BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) of .15 or higher.

DWI Courts hold DWI offenders accountable, save valuable resources, and make the community safer.

DWI Courts operate in a post-conviction model using intensive supervision and treatment to change the person's behavior.

DWI Courts use all the criminal justice stakeholders (judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, law enforcement, probation, and treatment) in a cooperative approach to ensure accountability.

In a study of three Michigan DWI Courts, DWI court participants were up to 19 times less likely to be re-arrested for DWI than a DWI offender in a traditional court.

In a study funded by NHTSA of three Georgia DWI Courts, DWI court participants had a 15% recidivism rate versus 24% for traditional courts.

In the same Georgia Study, it is estimated that DWI Courts resulted in between 47 and 112 fewer DWI arrests for those jurisdictions.

The following organizations have passed resolutions in support of DWI Courts:

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7 Mothers Against Drunk Driving, *New Data Shows Disturbing Number of Repeat Drunk Drivers on America’s Roadways*, press release, November 25, 2009.

American Judges Association; The Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA); The Highway Safety Committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP); Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); The National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA); The National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators (NAPC); The National District Attorneys Association; and, The National Sherriff's Association (NSA).
Webinar: How to Plan a Successful National Drug Court Month

In our ongoing effort to provide you with the resources you need to plan National Drug Court Month, NADCP is proud to offer the first National Drug Court Month Webinar!

When: Wednesday, February 22 at 2:00 PM EST

Presenters:

Connie Payne, Administrative Office of the Courts, KY

Jennifer Grandal, Senior Court Operations Consultant
Office of the State Courts Administrator, FL

Tonya Voelker, Associate Director of Legislative Affairs, NADCP

This webinar will cover:

- Planning and scheduling special events
- Ensuring your resolution is passed
- Inviting Members of Congress to attend your event
- Statewide National Drug Court Month Coordination
- Engaging the media

REGISTER TODAY

Don’t worry, if you can’t tune in, the webinar will be posted at the National Drug Court Month online headquarters: www.NADCP.org/NDCM-2012-Webinar
Getting Members of Congress to Your Event

May 1-4 & May 21-30

Our goal this year is for every Member of Congress to attend a Drug Court event during May. This May, Senators and Representatives will be in their home districts for two weeks in May, May 1-4 and May 21-30. This means that Members of Congress will be in their home states and eager to meet with constituents. **We encourage every Drug Court to reach out to invite their members to attend a graduation ceremony, regular Drug Court session or special Drug Court event.**

This is one of the best opportunities we have to make them lifetime supporters of Drug Courts.

In addition to inviting members of Congress, you can invite your governor, your mayor, your state legislators, your chief of police, and your local media. Nothing communicates the vision, purpose, and effectiveness of Drug Court as clearly as a graduation/commencement ceremony.

**NADCP stands ready to help you in securing the attendance of your Members of Congress. Please contact us for assistance!**

Tonya L. Voelker
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tvoelker@nadcp.org

Judge Phillip Shepherd shakes hands with a graduate of the Franklin County Drug Court in Kentucky
Steps for Inviting Your Member of Congress

It is easy to forget sometimes that your Members of Congress work for you - the constituent. But they do! Community events are important to Members, particularly when there is press coverage. Your National Drug Court Month Commencement Ceremony is a perfect event to invite them to attend.

Step 1 - Call Your Congressional Member’s Washington, D.C. Office

- Go to http://capwiz.com/nadcp/home/ and get your Member’s contact information by entering your zip code. (This is also a great resource for when you send your Members of Congress all of the fantastic National Drug Court Month press your court receives!)

- In your initial call, ask for the staff person who is “responsible” for Judicial/Drug Court issues in that Member’s office (usually the Judicial Legislative Assistant). Staff turnover on the Hill is frequent so any staffer you have previously met may be gone.

- Each Member of Congress also has someone on staff called the “Scheduler” who will NOT be the same person in charge of Drug Court issues. It is best to contact BOTH the scheduler and staff member.

- When you reach the appropriate staff person, tell them who you are and that you would like to invite your Member of Congress to a special National Drug Court Month Commencement Event during District Work Week (May 1-4, or May 21-25).

- Tell them that the ceremony is a part of National Drug Court Month and you would be honored if the Member would attend and provide keynote remarks. Let them know if press will be attending.

- The staff person will likely refer you to the Member’s Scheduler. If they do not, ask for the Scheduler’s contact information.

- It is imperative that you talk to either the staffer or the Scheduler during that initial call. If you get the staffer’s voice mail, leave a message and call the office back and ask for the Scheduler and make your request to him/her as well. Schedulers will often ask you to fill out a meeting request form and fax it back to them. Follow up your first contact with an email within 24 hours summarizing your request.
Step 2 - Make a follow-up call

A few days after you fax, or email, your request letter, follow-up with a phone call to the staff person confirming they received the request letter.

If the Scheduler says they have not made a decision on the invitation request yet:

- Acknowledge the amount of requests the Scheduler receives and thank the Scheduler for his/her time trying to accommodate your request.
- You may also want to mention any notable figures, public officials or community leaders who have confirmed attendance to the event.
- Ask when would be a good time to call back to confirm.

If the Scheduler says the Member of Congress will not be able to attend:

- Ask if there is another date that would work better (for future invites).
- Ask if there is a staff member who would be able to attend in the Member’s place.

If the Scheduler says the Member of Congress will be able to attend:

- Thank the Scheduler for his/her help.
- Confirm the key details: date, time, length of event, Member’s Role.
- Provide your cell phone number for any last minute changes.

Step 3 - Notify NADCP after you have scheduled your Member to attend.

Contact us and provide the following information:

1. Name of Member(s) of Congress and/or staff person attending
2. Date and time of ceremony

Tonya L. Voelker
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National Association of Drug Court Professionals
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571-384-1863 (Direct Line)
tvoelker@nadcp.org
Step 4 - Re-confirm the visit

A few days before the ceremony, contact the Member's Scheduler to confirm your meeting date and time. Life moves pretty quickly for Members and their staff often have to rearrange their schedules at the last minute. Again, staff will appreciate that you did!

Step 5- Day of the event

Expect that staff members may accompany the Member of Congress even if it was not specifically mentioned.

Consider appointing a person to greet and/or escort the official during the event and provide materials about Drug Courts to the Member including the NADCP Capitol Hill Brief and any state or local Drug Court information, data or research.

Ensure that media representatives who attend know the elected official is present. Likewise, ensure the Member of Congress and his/her staff know that media is present.

Step 5 – Thank your Member of Congress for attending!

Following your event, make sure to send a personalized “thank you” to your Member for attending. It is important for them to understand how much you appreciate their visit and this will help build a lasting relationship with your Member.
Sample Letter of Invitation to an Event

To: [Your Senator or Representative]
ATTN: [In-District Scheduler]
CC: [Judiciary LA]
FAX: [Congressional Office fax number]
FROM: [Your Name and City, State]
RE: Visit from Constituents
DATE: [Current Date]

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman XXXXXXX:

It is my honor to invite you to provide the commencement address at the graduation ceremony of the XXXX Drug Court, [date, time, location].

This graduation will occur during National Drug Court Month, a national celebration of Drug Courts throughout the United States. The event will recognize the men and women who have completed Drug Court and are leaving the program as productive members of society.

The [YOUR COURT] represents a proven budget solution for [YOUR LOCATION]. Our Drug Court is truly making a difference, from reducing drug use and recidivism, to reuniting families and making our community safer. By transforming the lives of our participants, we are saving our state valuable resources. As our district’s representative [IF INVITING SENATOR, INSERT: As the U.S. Senator for XXX], it would be an honor to have you address our Drug Court graduates. We have also invited [LIST INVITEES] and are working with local media to cover the event.

[ADD BASIC INFO ON YOUR COURT]

Thank you for your service to our community and for your consideration of this invitation. If you have any questions you can contact me at:

Sincerely,

Name
Title
Schedule a District Meeting

Go to http://capwiz.com/nadcp/home/ and get your Member’s contact information by entering your zip code. (This is also a great resource for when you send your Members of Congress all of the fantastic National Drug Court Month press your court receives!)

In your initial call, ask for the staff person who is “responsible” for Judicial/Drug Court issues in that Member’s office (usually the Judicial Legislative Assistant). Staff turnover on the Hill is frequent so any staffer you have previously met may be gone.

Each Member of Congress also has someone on staff called the “Scheduler” who will NOT be the same person in charge of Drug Court issues. It is best to contact BOTH the scheduler and staff member.

When you reach the right staff person:

WHO - Tell the staff person who you are (constituent, if you are involved with a Drug Court, etc.) and that during National Drug Court Month you would like to set up a meeting with your Member of Congress during the Constituent Work Week [May 1-4 or May 21-15].

WHAT - Tell the staff person that you would like to update the Member on the Drug Court work in his/her community and invite a Drug Court graduate to attend. Tell them you would also like to discuss the Federal Drug Court funding.

CONTACT - Ask for the staff person's email and/or fax number so that you may send a meeting request letter* and a copy of NADCP's NADCP Capitol Hill Brief. It is important to give information to the staff person prior to the meeting in order for the Member of Congress to be informed and prepared for your meeting.

SCHEDULE – The Judiciary LA will usually transfer you to the In-District Scheduler, however, it is best to ask for the In-District Scheduler's name and contact information from the Judiciary LA prior to the transfer.

FOLLOW-UP – Pursue the In-District Scheduler to ensure the meeting has been arranged. Staff are extremely busy, so do not be afraid to call back or email if you do not get a response. Remember, this is YOUR representative. You have a right to meet with him or her. Ask if they received your request letter. If they did not, send it again until a meeting date and time is set.
Sample District Meeting Request Letter

To:  [Your Senator or Representative]
ATTN:  [In-District Scheduler]
CC:  [Judiciary LA]
FAX:  [Congressional Office fax number]
FROM:  [Your Name and City, State]
RE:  Visit from Constituents
DATE:  [Current Date]

Dear [Your Senator or Representative]:

As a Drug Court Professional/Drug Court Graduate/Concerned Citizen and your constituent, I am writing to request an opportunity to meet with you while Congress is in recess on [insert date]. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss National Drug Court Month and how Drug Courts in our community are saving lives and saving money. I would also like to discuss Federal funding for Drug Courts.

I am including the Drug Court Capitol Hill Brief that includes recently published studies on the success of Drug Courts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my request. To confirm the meeting date and time please feel free to contact me at [phone number and email address].

Sincerely,

Name
Title
Resolution/Proclamation

In Support of
“National Drug Court Month”

WHEREAS, Drug Courts are a proven budget solution that benefit all facets of society; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts are an essential component of our justice system which save vast criminal justice resources and keep individuals out of jail and engaged with their communities as productive, tax-paying citizens; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts are the most effective tool in the criminal justice system for saving money, cutting crime and serving veterans; and

WHEREAS, Results of more than 100 program evaluations and at least four meta-analytic studies have yielded definitive evidence that Drug Courts significantly improve substance-abuse treatment outcomes, substantially reduce drug abuse and crime, and do so at less expense than any other justice strategy; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts facilitate community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health professionals in the fight against drug abuse and criminality; and

WHEREAS, The Drug Court movement has grown from the 12 original Drug Courts in 1994 to over 2,600 operational Drug Courts; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts demonstrate that when one person rises out of drugs and crime, we ALL RISE; and

WHEREAS, The time has come to put a Drug Court within reach of every eligible person in need.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ____________________________ declares that a “Drug Court Month” be established during the Month of May, 2012, recognizing the significant contributions Drug Courts have made toward reducing substance abuse, crime, and recidivism while saving valuable resources.
PSA’s

NADCP had produced over two dozen star-studded PSA’s. This year, they will be available for you to run on local television during National Drug Court Month, and to use as educational material during special events and commencement ceremonies. To view available PSA’s, visit http://www.NADCP.org/NDCM-2012-PSA

If you are interested, contact NADCP’s Social Media, Web Marketing and Distance Learning Specialist Nejla Routsong: nroutsong@nadcp.org. We will send you a link to download your PSA’s on the spot. Once you have them, contact your local television station and ask them to run them for National Drug Court Month. If you would like to add a special image or message to the end of the PSA’s please do so.
Media Guide

It is helpful to have a media kit on hand as you begin to engage your local media in a dialogue about your Drug Court program. Your media kit should be a concise, attractive package of background information about your local Drug Court and national issues relevant to your locale. Your kit does not need to be glossy or expensive. The press appreciates brevity, clarity, and newsworthy content.

Media Kit Components

- Press release (see the sample release in this kit).
- Media alert (see sample alert in this kit).
- Fact sheets on national Drug Courts (feel free use any of the talking points included in this packet).
- Your mission statement and goals.
- A backgrounder that highlights the history behind your local drug court.
- Brochures, newsletters, and other outreach materials.
- Key staff bios.
- “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) - a sheet that provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about Drug Courts (see the various talking points throughout this packet for examples).
- Glossy black and white photographs of spokespeople, 5”x7” or 8”x10” (with short bios), or photos of a Drug Court graduation ceremony (optional).
- Sample articles that may have appeared previously in the media (optional).

Media Kit Assembly

Media kits usually are assembled in two-pocket folders. If your kit includes a press release, place it on the right-hand side, in front, to ensure visibility. Remember to include a business card. All materials should be dated.

Prepare enough kits to send to each local media outlet on your list, and have more copies on-hand to dispense to reporters on request.

Extra Mileage

You can alter your media kit slightly and use it for other purposes and audiences - as a general information kit for speaker bureau pitches, potential funders, volunteers, events/conferences, and other important purposes.
Tips on Contacting the Media

For help with media outreach or for contact information for media in your state, contact Chris Deutsch at cdeutsch@nadcp.org.

Making the Right Contacts

Making media contacts takes time, so make the most of the time you invest by making the right contacts. Before you send a media kit, press release, or media advisory, take the time to:

- Call each newspaper, periodical, TV station, or radio station on your list.
- Ask for the name of the editor or reporter to whom your material should be directed (e.g., the legal editor).
- Ask whether press releases and media advisories should be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed (media kits, obviously, should be mailed or delivered).
- Get the mailing address (and an e-mail address and a fax number, if appropriate).

Once you have the right information, store it all in a file or a database so that it will be on-hand for future projects. At least once each year, review the material and update it, as needed.

Targeting the Full Range of the Media

Hometown newspapers and local cable stations can help you increase public awareness of Drug Courts. However, also consider regional and national media outlets that may be at your disposal. Simply select the outlets that are likely to reach the audience that you need. Think about contacting all of the following and more.

Print

- City dailies - An obvious choice if you are in an urban area, but consider them too if you are in a rural program. You may be 100 miles from the city, but if the people in your community read the city paper, the paper has a reason to consider covering your event.
- Daily and weekly community papers.
- Local university/college press.
- Regional and trade magazines.
- Bar journals, newsletters, magazines, and publications targeted to other disciplines that may have a special interest in court-based intervention programs.
• Special interest newspapers and magazines (e.g., non-English language papers).

• Newspapers and newsletters published by local military bases or large companies (call first to see if they cover community events/news).

**Broadcast**

• Local TV stations: commercial, public, and cable.
  - News editors
  - Community interest programs*

• Local radio stations: commercial and public.
  - News editors
  - Community interest programs*

*With respect to community interest programs:

• If you hope to get “air time” on community interest programs, be sure to have a spokesperson available and prepared to represent your court. The spokesperson should be knowledgeable about your court and the national Drug Court movement. He or she should be able to speak from a position of authority (i.e., a Drug Court judge or elected or appointed prosecutor).

• Be selective. Familiarize yourself with the groups (in terms of format, questioning techniques, and the like) that you solicit. Remember that the goal is to increase positive awareness of Drug Courts. If you have any doubts, lay the groundwork for the interview.
How to Write a Press Release or Media Advisory

Press releases and media advisories are excellent tools for letting the press know about the importance of your upcoming Drug Court event. You can include a press release or media advisory in your media kit, and you can also distribute them individually.

Whenever possible, press releases should be issued well in advance of the event or information that you are hoping to cover. If you are using a press release to provide advance notice of an upcoming graduation ceremony or other event, send a release three weeks in advance and then again the day before the event.

Media advisories are typically sent immediately prior to your event, within one week of the date. E-mail or fax it to everyone on your media list as a reminder of the event. Include the media advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment. Make follow-up calls to ensure that all of the contacts on your list received the e-mail or fax. Take the opportunity to pitch the story one last time.

When to Send a Press Release or Media Advisory

Before deciding to send a release or advisory, ask yourself:

- What do we hope to accomplish in sending out a press release or media advisory? [Will media coverage help you achieve your goal?]
- Who wants or needs to know, or cares (outside of your Drug Court)? [Which media outlets are most likely to reach the audience(s) in need of the information you want to share?]
- Will news coverage help us, and if so, how?

Purpose of a Press Release

- To issue a statement or take a stand on a newsworthy development or issue.
- To provide background information or supplement late-breaking news.
- To announce other news, such as the findings of a study, the results of a poll, recommendations in a report or a special event such as a Drug Court graduation.

Purpose of a Media Advisory

- To advise the media of an event, such as a Drug Court graduation ceremony.
- To get the media to attend your event.
- To provide background information on who, what, when, where, and most importantly, why. It should follow-up on the press release you sent earlier.
How to Format a Press Release or Media Advisory

Press Release

- Type it on your Drug Court’s letterhead (8 1/2” x 11”).
- List a contact person and his or her phone number and e-mail address in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
- Write “IMMEDIATE RELEASE” in the upper, left-hand corner of the page.
- Come down almost a third of a page and center the title of the release; use a brief and catchy headline to describe the story.
- Be brief - one to two typed, double-spaced pages, with wide margins. Avoid printing on the front and back.
- Use a “dateline” that includes the date, time, and location.
- Write in an active voice, and use short sentences and paragraphs. (In sentences written in an active voice, the subject performs the action expressed in the verb.)
- If your release is longer than one page, type “-MORE-” at the bottom of every page that continues.
- Identify subsequent pages with a “slug,” i.e., a one-word description from the headline followed by the page number in the upper, left-hand corner. (Pages can easily get separated in a newsroom.)
- Indicate the end of the release by typing “###” at the end of the final page.
- Carefully proofread your release.

Media Advisory

- Type it on 8½” x 11” letterhead.
- List a contact person and a phone number.
- Create an eye-catching, informative headline.
- Type “Media Advisory” at the top.
- Include a release date.
- List the date, time, and location of the event.
- Describe the event and any photo opportunities.
- Limit the advisory to one page.
- Type “###” centered at the bottom of the page to show its end.
Content

Press Release

- Use inverted, pyramid writing style and state facts in descending order of importance.
- Include at least two to three of the five W’s (Who, What, Where, When, and Why) in the lead (first) paragraph. Summarize the climax in the lead. It should “hook” the reporter into reading the rest of your release.
- Include the remaining Ws in the second paragraph.
- Identify your Drug Court spokesperson no later than in the third paragraph.
- Use quotes to make an emotional point or to state an opinion. A good release usually contains at least one or two quotes (including at least one that appears within the first four paragraphs).
- Include background information about your Drug Court in the last paragraph.
- Double-check names, dates, places, numbers, and quotes for accuracy.

Media Alert

- Use inverted, pyramid writing style and state facts in descending order of importance.
- Include who, what, where, when, and why.
- Double-check names, dates, places, numbers, and quotes for accuracy.
Sample Press Release and Media Advisory

Remember: There is nothing to be gained by spending time making your release or advisory unique in either structure or organization. The standard press release or media advisory will suffice, as members of the press know precisely where to look to find the information that they need.

Use the sample press release and media advisory provided in this field kit as your models. Remember to include basic background material on Drug Courts on both a local and national level in your press release.
Drug Court Celebrates “National Drug Court Month” With Graduation/Commencement Ceremony

“XXX Slated To Deliver Keynote Address”

CITY, STATE, DATE—In celebration of “National Drug Court Month,” the [NAME OF DRUG COURT] will hold a graduation ceremony on [DATE] at [LOCATION]. The Hon. XXX, chief executive of XXXXX County, will deliver the keynote address. This is the court’s Xth ceremony since it was founded in XXXX.

More than XX men and women are expected to be among this year’s graduates. The ceremony marks their completion of an intensive program of comprehensive drug treatment, close supervision, and full accountability.

“National Drug Court Month” is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). This year, Drug Courts throughout the nation are celebrating National Drug Court Month with the theme: “Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion.” Next week’s uplifting commencement ceremony is evidence of the tremendous impact the [NAME OF COURT] has had on our community and will send a powerful message that Drug Courts are a proven budget solution that saves lives and money.
Like the other 2,600 operational Drug Courts in the United States, the [NAME OF COURT] is a judicially-supervised court docket that reduces correctional costs, protects community safety, and improves public welfare. In Drug Courts, seriously drug-addicted individuals remain in treatment for long periods of time while under close supervision. Drug Court participants must meet their obligation to themselves, their families, and society. To ensure accountability, they are regularly and randomly tested for drug use, required to appear frequently in court for the judge to review their progress, rewarded for doing well and sanctioned for not living up to their obligations. Research continues to show that Drug Courts work better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone.

Drug Courts are this nation’s most effective strategy at reducing recidivism among seriously drug addicted, nonviolent offenders with long criminal histories. Nationally, 75% of individuals who complete Drug Court are not re-arrested. Drug Courts save up to $13,000 for every individual they serve and return as much as $27 for every $1 invested. “Drug Courts are a proven budget solution and must be expanded,” said NADCP CEO West Huddleston. “This May, Drug Courts throughout the country are demonstrating that a combination of accountability and compassion should be the foundation upon which our criminal justice system handles drug addicted individuals. By treating our chronically addicted offenders, we can save vast amounts of money, protect public safety and reduce drug abuse in the community.” Mr. Huddleston acknowledged the progress of the last two decades but stated that more can be done. “In order to truly end the cycle of substance abuse and crime,” he added, “we must put a Drug Court within reach of every eligible American.”

[PROVIDE INFORMATION ON YOUR COURT]

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Sample Media Advisory

(If you would like national Drug Court Commencement Day statistics to include in your media advisory, please contact Chris Deutsch at cdeutsch@nadcp.org.)

MEDIA ADVISORY
(Date of Release)

For Immediate Release
Contact: Name/Phone

Drug Courts Across the Country Celebrate “National Drug Court Month”
(Your Local Court Name) Celebrates by Honoring Program Graduates

WHO: Your Drug Court Name and all VIP attendees

WHAT: Graduation of (provide number of graduates) Drug Court participants in conjunction with “National Drug Court Month,” the annual celebration of Drug Courts in the United States.

WHERE: Location of graduation ceremony

WHEN: Date and time of graduation ceremony
Put details of ceremony in bullets, include all invited guests

WHY: The graduation ceremony will showcase the accomplishments of the Drug Court participants and the successes of the Drug Court program since its establishment in (your city, state). All members of the Drug Court team - the judge, the prosecutor, the public defender, law enforcement and treatment professionals, as well as the graduates’ families, will be in attendance celebrating the graduation of this session’s participants and “National Drug Court Month.”

If a VIP is providing a keynote address, be sure to let the press know!

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**Write and place an OpEd**

National Drug Court Month typically gets significant media attention. One way to enhance this attention and ensure our message gets out is to write an Opinion Editorial (OpEd).

One of the unforeseen outcomes of the current financial crisis is a renewed interest in criminal justice reform. This makes our National Drug Court Month theme even more relevant. An OpEd is a great way to remind your legislators that Drug Courts are a **Proven Budget Solution** and must have their support.

Here are tips for getting your OpEd published.

**Find a news hook.** Your Drug Court graduation is newsworthy. Give it an extra hook by relating it to the broader discussion of the economy. Your hook is that Drug Court is a proven budget solution that must be expanded in order to save valuable resources. (If your Drug Court is in jeopardy of losing funding – say so!)

**Know the word limit.** Newspapers have limited space, and editors don’t have the time to cut your piece down to size. In general, 750 to 800 words will do, but check the paper’s op-ed page to find out their preference.

**Stick to a single point.** You only have 750 to 800 words. Make one point clearly and persuasively.

**“Humanize” your OpEd.** Illustrations, anecdotes and personal stories help explain and bring complicated issues to life. Think about your personal experiences in Drug Court and use them in the OpEd.

**Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece. State your opinion on what is needed to ensure your Drug Court can continue to operate effectively.

**Draw the reader in, but get to the point.** Your first paragraph should draw the reader in by using a dramatic vignette or a well-stated argument. If you choose to open with an anecdote or other device, make sure you quickly get to the point.

**End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph.

**Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you within a week. If you haven’t heard in that time frame or if your piece is particularly time sensitive, you can make one follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.
Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion

This May, Drug Courts throughout [YOUR STATE] will join over 2,600 Drug Courts nationwide in celebrating National Drug Court Month. By month’s end, thousands of individuals who entered the criminal justice system addicted to drugs and facing incarceration will complete Drug Court and emerge as productive, taxpaying citizens.

National Drug Court Month arrives amid renewed interest in criminal justice reform. The ongoing budget crisis has compelled national and state leaders to closely examine our criminal justice system to see how best to reduce our costly overreliance on incarceration. Sentencing and prison reform is a start, but if we are serious about reducing substance abuse, crime, and recidivism while saving money for taxpayers, than we must continue to expand Drug Courts.

In [YEAR], the first Drug Court in [YOUR STATE] opened its doors with a simple premise: rather than continue to allow individuals with long histories of drug abuse and crime to cycle through the criminal justice system at great expense to the public, use the leverage of the court to keep them engaged in drug treatment long enough to be successful. Today, Drug Courts have proven that a combination of accountability and compassion can not only save lives, but save valuable resources and reduce exorbitant criminal justice costs.

More research has been published on the effects of Drug Courts than virtually all other criminal justice programs combined. Recently, the U.S. Government Accountability Office submitted a report to the Congress confirming Drug Courts reduce substance abuse and crime and save money. Nationally, Drug Courts return to the community up to $27 for every $1 invested. Drug Courts reduce crime by up to 50%, and the longest study to date shows reductions lasted an astounding 14 years. Moreover, studies show that the more serious an individual’s drug addiction and the longer his or her criminal record, the better Drug Courts work. This approach not only diverts individuals from a life of drug abuse and crime, but has been proven to reduce use of jail or prison beds and family conflicts associated with domestic violence and child abuse. In December, the Government Accountability Office submitted a report to Congress confirming Drug Courts reduce substance abuse and crime and save money.

[YOUR STATE] is now home to over [XX] Drug Courts and is setting a national standard for smart on crime justice policies that reduce recidivism and save money. These programs keep our roads safe from drunk drivers, intervene before our youth embark on a debilitating life of drug abuse and crime, and give parents the tools they need to stay clean and maintain custody of their children.
But Drug Courts in [YOUR STATE] are also answering the call to duty by ensuring that veterans who struggle with substance abuse and mental illness upon their return home receive the benefits and treatment they have earned. [PROVIDE STATE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT INFO IF APPLICABLE]

Drug Courts represent a path ahead that will not only save critical money for taxpayers, but save the lives of our neighbors and our troops suffering the ravages of addiction and mental illness. This year’s National Drug Court Month celebration should signal that the time has come to reap the economic and societal benefits of expanding this proven budget solution to all in need.
Tell us what you’re up to during National Drug Court Month

NADCP wants to highlight National Drug Court Month on our Facebook page, our website and at our national conference. In order to present accurate statistics, we ask that you send us information on your National Drug Court Month activities.

Below you will find a form for you to fill out and return to us, as well as a photo release for pictures of Drug Court participants and graduates. You can also enter this information online at www.AllRise.org/NDCM/Submission

**National Drug Court Month on Facebook and YouTube.**

Every day in May NADCP will highlight National Drug Court Month by posting articles, pictures, video’s as well as updates on National Drug Court Month activities. If you would like to see your court highlighted, make sure you send your material and information to cdeutsch@nadcp.org.

These can be very short. Here are some examples:

“**Drug Court in Camden, New Jersey graduates 17 during special National Drug Court Month ceremony**”

“**Colorado Springs Mayor signs special National Drug Court Month Proclamation**”

“**Big Island Drug Court participates in community cleanup as part of National Drug Court Month celebration in Hawaii.**”

“**Veterans Treatment Court hosts ceremony with local VFW in honor of National Drug Court Month.**”
National Drug Court Month Organizational Information

To submit this information online, visit http://www.nadcp.org/ndcm-2012-submissions

Organization ____________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________

City _____________________ State _____ Zip ________

Contact Person

______________________________________________________________

Phone __________________________________________ ______________________

Email __________________________________________ ______________________

Date of Commencement Ceremony

________________________________________

Number of graduates in May

________________________________________

Keynote speaker

_____________________________________________

Members of Congress invited to attend________________________________________

Resolution (state, county, or local) _____ YES  _____ NO

*If yes, please send NADCP a copy

Additional information:
Send NADCP Your Drug Court Month Pictures

Please send us high quality pictures from your National Drug Court Month activities. When you do, please include your name, the name of your court, the names of individuals in pictures.

You must also include a completed photo release form for all Drug Court graduates or participants. Download release forms here.

We will use these pictures online and during a special presentation at the 18th Annual NADCP Training Conference.

You can also submit pictures online at www.NADCP.org/NDCM-2012-Submissions
Photo Release

For valuable consideration received, I hereby grant to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and its legal representatives, licensees, and assigns the irrevocable and unrestricted right to use and publish photographs of me, or photographs in which I may be included, for editorial trade, advertising, and any other purpose and in any manner and medium; and to alter the same without restriction. I hereby release the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and its legal representatives, licensees, and assigns from all claims and liability relating to said photograph.

___________________________________
Name*

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Signature*

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Date*

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Name of Drug Court*

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Address

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Email
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