



# Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program: Advancing Effective Diversion in Wisconsin

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Full reports of evaluation findings are available at  
<http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/about/staff/van-stelle-kit.htm>

Collaboration among the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA), the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC), and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) established the **Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD)** grant program in 2006 to fund projects that provide alternatives to prosecution and incarceration for criminal offenders who abuse alcohol or other drugs.

## DOES TAD WORK?

**Yes!**

The results of the current evaluation reveal that the TAD program effectively diverts non-violent offenders with substance abuse treatment needs from incarceration and reduces criminal justice system costs. TAD projects have positive impacts on individual offenders, communities, and local service systems.

An evaluation of the TAD projects was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to document the implementation of the TAD program in seven Wisconsin sites and examine the individual outcomes of offenders who participated in TAD projects between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2010.

All seven TAD sites provide participants with case management, substance abuse treatment, drug testing, and monitoring, but vary in program model/approach, length, treatment intensity, and target population. Four of the TAD projects are **adult drug treatment courts**: Burnett County (in collaboration with the St. Croix tribe), Washburn County, Wood County, and Rock County. Utilizing standard drug treatment court models, these sites serve non-violent

offenders pre- and post-adjudication through the integration and collaboration of judicial, treatment, probation, social services, law enforcement, and case management services. Three of the TAD projects utilize **diversion models**: Milwaukee County (pre-charging diversion and deferred prosecution), Washington County (diversion of operating while intoxicated and offenders entering an alternative to revocation of correctional supervision), and Dane County (pre-trial bail diversion based in arraignment court).

## Does TAD Provide Evidence-Based Substance Abuse Treatment?

**Yes!**

TAD has a graduation rate of 64% -- 66% for TAD diversion projects and 55% for TAD treatment courts

## Does TAD Divert Offenders From Incarceration?

**Yes!**

A total of 135,118 incarceration days were averted by TAD projects during the first four years of operation

## Does TAD Reduce Recidivism?

**Yes!**

- More than three-quarters of TAD participants (76%) are not convicted of a new crime after program participation
- Successful completion of TAD treatment reduces the likelihood of a new conviction after TAD: 11% of TAD graduates were convicted of a new offense within one year compared to 23% of those who were terminated from TAD projects
- Offenders who complete TAD are nine times less likely to be admitted to state prison after program participation than those who do not complete TAD projects

→ The TAD program has demonstrated that well-coordinated, monitored, and evaluated projects grounded on evidence-based practices (EBPs) deliver fiscal benefits based on costs averted from prison and jail days.

### **Is TAD Cost Effective?**

**Yes!**

**Every \$1.00 invested in TAD yields benefits of \$1.93 to the criminal justice system through averted incarceration and reduced crime**

**TAD treatment courts yield benefits of \$1.35 for every \$1.00 invested**

**TAD diversion projects yield benefits of \$2.08 for every \$1.00 invested**

- TAD projects are effective in both pre-trial and post-conviction applications -- costs associated with continued criminal activity and recidivism can be reduced within this target population at a variety of stages of criminal justice system processing.
- TAD projects are effective in both rural and urban environments -- averted costs can be realized regardless of county size and/or composition.
- The comprehensiveness of future cost-benefit analyses would be improved with the inclusion of an assessment of TAD impacts related to additional factors such as increased employment and productivity, decreased substance use, decreased health care utilization, avoided foster care placements, drug-free births, and avoided crime victimization costs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS**

Based on both the evaluation results and current evidence-based practices, the TAD Advisory Committee developed recommendations for improvement of the TAD program. In addition to the recommendations highlighted below, a comprehensive list of recommendations is available in the full evaluation report.

### **Modify Existing Statutes Related to TAD**

- To allow projects to enroll persons with a prior charge/conviction that would currently exclude them from program eligibility, if the local project team and/or local advisory committee determine that the offender is otherwise appropriate.
- To expand the current limited scope of standards to include criminal justice EBP principles for correctional populations.

### **Quality Assurance**

**Require projects to incorporate evidence-based practices (EBPs) recommended for:**

- Correctional populations,
- Substance abuse treatment,
- Case management,
- Criminal risk and needs assessment,
- Drug treatment courts, and
- Judicial processing/decision-making.

### **State-Level Coordination and Training**

- Continue to structure TAD as a multi-agency, collaborative effort among OJA, DOC, and DHS.
- The State of Wisconsin should coordinate and fund (a) solutions to high volume and critical program functions such as drug testing and mental health services that are integral to all treatment and diversion projects and (b) training for local and state community justice stakeholders on the latest evidence-based practices and treatment standards.

### **Evaluation and Accountability**

- Continue commitment to independent and comprehensive program evaluation through state and local agency partnerships.
- Direct the state agencies responsible for managing administrative data systems to provide evaluation data as part of a shared responsibility.
- Require the development of an accountability system for monitoring, tracking, and utilizing the grant funds and to evaluate grant effectiveness.
- Require a research-based process evaluation targeting critical components to ensure that the project is being delivered as designed.

