

NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH 2017

DRUG COURTS ARE IN PERIL

WILL YOU ACT?



11 years ago, a drug court saved my life. As a person in long-term recovery who now works as a treatment provider, I'm concerned that countless people won't get the same chance I had.

Unless we act.

Abby F.

Drug court graduate, Washington County, ME
Treatment Provider

Dear colleagues,

There is a burden that comes with the work we do. We know better than anyone that no individual is beyond hope. We know that treatment works, and recovery is possible. We know that addiction is a fatal disease. We are the ones our friends and family turn to when a loved one is struggling. We work every day on the front lines.

Knowing what we know, we don't turn away from people in need. In our field, inaction means death.

Every new Administration and Congress faces the immense task of determining their priorities and how they will fund the programs that support those priorities. To save our funding, we must ensure drug courts and veterans treatment courts remain a priority.

Today, NADCP is issuing a call to action on behalf of your future graduates. This May, during National Drug Court Month, every adult, juvenile and family drug court, every DWI court, tribal healing to wellness court, and veterans treatment court **must ensure every Member of Congress attends a graduation ceremony and fights for treatment court funding with a speech at the Capitol.**

Why? If we don't, drug courts and other treatment courts will be eliminated, and the lives of addicted people all across the country will be in peril. We've never turned our backs on our participants and graduates, and we won't do so now. We'll continue to fight to save these valuable lives.

In this kit, you will find everything you need to make this happen. NADCP stands ready to assist you in every way we can. Together, we will fight to save treatment court funding and the countless mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters it serves.

Thank you for the work you do, and thank you for taking a stand this May for every past, present, and future drug court graduate.

Sincerely,



Carson Fox, CEO, NADCP

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Fight for Your Graduates

Every new Administration and Congress faces the immense task of determining their priorities and goals and how they will fund the programs that support and achieve those goals.

We must fight for future drug court graduates and ensure your Members of Congress support federal funding.

Your call to action:

- 1) Get your Senator and Representative to attend a graduation.** The single most important thing you can do is ensure your Members attend a graduation ceremony. Instructions for how to do this begin on page 6.

Recommended Graduation Ceremony Dates:

- **May 5-15** – *House Members will be in their districts*
- **May 26 – June 5** – *House and Senate Members will be in their districts*

- 2) Urge them to read a one-minute speech in the Capitol** in support of treatment courts and their continued funding. A sample speech is provided on page 11.

Questions? Contact Greg Loeffler, NADCP Public Affairs Associate, at 571-384-1877 or gloeffler@allrise.org.

Today, I'm a veteran mentor in the veterans treatment court that saved my life. Will my fellow vets have the same opportunity?

Tim W.

Veterans treatment court graduate, Philadelphia, PA
Veteran Mentor Coordinator

Instructions

Step 1: Call your Member of Congress's office in Washington, DC.

- [Click here](#) to get your Member's contact information.
- Ask to speak to the person handling judiciary issues, most often the **Judicial Legislative Assistant (JLA)**. Get his/her email address and ask for the scheduler's email address as well.
- If the JLA is available:
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Urge your Member to fight for drug court funding with two critical actions:
 - 1. Keynote speaker at graduation ceremony:**
Give the date, location, and details.
Inform them that media will be present.
 - 2. One-minute speech on the floor in support of your graduates:**
May is National Drug Court Month.
You have drafted a one-minute speech; ask that they read it on the floor.
- Follow up with an email (see sample on page 9):
 - Attach the invitation and sample speech (see samples on pages 10-11).
 - Send it to the JLA and scheduler.

Step 2: Send a follow-up email.

- Follow up with an email to the scheduler to confirm that s/he received the requests.
- If your Member will attend:**
 - Confirm the date, time, and duration of the event, as well as the Member's role, particularly if s/he has agreed to serve as the keynote speaker.
 - Provide your contact information, including email address and cell phone number, in case the scheduler needs to advise you of any last-minute changes.
 - Coordinate with the media (see page 13).
 - Offer to provide information on the court program for the Member's speech.
- If your Member has not made a decision:** Ask for a good time to follow up.
- If your Member will not be able to attend:** Ask if another date would work.
- Regardless of whether your Member will be able to attend your event, ask whether the Member would be willing to read a one-minute support speech from the Senate or House floor during the month of May.

Step 3: Notify NADCP as soon as you have confirmed attendance or agreement to read a support speech.

- Contact Greg Loeffler, NADCP Public Affairs Associate, at 571-384-1877 or gloeffler@allrise.org. Provide the following information:
 - Name of Member(s) of Congress and/or staff person attending
 - Date, time, and location of graduation ceremony or event
 - Name of the Member(s) of Congress who will be reading a one-minute support speech

Step 4: Prepare social media.

- Review the sample social media posts provided on pages 17-18, and prepare posts specific to your program and event. Be sure to tag your Members(s) in your posts.

Step 5: Re-confirm that the Member is attending the graduation ceremony via email 3-5 days before.

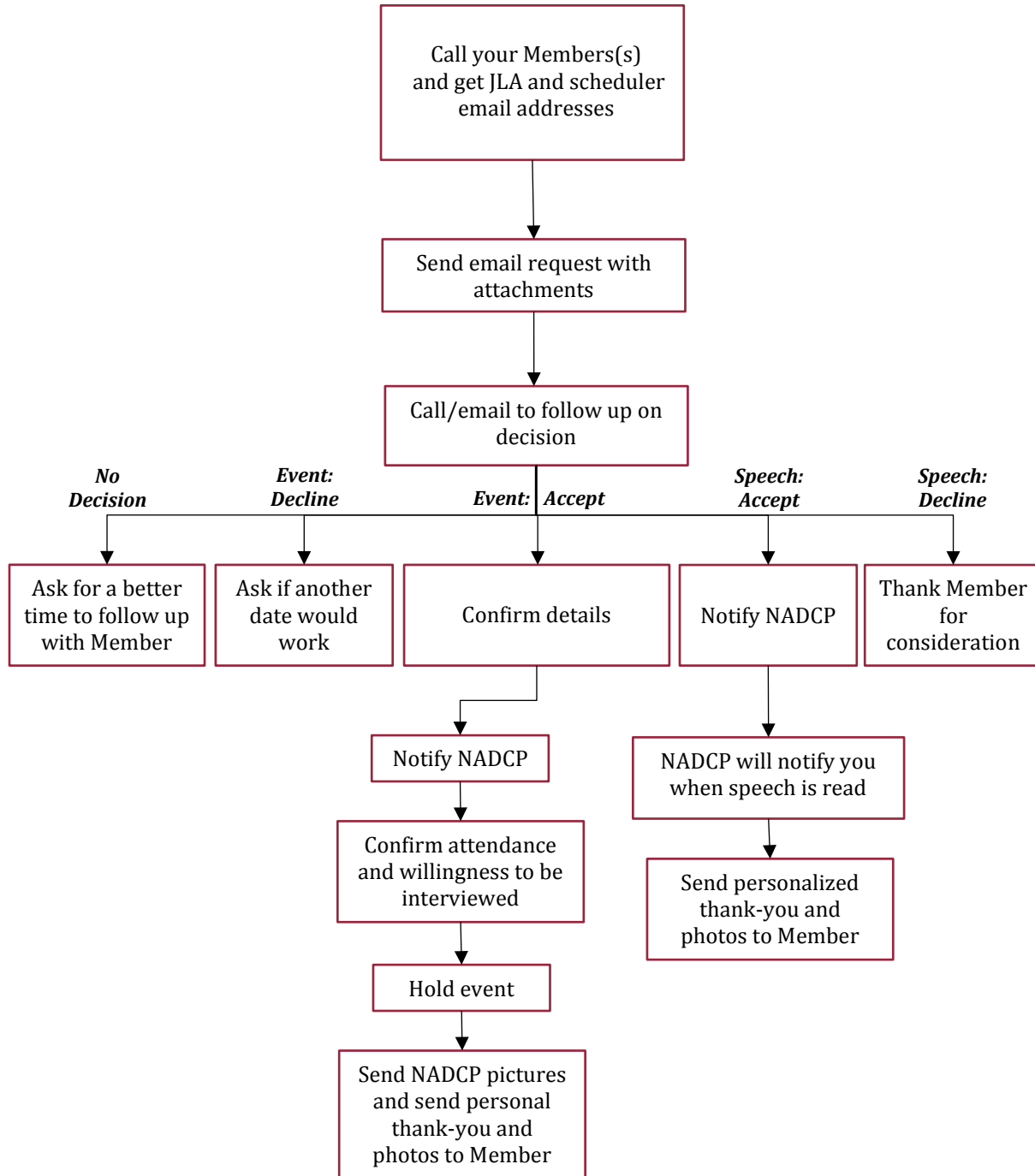
Step 6: Hold your graduation ceremony or event.

- Appoint a person to greet and/or escort the Member(s) during the event. Expect that staff may accompany Members of Congress, even if their attendance was not explicitly mentioned.
- Provide materials about treatment courts to the Member(s) (available for download via the [National Drug Court Month Resource Center](#)). Include any state or local treatment court information, data, or research.
- Ensure media representatives in attendance know that elected official(s) are present. Likewise, ensure the Member(s) of Congress and staff know that the media is present.

Step 7: Send a personal thank-you letter with photos.

- Consider asking your graduates/participants to send letters of thanks as well.

Congress Member Request Process



Sample Email

Send one email with both requests. Attach the official graduation invitation letter and sample support speech.

Dear [Congressional Staffer]:

May is National Drug Court Month, a celebration of the most successful strategy for cutting crime and saving lives and valuable tax dollars. As [Senator/Representative] [last name] represents our community, we need his/her continued support for drug courts and the 150,000 lives they restore each year.

First, it is my honor to invite [Senator/Representative] [last name] to provide the [commencement address/keynote address] at the [graduation ceremony] of the [treatment court] on [time and date]. Media will be invited. Attached please find the event invitation with further details.

Second, we ask that **[Senator/Representative] [last name]** provide one minute of remarks on the floor in support of our drug court graduates and continued federal funding. Attached please find a sample speech for you to adapt and use as desired.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. If you have any questions, or to confirm the event details, please feel free to contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely,

[Your name]
[Your title]

Sample Invitation Letter

Fill out the sample letter below.

To: [Your Senator or Representative]
Attn: [Scheduler]
CC: [Judiciary Legislative Assistant/Staff Member]
From: [Judge name, city, state]
Subject: Visit with Constituents
Date: [Current date]

Dear [Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman] [name]:

As the presiding judge of the [treatment court], it is my honor to invite you to deliver a commencement address during a special ceremony celebrating National Drug Court Month and honoring our most recent graduates on [date] at [time] at [location]. Your support for drug court was critical to giving our graduates an opportunity to address their substance use disorder and become productive citizens. This event—with community leaders, court staff, friends, family, and media in attendance—will be a powerful opportunity for all of us to show our gratitude for your commitment to drug court.

Our drug court is one of nearly 3,200 nationwide annually serving 150,000 people. Drug courts are now the most successful justice program for reducing addiction, crime, and recidivism while saving taxpayer dollars. Our drug court graduates entered the program addicted to drugs and as a drain on the community. Because of the combination of accountability and treatment they received in drug court, they are now going back to school, reuniting with their families, finding employment, and paying taxes. They want to thank you for your continued support of drug court, support that will help future drug court graduates receive the same opportunity.

[Add basic information/statistics on your program.]

As our [Senator/Representative] for [location], it would be an honor to have you address our [graduates/participants/families/etc.]. Thank you for your service to our community and for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, or to confirm the event details, please feel free to contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely,

[Judge name]
[Judge title]

Sample One-minute Support Speech

*Adjust the sample speech below as needed, and email it to each Member of Congress's JLA and scheduler within 24 hours of your initial contact with them. Keep in mind these speeches are **strictly limited to one minute in length.***

Today, I stand to support drug courts in my community and nationwide. I stand in recognition that drug courts are an indispensable resource to law enforcement and other community stakeholders impacted by an opioid epidemic that claims the lives of 91 Americans each day. I stand for the 150,000 people currently involved in drug court who are going back to school, back to work, back to their community as an asset and not a drain.

Drug courts and veterans treatment courts represent one of the most successful strategies in our nation's history for reducing crime. By holding offenders with substance use and mental health disorders accountable through strict supervision and treatment, drug courts and veterans treatment courts have saved billions of tax dollars and saved the lives of over 1.5 million citizens and veterans.

This May, more than 3,000 drug courts and veterans treatment courts in the United States will celebrate National Drug Court Month and the 150,000 people they serve each year. There is no better time to pledge our support for the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and the Veterans Treatment Court Initiative at the Department of Justice.

For evidence of why this is a critical investment for Congress to make, we need look no further than the incredible stories of redemption found in drug courts and veterans treatment courts.

[Insert story of local graduate here.]

I ask that you support the work of drug courts and veterans treatment courts in the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations process so that more lives can be saved, more families reunited, more hard-earned tax dollars spent on solutions that work. Thank you in advance for consideration of our request.

Family drug court gave me my daughter back in 2005. They never gave up on me. I'll always be grateful for that. But what about the next mother or father who can't get into a drug court because there isn't one available?

We can't give up on them.

Karen C.

Family treatment court graduate, Washington, DC

National Drug Court Month Media Kit

Your court's graduation ceremony is newsworthy, especially if one or more Members of Congress attend. It is your responsibility to get media to the event to ensure the Member receives positive coverage.

Designate a media coordinator and spokesperson for your court:

1. The **media coordinator** is responsible for identifying and contacting media for your court.
2. The **media spokesperson** is the individual providing quotes and interviews to the media. The spokesperson must be knowledgeable about your court and able to speak from a position of authority. This is often the judge but could be another key member of the team.

Write your press release. If your Members' attendance is confirmed, let them know you will be sending a press release (use the sample provided on page 14). They may want to see it before it is sent.

Identify media outlets to contact. Don't limit your list to local media; state and regional media may also be interested. If you've worked with reporters in the past, or know of reporters covering criminal justice issues, reach out to them directly. Otherwise, contact the outlet and ask for the assignment desk.

Send your press release. Email your press release to each media outlet 5-10 days prior to the event. Include the release in the body of the email, not as an attachment.

Follow up. Don't be afraid to make repeated calls to follow up. This is often what it takes to get noticed.

Send positive media stories about your treatment court to your Members of Congress and other elected officials. Include both your Representatives and Senators. You can look up contact information for your Members of Congress [here](#).

Note: Personal stories are critical. Ask successful graduates or participants nearing program completion if you can share their story. If they wish to remain anonymous, ask if you can do so without using their name or photo. If you choose to feature a success story from your court, remember that **new participants are in a vulnerable stage and should not be profiled by the media.**

For assistance with media outreach and interviews, contact Brooke Prokopchak, NADCP Associate Director of Communications, at 571-384-1862 or bprokopchak@allrise.org.

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your phone number and email address]

[court logo]

Local Court Celebrates National Drug Court Month with [Event]

[Name] Slated to Deliver Keynote Address

[CITY, STATE, DATE]—In celebration of National Drug Court Month, the [treatment court] will hold a [graduation ceremony/event] on [date] at [location]. [Name (judge, Member of Congress, etc.)] will deliver the keynote address. The event comes as Congress is considering funding for drug courts and will serve as powerful evidence that drug courts are a life-saving budget solution that must have their support.

[This is the court's [#] ceremony since it was founded in [year]. [#] men and women are expected to be among this year's graduates. The ceremony marks their completion of an intensive program of comprehensive substance use treatment, close supervision, and full accountability.] Treatment courts are this nation's most effective strategy to reduce recidivism among substance-addicted, nonviolent offenders with criminal histories. Nationally, 75% of individuals who complete such programs are not re-arrested. These courts save up to \$13,000 for every individual they serve and return as much as \$27 for every \$1 invested.

National Drug Court Month is coordinated by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). This year, treatment courts throughout the nation are advocating to ensure continued federal and state funding for these effective, evidence-based programs. Next week's uplifting [graduation ceremony/event] is evidence of the tremendous impact the [treatment court] has had on our community and will send a powerful message that these programs reduce addiction, crime, and recidivism while saving lives, families, and valuable resources for our state.

[If you have a quote from your judge or a local official, add it here.]

Today, nearly 3,200 treatment courts are in operation in all 50 states, plus US territories, successfully treating close to 150,000 substance-addicted individuals each year. Since 1989, these courts have saved over 1.5 million lives and billions of tax dollars.

“Treatment courts are a proven budget solution that stops the revolving door of arrest and incarceration for people with substance use and mental health disorders,” said NADCP CEO Carson Fox. “Congress must support drug courts so they can continue to restore lives, reunite families, and make communities safer, all while saving millions of valuable taxpayer dollars.”

The [treatment court] is a judicially supervised court docket that reduces correctional costs, enhances community safety, and improves public welfare. In these programs, seriously addicted

individuals remain in treatment for long periods of time while under close supervision. Court participants must meet obligations to themselves, their families, and society.

To ensure accountability, they are regularly and randomly tested for substance use, required to appear frequently in court for the judge to review their progress, rewarded for meeting goals, and sanctioned for not meeting clearly stated obligations.

Research continues to show that treatment courts work better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone.

[If you have a quote from a program graduate, add it here.]

[Provide specific information/statistics on your court here.]

###

Even when I didn't believe in myself,
drug court believed in me. When I
thought I was alone, drug court fought
for me. When I was finally ready for a
change, drug court supported me.
Today, we must do the same for the
countless people who need our help but
have no access.

Take action. It will save.

Adam M., MA, CIP

Drug court graduate, Flagstaff, AZ
Treatment Provider & PhD Candidate

Social Media

Social media is one of the best ways to reach out Members of Congress. **Even a single comment or tweet can catch the eye of the correct staff member and help secure funding.** This May, we want them to read the inspiring stories about your program and see the faces of the lives you have saved. [Click here](#) to get your Members' social media account information.

Remember, posts on social media (text, photos, videos, etc.) are **public content**. Put a system in place to ensure that content posted or shared is 1) factual, 2) appropriate, and 3) in accordance with the principles and responsibilities of your court and the US judicial system.

Below we've provided sample social media content for you to use during National Drug Court Month.

Be sure to follow our [All Rise](#) and [Justice For Vets](#) Facebook pages and our [NADCP/All Rise](#) and [Justice For Vets](#) Twitter accounts for content you can like, share, and retweet all month long! And don't forget about our [YouTube channel](#), which has celebrity PSAs, conference clips, media compilation videos, and much more.

Sample Facebook Posts

Sample 1:

It's National Drug Court Month! Our court is saving lives and reducing crime by offering evidence-based accountability and treatment to people struggling with substance use and mental health disorders. We'd like to thank @[Member of Congress] for supporting treatment courts!

Sample 2:

As part of National Drug Court Month, [treatment court] is joining nearly 3,200 other programs across the country to advance a smart-on-crime approach to justice. Instead of locking people away, we return them to the community as healthy, employed, tax-paying parents, friends, and neighbors. Thank you @[Member of Congress] for supporting treatment courts.

Sample 3:

We know that [jurisdiction] has been hit hard by the opioid epidemic. We can't incarcerate our way out of this problem. That's why the [treatment court] is so critical. We provide intense supervision and treatment to lead people out of the justice system and into long-term recovery. Thank you @[Member of Congress] for supporting treatment courts!

Sample 4 (veterans treatment courts):

We're celebrating the life-saving work of veterans treatment courts across the US the entire month of May. Most veterans return home strengthened by their service. But for those who struggle with the transition, the [veterans treatment court] provides accountability, treatment, and mentoring by other veterans to help get their lives back on track. Thank you @[Member of Congress] for supporting veterans treatment courts!

Sample 5 (DWI courts):

We're celebrating the life-saving work of DWI courts across the country the entire month of May. Every day, DWI courts keep our roads and communities safer while providing accountability and treatment to help repeat impaired drivers get back on track. Thank you @[Member of Congress] for supporting DWI courts!

Sample Tweets

It's Nat'l Drug Court Month! TY @[Member of Congress] for supporting treatment courts that save lives & valuable resources

TY @[Member of Congress] for supporting life-saving drug courts & veterans courts, evidence-based #CJreform

This Nat'l Drug Court Month, we're asking @[Member of Congress] to ensure cont'd funding for live-saving drug courts & veterans courts

#Veterans treatment courts save lives. As part of Nat'l Drug Court Month, we're celebrating serving those who've served us #Justice4Vets

May is National Drug Court Month! We're celebrating leading people out of the justice system and into long-term #recovery #CJreform

May is Nat'l Drug Court Month! Nearly 3,200 treatment courts across the country are breaking the vicious cycle of addiction and crime

Thank You

We at NADCP and our divisions— the [National Drug Court Institute](#), [National Center for DWI Courts](#), and [Justice For Vets](#)—would like to express our profound gratitude to you, the individuals doing such difficult, important, rewarding work day in and day out. From DWI courts to family treatment courts; from tribal healing to wellness courts to juvenile drug courts; from veterans treatment courts to adult drug courts, **our country is learning a better way** to address substance use and mental health disorders in the justice system, **and you are the teachers**. Because of you, millions of lives have seen a level of restoration that would not have been possible otherwise.

Together, we will ensure Congress continues to support your programs and the men and women you serve.

Because of you, we All Rise. Thank you.