



Vermont Statewide Evaluation of Treatment Courts

Washington County Treatment Court Key Findings Report

Submitted by NPC Research
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Evaluation Background

Treatment courts provide integrated substance use disorder treatment, behavioral health services, and intensive judicial supervision as an alternative to incarceration. The ultimate goals of these courts are to reduce rearrests, increase public safety, and provide treatment and other recovery support services to justice-involved individuals with substance use or mental health disorders to promote long-term recovery and enhance the quality of life for participants and their families.

Many studies have demonstrated that treatment courts effectively reduce recidivism, including fewer rearrests and less time incarcerated.¹ These positive outcomes for treatment court participants in turn reduce taxpayer costs with substantial returns on investments. For example, Bhati and colleagues found a cost-benefit ratio of 1:2.2 (that is, for every dollar invested in the program, there is a return of \$2.20),² while Carey et al. found a cost-benefit ratio of 1:4.6 (for every \$1 spent there was a return of \$4.60).³

This report provides the findings of the outcome and cost evaluation for the Washington County Treatment Court (WCTC). In 2021 and 2022, the Vermont Judiciary initiated a statewide process, outcome and cost evaluation of its adult treatment courts: WCTC, Chittenden County Treatment Court (CCTC), Rutland County Treatment Court (RCTC), the Southeast Regional DUI Treatment Docket (SERDTD) and the Chittenden County Mental Health Court (CCMHC). Process evaluation reports were completed in September 2022 that assessed program alignment with best practices.

The outcome evaluation was planned to measure whether the program achieved intended participant outcomes and goals, including reduced recidivism and successful program completion, as well as whether the program delivered treatment and other services as intended. The economic impact of Vermont's treatment courts was evaluated through a detailed cost analysis. The cost evaluation calculated the cost of the program and participant outcomes.

Data were analyzed from several administrative data sources, including program databases, court records, incarceration and probation records, as well as data from local treatment providers. Notably, service and treatment data were found to be incomplete and are therefore not included in this report. *Detailed methodology and data sources are in a separate Methods Appendix provided with this report.*

Findings are presented along with information about the context affecting participant outcomes including program practices, state and local policies, and resources (or lack of).

1. For example, see Carey, S. M., Mackin, J. R., & Finigan, M. W. (2012). What Works? The 10 Key Components of Drug Court: Research Based Best Practices. *Drug Court Review*, 8(1), 6–42.

2. Bhati, A. S., Roman, J. K., & Chalfin, A. (2008). To treat or not to treat: Evidence on the prospects of expanding treatment to drug-involved offenders. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

3. Carey, S. M., & Finigan, M. W. (2004). A Detailed Cost Analysis in a Mature Drug Court Setting: A Cost-Benefit Evaluation of the Multnomah County Drug Court. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*. 20(3) 292-338.

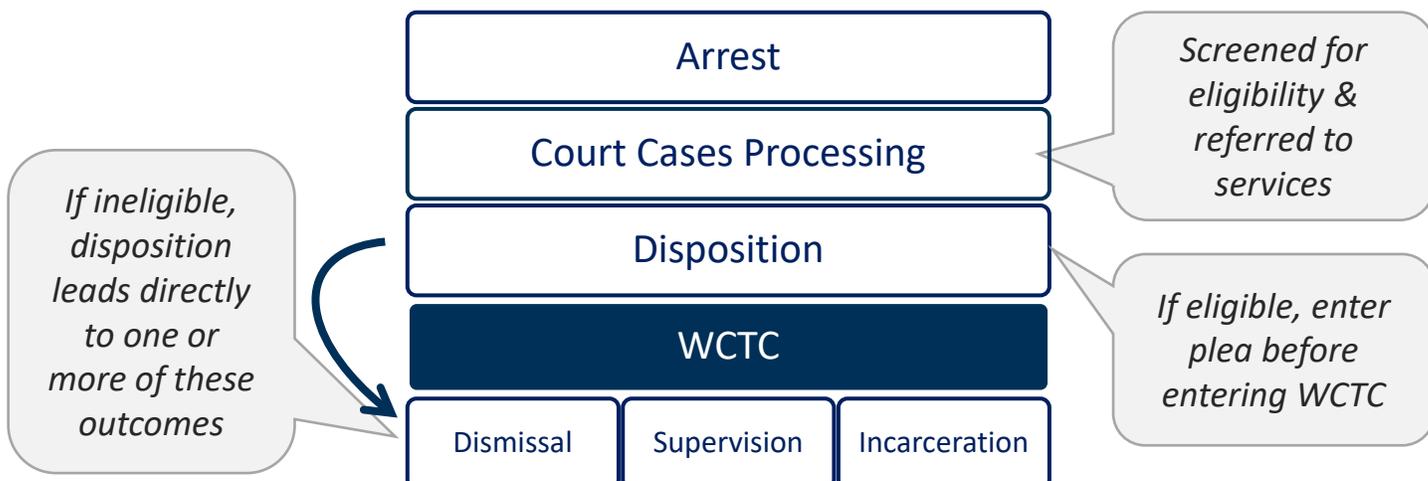
Washington County Treatment Court (WCTC)

Program and Participant Overview



WCTC: Participant Identification and Path

The graphic below illustrates how and at what point in the court case individuals are identified and referred to treatment court, as well as the alternatives if they are found ineligible. Charges identified as eligible for WCTC most commonly include **drug** and **property** related offenses.



Entering the program requires **entering a plea**, often with maximum jail caps if the participant fails to complete the program and the intention of dismissing the jail time upon successful completion. Those not entering the program continue through the court system and have a variety of outcomes, including jail, prison, probation, or case dismissal.

This evaluation analyzes participant data at each point in the system. State and local policies, as well as program practices all impact participant outcomes, as do the resources (or lack thereof) available in these communities.

Factors Affecting Participant Outcomes



Often out of the program's control, the referral timeline, funding, and treatment reimbursements all are affected by **state and local policies**, some of which have shifted dramatically over the years.



Program practices have changed from 2015 to 2019, when the participants discussed in this report entered. Major shifts that may affect outcomes are noted in this report.



A lack of **resources**, in addition to treatment, but most notably housing and transportation, can reduce the likelihood of participant success, regardless of program and state policies.

WCTC: Participant Overview

The sample of individuals used in this evaluation were all participants who entered the WCTC between 2015 and 2019.

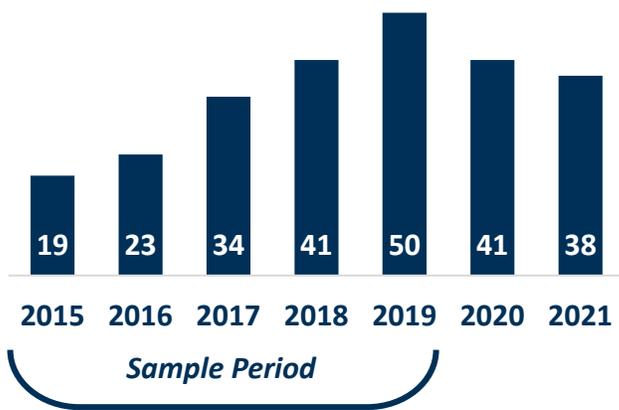
Why use this sample?

Evaluating participants who entered in 2015-2019 provides at least 2 years of recidivism data. Participants who entered more recently have not had enough time pass to adequately assess their long-term recidivism. This also allows sufficient time for participants to enter and complete the program based on the average time to complete (~19 months). In addition, having several years of participant data allows a large enough sample size for valid analyses.

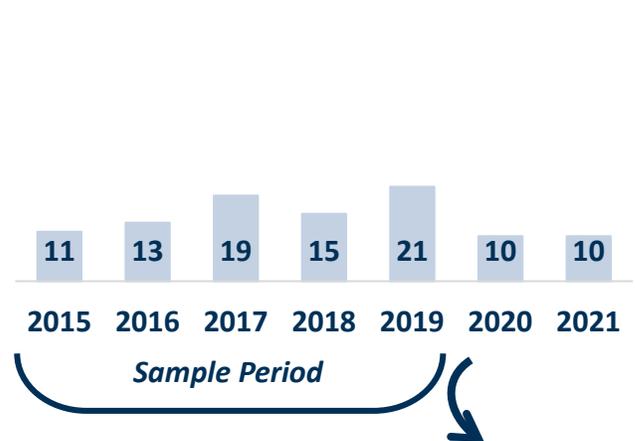
Keep in mind:

- Participant outcomes reflect treatment court practices during this time period. Process changes and improvements have been made since then.
- Because recidivism is measured 2 years after program entry, results include both in-program and post-exit recidivism.

On average, WCTC served a census of 33 individuals each year from 2015 to 2019



There were 16 new program entries each year on average from 2015 to 2019



2020's dip in entries is likely related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WCTC: Participant Overview

2015 to 2019 Entries

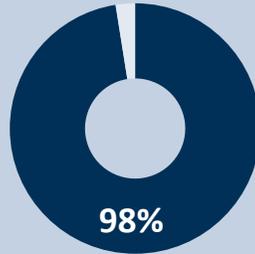
Who Entered?

47%



Slightly more men entered the program

53%



Nearly all program participants were white

Average age at entry

29

years old

WCTC participants appear to be high risk, averaging almost 5 arrests in the 2 years prior to program entry

Most offenses were property related (2 per person) and misdemeanors (nearly 4). Participants averaged more than 1 felony and less than 1 each for drug or person related charges.

Typically, high risk participants in other programs across the country average 2-3 arrests in the 2 years prior to entry.



State & Local Policy: Criminal justice reform in VT, including Act 61 (2017), the Youthful Offender Statute (2017), and the Justice Reinvestment Act (2019), altered eligibility requirements and additional diversion opportunities.



Program Practices: WCTC has assessed for and accepted high risk individuals into the program, which follows best practice.



Resources: Increased risk is associated with greater service needs, which requires resources. Shortages and lack of funding in treatment services create challenges to meet the treatment needs of participants, including mental health services and residential treatment. Without extensive resources available in the community, successfully meeting the needs of the population can be difficult.



Outcomes

Recidivism and cost outcomes were measured against a matched comparison group of individuals who were arrested and charged with a treatment court eligible arrest in Washington County but did not enter the WCTC. The comparison group was matched to the WCTC participants on age, gender, race, and arrest history. *The separate Methods Appendix provided with this report gives more details on matching and analysis methods.*

Match success!

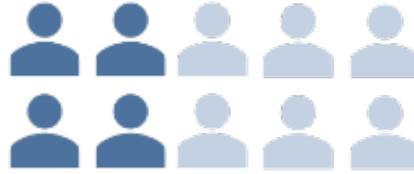
There were no statistically significant differences between the WCTC participants and the comparison group on demographics, age, or criminal history indicators.

	WCTC (N=74) Percent	Comparison n (N=74) Percent
Gender		
Male	54%	54%
Female	46%	46%
Race		
White	97.3%	98.6%
Non-White	2.7%	1.4%

	WCTC (N=74) Mean	Comparison (N=74) Mean
Age at Program Entry (Years)	29	29
Mean Arrests/Charges: 2 years prior to entry date		
All prior arrests	4.5	4.4
Prior person arrests	0.5	0.4
Prior property arrests	2.1	2.1
Prior drug arrests	0.6	0.6
Prior DUI arrests	0.2	0.1
Severity		
Prior misdemeanor arrests	3.7	3.7
Prior felony arrests	1.3	1.3

WCTC Outcomes: Graduation Rate

41% of the exited participants successfully graduated from the WCTC program.



National average = **59%**

Graduates and non-graduates stayed in the program for similar lengths of time

Graduate average time: 19 months

Non-grad average time: 19 months



WCTC is meeting best practices related to time in the program of at least 12 months.

Women and men graduated at similar rates



43% of women successfully graduate



40% of men successfully graduate

Non-graduates averaged more prior arrests before entering WCTC

All Prior Arrests

4

vs.

5

Graduate

Non-grad

There were similar graduation rates by age. There were too few non-white participants to assess possible differences by race.



Program Practices: While the graduation rate is lower than the national average, the risk level of participants is very high (with an average of nearly 5 arrests in the 2 years prior to program entry) compared to many adult treatment courts. The graduation rate likely reflects this challenging population with complex needs. Participants with higher risk (more arrests prior to program entry) were also less likely to graduate. WCTC serves as a final effort to avoid long-term incarceration.

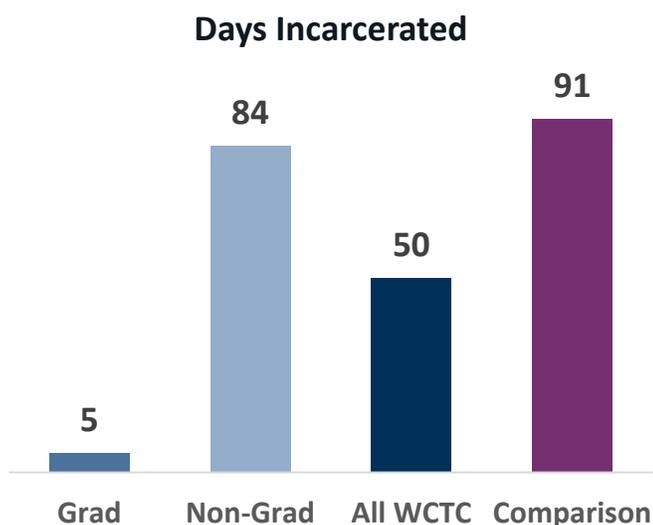


Resources: Resource shortages in VT may hinder graduation. Given the high risk level, participants may not get the intensity of services to meet their assessed needs. The scarcity of housing, transportation, health care, and social services means that participants' basic human needs are often not being met, which detracts from their focus on recovery. A lack of resources may also contribute to some participants exiting the program unsuccessfully.

* Exited participants do not include the 4% who died or transferred to another program during participation. The graduation rate excludes the 4% of participants in the sample who were still active at the time of data export.

Justice Involved Outcomes: Incarceration & Supervision

Total days incarcerated within the 2 years post program entry was considerably higher for WCTC participants who *did not graduate* the program than those who graduate. The average time incarcerated for non-graduates was close to the average for the matched comparison group. WCTC graduates averaged only 5 days of incarceration.



VT Department of Corrections (DOC) data capture incarceration from any source, such as a new arrest or jail sanctions imposed by WCTC. The DOC database was used to calculate time incarcerated. During the 1-year period after program entry, **81% of the non-graduates** had at least one episode of incarceration while in the program. The WCTC database shows that **48% of non-graduates** received a jail sanction during their first year of program participation, whereas **29% of graduates** received a jail sanction during their first year.

Incarceration tends to lead to higher recidivism. Lengthy incarceration and a high incidence of incarceration likely increase the recidivism of non-graduates. Time incarcerated also likely results in lower graduation rates.

Although eligible charges typically result in jail time, it is possible some comparison individuals had their charges dismissed or were offered shorter sentences. Indeed, 2 years after program entry, **comparison individuals spent about 50% less time on probation. WCTC participants averaged 328 days on probation** while the **comparison group averaged 198 days.**



State & Local Policy: There are no state-level formal agreements with partner agencies. Without agreements requiring alignment with best practices, partners have engaged in practices that inadvertently harm participants. Some past State's Attorneys created offers that increased jail time for failure to complete treatment courts, thereby deterring participation and punishing people for attempting to address their substance use disorder. Participants on furlough may be under DOC jurisdiction. Incarceration and probation sentences may be outside of the program's control, especially when those individuals are rearrested while in the program.



Program Practices: The WCTC program database revealed a high rate of jail sanctions for non-graduates, with 48% of non-graduates receiving a jail sanction in their first year of the program, which likely contributed to increased recidivism in the evaluation sample. Notably, the WCTC has reported rarely using jail sanctions now in alignment with newer research and recommendations to use jail sparingly.

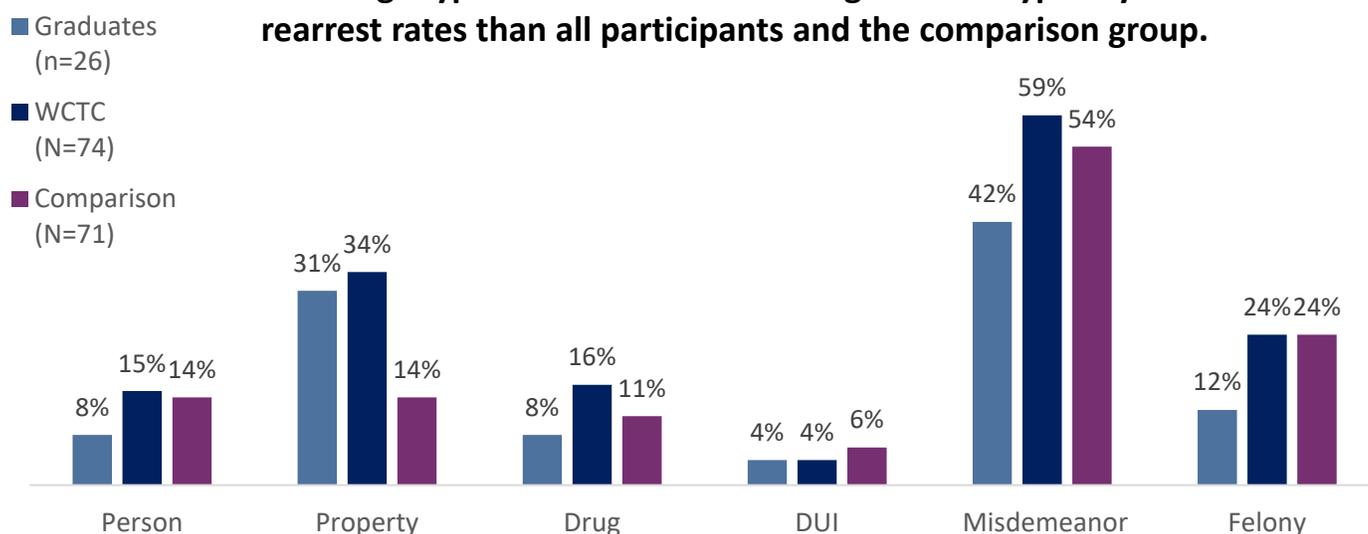
Justice Involved Outcomes: Recidivism

WCTC participants are rearrested at the same rate overall as the comparison group 2 years after program entry. WCTC graduates had far lower rearrest rates than non-graduates.



Recidivism outcomes are presented as the rearrest rate (the percentages of individuals in the participant and comparison groups that are rearrested). Arrests are used as a measure of recidivism because they are an indication of engagement in criminal activity at the time an incident occurs in contrast to using measures such as convictions, which may not occur for several months to years after an incident (or a conviction may not occur at all).

At 2 years post entry, WCTC participants were rearrested at higher rates for most charge types and severities. WCTC graduates typically had lower rearrest rates than all participants and the comparison group.



WCTC participants had worse recidivism rates except for felony charges (equivalent rearrest rates) and DUI charges (where participants had lower rearrest rates). **Graduates had lower recidivism rates than the comparison group for all charge types and severities except for property charges.** Non-graduates are driving the trend toward worse participant recidivism rates. **Success in the program is associated with reduced recidivism.**

Participants also had a higher overall average number of rearrests. Participants averaged over 2 rearrests, while the matched comparison group averaged closer to 1 rearrest over the same 2-year period (see Appendix A).

There are many factors contributing to these outcomes discussed on the next page.

Justice Involved Outcomes: Recidivism

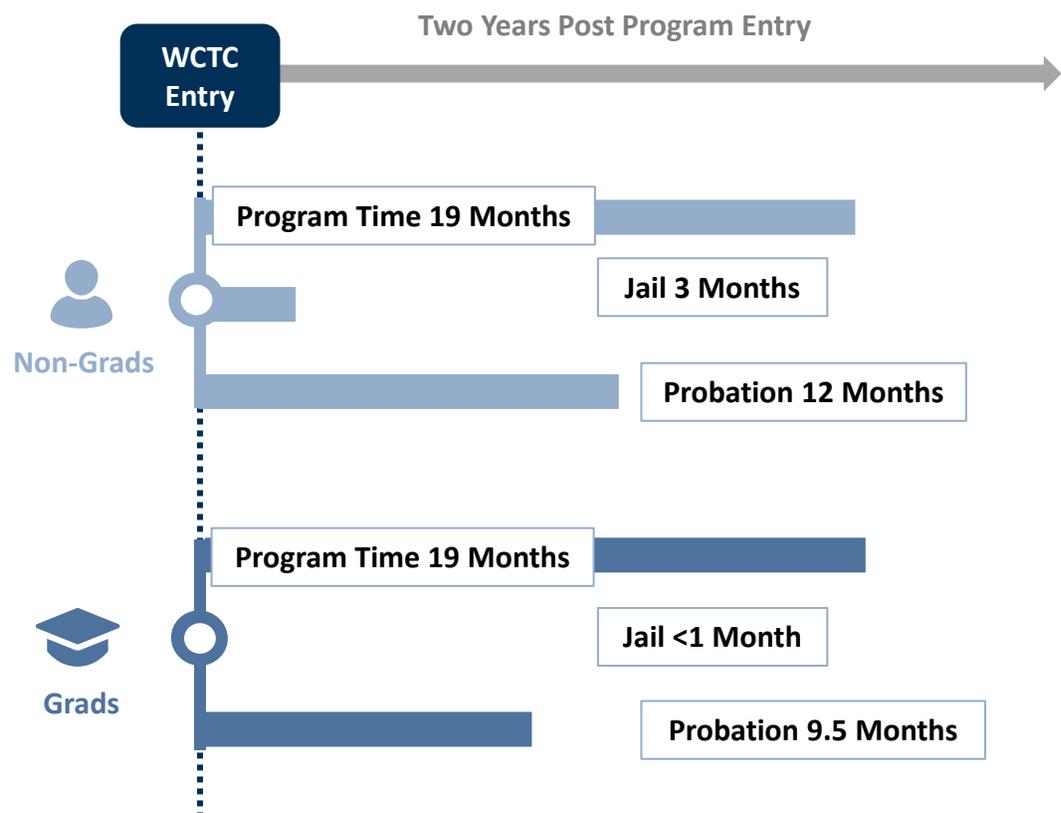
What contributed to higher recidivism among participants, particularly non-graduates?

The factors contributing to high recidivism for participants span and intersect across policies, program practices and resources.

- **Extensive time incarcerated.** Time spent incarcerated means participants are unable to participate in the program activities and services intended to support their recovery, and incarceration tends to lead to higher recidivism. Non-graduates in particular spent extensive time incarcerated, including incarceration from sources outside of the program.
- **Judicial rotations.** Treatment courts have better outcomes when the judge has *at least* 2 years of treatment court experience. Judges tend to be least effective in their first year on the treatment court bench, with outcomes improving in the second year and thereafter. Judicial turnover exacerbates the instability in participants' lives. This is evident in Vermont in the results from the 2017 evaluation of the Chittenden County Treatment Court where recidivism increased in the years after a new judge rotates into the program. Vermont's current 2-year judicial rotations mean that judges rotate just when they reach the threshold for improved participant outcomes.
- **Increased surveillance.** Higher recidivism rates may be a byproduct of the "surveillance effect" in which participants are more likely to be arrested simply because they are surveilled and caught more frequently. This may be particularly true in Vermont communities where law enforcement may have repeat offenders and unsuccessful participants on their radars.
- **Inadequate treatment.** Treatment agencies and the WCTC were under-resourced due to staffing vacancies, high turnover, and low reimbursement rates, and may not have had the ability to provide the type or dosage of treatment required to support long-term recovery. Furthermore, agencies that provide mental health treatment and substance use disorder treatment are bifurcated in Washington County, which may hinder service coordination and continuity of care for participants.
- **Structural and resource limitations hampered the ability to follow best practices.** The WCTC did not have all the resources and staff necessary to follow evidence based best practices during the study period (2015-2019), particularly given the high staff turnover rates among team members. The WCTC staff did the best they could within their circumstances during this period.

Justice Involved Outcomes: Timelines

WCTC non-graduates are in the program for the same amount of time as graduates but have considerably more time incarcerated and on probation



State & Local Policy: Participants on furlough may be under DOC jurisdiction. Incarceration may be outside of the program's control, especially when those individuals are rearrested while in the program.



Program Practices: Graduates and non-graduates spend similar amounts of time in the program, which may indicate the program is working to meet the needs of all participants and is not discharging struggling participants too quickly.



Resources: Participants may be struggling to get adequate treatment for their substance use disorder due to a lack of state funding for treatment. Policy changes have now reduced residential treatment to 14 days, while most residential programs are 60, 90, and even 120 days long. This may have contributed to both low graduation rates and higher recidivism.



Cost Analysis

Cost outcomes were calculated using the same participant and comparison groups as the outcome evaluation. The cost evaluation was conducted using the transactional and institutional cost analysis (TICA) approach by analyzing the costs of program activities (the investment cost) as well as the costs of outcomes (including arrests, new court cases, time in jail or prison, and time on probation or parole) to measure whether there was a cost offset, or savings, due to more positive participant outcomes. *See Appendix B for more cost results, and the separate Methods Appendix provided with this report for more methodology details.*

WCTC INVESTMENT COSTS

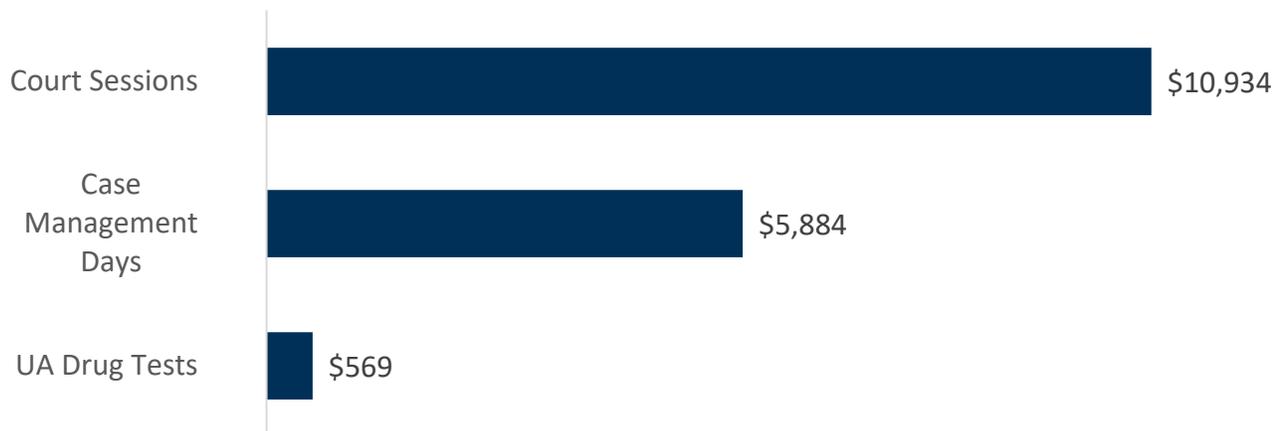
WCTC Program Investment Costs = \$17,387 Per Participant

WCTC program costs, also called investment costs, were calculated for each event (or “transaction”) experienced by those participants who exited the WCTC (N = 68).¹ Based on program data, the following transactions resulted in an overall cost of \$17,387 per participant from entry to exit.² This is in the typical range of treatment court program costs based on cost studies performed by NPC in treatment courts across the United States, roughly \$4,000 to \$30,000 per participant, although the WCTC total does not include treatment costs (more on this in the “important note” below).³

An examination of cost by transaction shows that:

- **Court sessions represented the greatest cost.**
- **Case management represented the second largest cost.**
- **A small portion of the overall cost was attributed to drug testing.**

WCTC Total Cost = \$17,387 Per Participant



IMPORTANT NOTE: The total cost of the program provided above does not include treatment services, which are an integral part of the program. Site-specific substance abuse treatment data were not complete and so could not be included in this cost analysis. Substance use disorder treatment costs from other treatment courts from NPC studies nationwide averaged \$10,688 and ranged from \$639 to \$35,743 per participant.

1 Active participants were still incurring program costs so are not included in investment cost calculations.

2 More detailed cost results are provided in Appendix B.

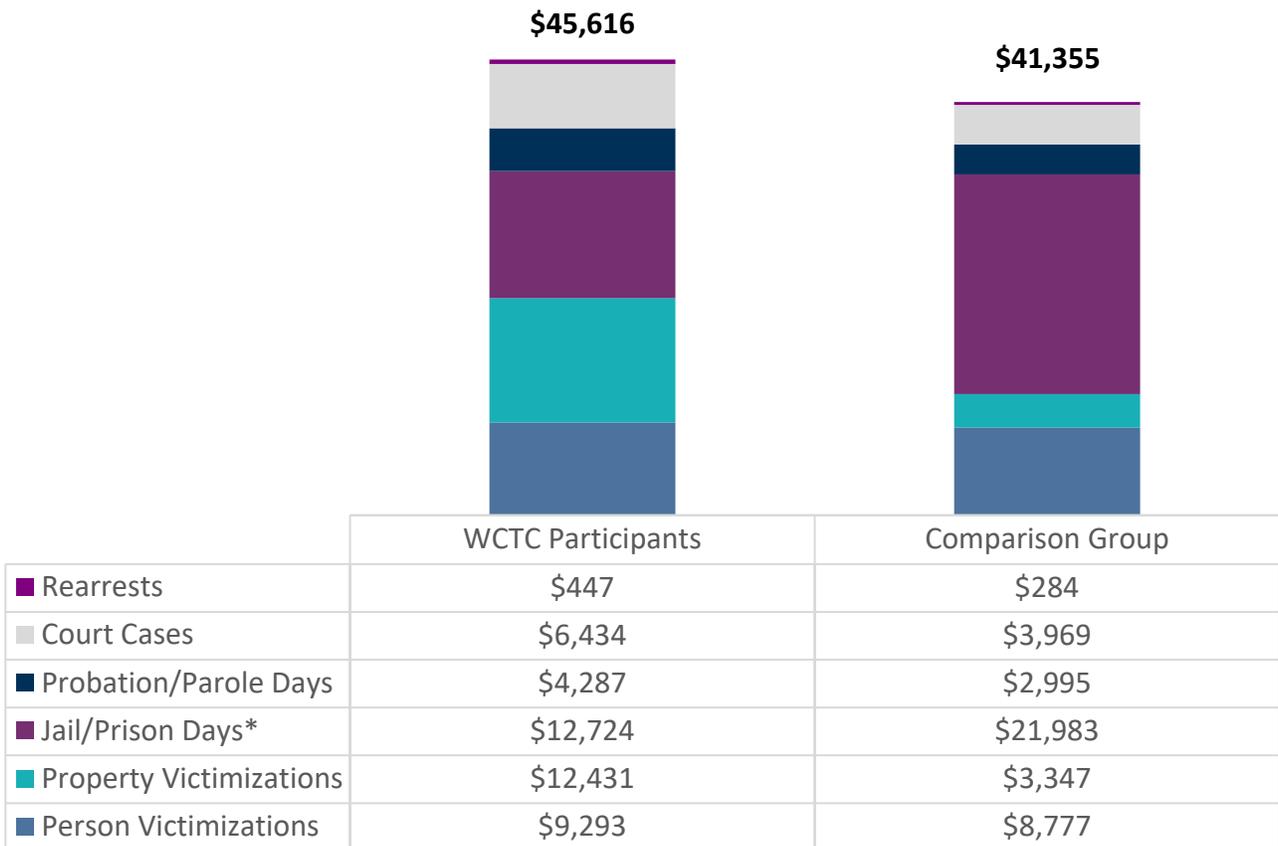
3 Program costs range from \$4,035 to \$30,624 based on treatment court cost evaluations conducted by NPC in California, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York and Oregon. The average program cost across all these programs is \$11,683 (See reports and publications at www.npcresearch.com).

WCTC OUTCOME COSTS

WCTC did not have outcome savings

The difference in the 2-year outcome costs between all WCTC court participants and the comparison group was \$4,261 *more* per participant. This difference shows that there is not a benefit, or savings, to Vermont taxpayers and to society at large for WCTC participants, mainly due to more court cases and victimizations (the societal costs attributed to person and property crimes with victims). The figure below shows all costs that were related to, and available for, the outcomes reviewed across groups. WCTC participants had fewer jail/prison days than the comparison group, but more of every other outcome transaction. More details on the cost analysis results are available in Appendix B. Full cost methods are provided in a separate Methods Appendix.

WCTC Outcome Costs Per Participant Over 2 Years = **\$4,261** Higher Than the Comparison Group





Key Recommendations



Key Recommendations

Notably, many challenges to program effectiveness are occurring on the state level and reflect state and local policies, as well as resource limitations. These statewide challenges include the lack of a statewide infrastructure needed for treatment court success, judicial rotation requirements, no requirements for state-level formal agreements with partner agencies, underfunding from the state and low state leadership buy-in. These factors are largely outside of the influence of the WCTC. See the statewide report for recommendations to address these larger statewide issues that are barriers to treatment court success in Vermont.

WCTC can continue to work on process improvement to promote positive outcomes for participants.

It is important to note that the WCTC program has made several improvements since the time period of the sample used in this study (2015-2019) and that there are new team members. The recommendations below include suggestions for continuing those improvements, or new recommendations based on the outcome results.

- **Ensure adherence to best practice standards.** Vermont now has a statewide Policy and Procedure Manual based on the best practice standards. Work with the Programs Manager to ensure WCTC is in compliance with all best practice standards.
- **Continue efforts on the process improvement plan (PIP) based on the process evaluation results.** Treatment courts that monitor and evaluate their programs and make changes based on the feedback have significantly better outcomes, including twice the reduction in recidivism rates and over twice the cost savings.
- **Minimize jail sanctions.** In accordance with newer guidance to use jail sanctions sparingly, WCTC reported reducing the use of jail sanctions for participants in recent years. Continue to avoid jail sanctions as much as possible since incarceration tends to increase recidivism.
- **Prioritize working with a local advisory committee.** These committees can build community support for the program, address participant needs in the community (e.g., housing and transportation), review program performance, advocate for funding, and help with acquiring resources. This is particularly important given the scarcity of community resources in Vermont. The process evaluation included a recommendation to establish this committee. If not already established, prioritize building this committee. If a committee has since been established, prioritize building an effective and high-impact partnership.

Appendices

Learn
more

A photograph of a chalkboard with the words "Learn more" written in white chalk. A single lightbulb is positioned to the right of the text, casting a soft shadow on the board.

Appendix A: Additional Recidivism Results



Average Number of Rearrests

In the main report, recidivism was provided as the two-year rearrest *rate* (the number of individuals who were rearrested at least once in the two year period out of the total number of individuals in the group). The table below provides the average number of rearrests per person for the participant group (graduates, non-graduates, and all participants) and the comparison group. The results are similar to the recidivism rate, with WCTC participants having a higher average number of arrests as the comparison group for all charge types with the exception of person, DUI and drug charges which are equivalent.

Mean Number of Rearrests at 2 Years Post-Entry

Arrest Type	<i>Grads</i> (n=26)	<i>Non-Grads</i> (n=42)	All WCTC (N=74)	Comparison (N=71)
All Rearrests	1.6	2.5	2.2	1.4
Person	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Property	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.2
Drug	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2
DUI	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.06
Misdemeanors	1.5	2.2	2.0	1.2
Felony	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3

Appendix B: Detailed Cost Evaluation Results



APPENDIX B: DETAILED COST EVALUATION RESULTS

Detailed cost methodology can be found in the separate Methods Appendix provided as a companion to this report.

Program Costs

Program transactions for which costs were calculated include WCTC court sessions (including team meetings), case management, substance use disorder treatment, drug testing, and jail sanctions. Obtaining the cost of WCTC transactions for court sessions and case management involved asking each WCTC team member for the average amount of time they spend on these activities (including any time needed to prepare for these activities), observing their activities on a site visit and obtaining each WCTC team member's annual salary and benefits from a supervisor or financial officer at each agency involved in the program. As this is typically public information, some of the salaries were found online, but detailed benefits information often came from the agency's financial officer or human resources department. In addition to salary and benefits, the indirect support rate and jurisdictional overhead rate were used in a calculation that results in a fully loaded cost per participant. The indirect support rates and overhead rates for each agency involved in the program were obtained from agency budgets that were found online or by contacting the agencies directly. All cost results are based on fiscal year 2023 dollars or were updated to fiscal year 2023 using the Consumer Price Index.

Court Sessions. Court sessions are typically one of the most staff and resource intensive program transactions. These sessions include representatives from the following agencies:

- Vermont Judiciary
- Vermont State's Attorney's Office
- Vermont Office of the Defender General
- Vermont Department of Corrections - Probation and Parole
- City of Barre Police Department
- Washington County Mental Health Services
- Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services
- Treatment Associates

NPC based the cost of a court session (the time during a session when a single program participant interacts with the judge) on the average amount of court time (in minutes) each participant interacts with the judge during the court session. This included the direct costs for the time spent for each WCTC team member present, the time team members spend preparing for the session or in team meetings, the agency support costs, and jurisdictional overhead costs. NPC calculated the cost for a single WCTC court appearance at \$307.04 per participant.

Case Management is based on the amount of staff time dedicated to case management activities during a regular work week and is then translated into a total cost for case management per participant per day (taking staff salaries and benefits, and support and overhead costs into account).¹ The daily cost of case management was calculated to be \$10.06 per participant.

¹ Case management included meeting with participants, evaluations, phone calls, referring out for other help, answering questions, reviewing referrals, consulting, making community service connections, documentation, file maintenance, and referrals.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment for WCTC participants was provided by Washington County Mental Health Services, Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services, and Treatment Associates as well as other area providers. WCTC staff estimated that 100% of program participants use public funds for their treatment services. NPC obtained treatment costs from the State of Vermont Medicaid billing rates (typically billed at \$122.48 per encounter or \$30.62 per 15 minutes); however, the treatment data NPC obtained were not usable for this cost analysis. In lieu of site-specific treatment data, the costs from other treatment court cost analyses that NPC has conducted nationwide over the past 8 years are listed here to provide the average and range of costs that would be expected to apply in Vermont for treatment services. The nationwide treatment costs averaged \$10,688 in 2023 dollars and ranged from \$639 to \$35,743 per participant. These costs are shown for informational purposes, but they were not included in the program costs because they are not specific to the site being analyzed.

Drug Testing was managed by Washington County Mental Health Services and Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services, but performed by Dominion Diagnostics and are generally billed to health insurance. The court mainly uses urinalysis (UA) tests at a cost of \$6.00 per test.

Jail Sanction costs are provided by the Vermont Department of Corrections. Using budget and average daily population information from Vermont Department of Corrections Budget documents, the cost per person of jail was calculated to be \$220.60 per day.²

Program Cost Results by Transaction

Exhibit B1 displays the unit cost per program related event (or “transaction”), the number of events and the average cost *per individual* for each of the WCTC events for all participants who exited the program³ and for graduates. The sum of these events or transactions is the total per participant cost of the WCTC program. The Exhibit includes the average number of events and costs for all WCTC participants regardless of completion status (*N* = 68) and for WCTC graduates (*N* = 26).

Exhibit B1. WCTC Program Costs per Participant by Transaction

Transaction	Unit Cost	WCTC Graduates		All WCTC Participants	
		Avg. # of Events per Graduate	Avg. Cost per Graduate	Avg. # of Events per Person	Avg. Cost per Person
Court Sessions	\$307.04	34.76	\$10,673	35.61	\$10,934
Case Management Days	\$10.06	601.27	\$6,049	584.85	\$5,884
UA Drug Tests	\$6.00	110.68	\$664	94.87	\$569
Jail Sanction Days ²	\$220.60	1.52	N/A	3.21	N/A
Total			\$17,386		\$17,387

² Jail sanction days are included in the table but are not included in the costs as the jail sanction data was an estimate from the program. All jail time is included in the outcome costs, and to avoid any double counting of jail time, it was omitted from program costs.

³ Program participants included in the program cost analysis are those who had sufficient time to complete the program and who exited the program either through graduation or termination. Active participants were not included in the analysis as they were still using program services so did not represent the cost of the full program from entry to exit.

The unit cost multiplied by the number of events per person results in the cost per person for each transaction during the course of the program. When the costs of the transactions were summed, the result was a total WCTC program cost per participant of \$17,387. The largest contributor to the cost of the program was court sessions (a total of \$10,934), followed by case management (\$5,884) and drug testing (\$569). Note that total program costs are likely much higher as SUD treatment and jail sanctions are not included in the total.

Program Cost Results per Agency

Another useful way to examine program costs is by agency to further understand which agencies are contributing resources and the allocation of resources. Exhibit B2 shows that the taxpayer costs accruing to Probation and Parole (for court sessions and case management) account for 28% of the total program cost per participant. The next largest cost (20%) was to Vermont Judiciary for court sessions and case management, followed by Washington County Mental Health Services (18%) for court sessions, case management, and drug testing.

Exhibit B2. WCTC Program Costs per Participant by Agency

Agency	Avg. Cost per Person for WCTC Graduates	Avg. Cost per Person for all WCTC Participants
Vermont Department of Corrections - Probation and Parole	\$4,885	\$4,889
Vermont Judiciary	\$3,453	\$3,521
Washington County Mental Health Services	\$3,235	\$3,165
Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services	\$2,754	\$2,697
Vermont State’s Attorney’s Office	\$1,364	\$1,397
Vermont Office of the Defender General	\$1,057	\$1,069
City of Barre Police Department	\$392	\$401
Treatment Associates	\$246	\$248
Total	\$17,386	\$17,387

Program Cost Summary

The total taxpayer cost for the WCTC program was estimated at \$17,387 per participant and \$17,386 per graduate. Note that these totals do not include any SUD treatment or jail sanction costs, as those data were not usable for the cost analysis. Overall, the largest portion of WCTC costs was due to resources put into court sessions (an average of \$10,934, or 63% of total costs), followed by case management (\$5,884, or 34%), and drug testing (an average of \$569, or 3% of total costs). When program costs were evaluated by agency, the largest portion of costs accrued to Probation and Parole (\$4,889, or 28% of total costs), followed by Vermont Judiciary (\$3,521, or 20%), and Washington County Mental Health Services (\$3,165, or 18%).

WCTC Outcome Costs

Outcome costs include any events (transactions) that occur after program entry that were not related to program activities. For this study, criminal justice system related events and life events were included in the cost analyses. These events included arrests, court cases, days in jail/prison, time on probation/parole, and victimizations (person and property crimes).

The cost per **Arrest** incorporated the time of the law enforcement positions involved in making an arrest, the salaries and benefits for those positions, support costs and overhead costs. Information about which law enforcement agencies typically conduct arrests was obtained by talking with program staff along with web searches. The cost of an arrest used in this analysis was the average cost of an arrest by the Montpelier Police Department. NPC contacted staff at this law enforcement agency to obtain time and cost information, but some cost information was obtained online from agency budgets or pay scales. NPC used that information to calculate the cost of an average arrest episode. The average cost of a single arrest was \$201.17.

Court Cases include those criminal cases that were dismissed as well as those cases that resulted in conviction. Because they were the main agencies involved, court case costs in this analysis were shared among the Vermont Judiciary, Vermont State's Attorney's Office, and Vermont Office of the Defender General. Using budget and caseload information from each agency, the cost of a Court Case was calculated to be \$3,006.69.

Jail and Prison were provided by the Vermont Department of Corrections. Using budget and average daily population information from Vermont Department of Corrections Budget documents, the cost per person of jail/prison was calculated to be \$220.60 per day.

Probation and Parole costs were calculated using online information on the Department of Corrections- Field Services Division's budget and caseload. The average cost of probation and parole was \$11.76 per person per day.

Victimization costs were calculated from the National Institute of Justice's *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look (1996)*.⁴ The costs were updated to fiscal 2023 dollars using the Consumer Price Index. Property crimes were \$15,937.43 per event and person crimes were \$51,629.54 per event.

The outcome cost analyses were based on a cohort of individuals who participated in the WCTC program and a matched comparison group of individuals who were eligible for the WCTC program but who did not attend the program. The same program and comparison groups used for the outcome evaluation were used for the cost analyses. These individuals were followed through administrative data for 2 years post program entry (and a similar time period for the comparison group). This study

⁴ The costs for victimizations were based on the National Institute of Justice's *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look (1996)*. This study documents estimates of costs and consequences of personal crimes and documents losses per criminal victimization, including attempts, in a number of categories, including fatal crimes, child abuse, rape and sexual assault, other assaults, robbery, drunk driving, arson, larceny, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The reported costs include lost productivity, medical care, mental health care, police and fire services, victim services, property loss and damage, and quality of life. In our study, arrest charges were categorized as violent or property crimes, and therefore costs from the victimization study were averaged for rape and sexual assault, other assaults, and robbery and attempted robbery to create an estimated cost for violent crimes, arson, larceny and attempted larceny, burglary and attempted burglary, and motor vehicle theft for an estimated property crime cost. All costs were updated to fiscal 2023 dollars using the consumer price index (CPI).

compared recidivism and other outcome costs for the groups over that 2-year period by transaction, as well as the outcome costs by agency.

The outcome costs discussed below do not represent the entire cost to the criminal justice system or other public systems. Rather, the outcome costs include the transactions for which NPC’s research team was able to obtain data and cost information on both the WCTC and comparison group from the same sources. Note that some possible costs or cost savings related to the program were not considered in this study. These include health care expenses and WCTC participants legally employed and paying taxes. The gathering of this kind of information is generally quite difficult due to HIPAA confidentiality laws and due to the fact that much of the data related to this information are not collected in any one place, or are not collected at all. Although NPC examined the possibility of obtaining this kind of data, it was not feasible within the time frame or budget for this study.

Outcome Cost Results by Transaction

Exhibit B3 shows the average number of recidivism-related events per individual for all **WCTC** participants and the comparison group over 2 years. These events were counted from the time of program entry (an estimated “program entry date” was calculated for the comparison group to ensure an equivalent time period between groups). Exhibit B3 also shows the average number of recidivism-related events per individual for WCTC graduates. The results for graduates are provided to illustrate the outcomes for participants who have successfully met all program requirements and have completed (graduated from) the treatment court program. **However, graduates should not be directly compared to the comparison group.** The comparison group is comprised of all individuals who were eligible for entry into the treatment court, which includes people who would have graduated and also people who may have been terminated. It is not possible to determine who in the comparison group would have graduated and who would not, therefore, it is only valid to compare all treatment court participants (which includes graduates and non-graduates) to the comparison group.

Exhibit B3. Average Number of Events per Person over 2 Years from WCTC Entry

Outcome Events	Average Number of Events (per person)		
	WCTC Graduates (N = 26)	All WCTC Participants (N = 74)	Comparison Group (N = 71)
Probation/Parole Days	340.54	364.51	254.65
Jail/Prison Days	5.08	57.68	99.65
Rearrests	1.58	2.22	1.41
Court Cases	1.54	2.14	1.32
Property Victimizations	0.54	0.78	0.21
Person Victimizations	0.08	0.18	0.17

Overall, as demonstrated in Exhibit B3, WCTC participants had more of every outcome transaction than the comparison group, except for jail/prison days. WCTC graduates had fewer of every outcome transaction than all WCTC participants (graduates cannot be fairly compared to the comparison group).

Exhibit B4 displays the costs of outcomes by transaction that occurred in the 2 years after program entry for all WCTC participants and the comparison group, and also the costs of outcomes for WCTC graduates. Exhibit B4 shows the costs of both the taxpayer funded systems and non-taxpayer funded societal outcomes (victimizations). The first subtotal displays the costs associated with *criminal justice* outcomes that occurred in the 2 years after program entry, and the second subtotal displays the costs associated with *societal* outcomes (victimizations) that occurred in the 2 years after program entry, followed by the grand total that sums the criminal justice and societal outcomes.

Exhibit B4. Taxpayer and Societal Outcome Costs per Person over 2 Years from WCTC Entry

Outcome Events	Unit Cost	WCTC Graduates (N = 26)	All WCTC Participants (N = 74)	Comparison Group (N = 71)
Jail/Prison Days	\$220.60	\$1,121	\$12,724	\$21,983
Court Cases	\$3,006.69	\$4,630	\$6,434	\$3,969
Probation/Parole Days	\$11.76	\$4,005	\$4,287	\$2,995
Rearrests	\$201.17	\$318	\$447	\$284
Subtotal for Criminal Justice Recidivism		\$10,074	\$23,892	\$29,231
Property Victimizations	\$15,937.43	\$8,606	\$12,431	\$3,347
Person Victimizations	\$51,629.54	\$4,130	\$9,293	\$8,777
Subtotal for Other Societal Costs		\$12,736	\$21,724	\$12,124
Total		\$22,810	\$45,616	\$41,355

Exhibit B4 shows that the difference in the 2-year outcome cost between all WCTC participants and the comparison group was \$5,339 per participant, indicating that **WCTC participants cost less than the comparison group when only criminal justice outcome costs were included, which demonstrates a benefit, or savings, to taxpayers** (since these are taxpayer funded systems). When societal costs were included, the difference in the 2-year outcome cost between all WCTC participants and the comparison group turned negative, to (\$4,261) per participant, indicating that WCTC participants cost more than the comparison group when both taxpayer-funded and societal costs were included. This difference shows that there is a benefit, or savings, to taxpayers, but not a savings to society at large due to WCTC participation, due to victimizations. The cost associated with graduate outcomes is less than the cost of outcomes for all participants (which includes non-graduates who have higher recidivism costs).

Outcome Cost Results per Agency

The taxpayer funded outcome costs were also examined by agency to determine the relative benefit to each agency that contributed taxpayer resources to the WCTC program. The transactions shown in the

previous Exhibit were provided by one or more agencies. If one specific agency provides a service or transaction (for example, the Vermont Department of Corrections provided all probation days), all costs for that transaction accrued to that specific agency. If several agencies all participate in providing a service or transaction (for example, the Vermont Judiciary, Vermont State’s Attorney’s Office, and Vermont Office of the Defender General were all involved in court cases), costs were split proportionately amongst the agencies involved based on their level of participation. Exhibit B5 provides the publicly funded cost for each agency and the difference in cost between the WCTC participants and the comparison group per person. A positive number in the difference column indicates a cost savings for WCTC participants.

Exhibit B5. Outcome Costs per Person by Agency over 2 Years from WCTC Entry

Agency	WCTC Outcome Costs per Participant	Comparison Outcome Costs per Person	Cost Difference per Person
Victimizations	\$21,724	\$12,124	(\$9,600)
Vermont Department of Corrections	\$12,724	\$21,983	\$9,259
Vermont Department of Corrections - Field Services Division	\$4,287	\$2,995	(\$1,292)
Vermont State’s Attorney’s Office	\$2,308	\$1,424	(\$884)
Vermont Office of the Defender General	\$2,219	\$1,369	(\$850)
Vermont Judiciary	\$1,907	\$1,176	(\$731)
Law Enforcement	\$447	\$284	(\$163)
Total	\$45,616	\$41,355	(\$4,261)

Exhibit B5 shows that none of the involved agencies benefitted from savings associated with WCTC participation, with the exception of the Vermont Department of Corrections. As demonstrated in Exhibit B5, the total outcome cost over 2 years from program entry for the WCTC per participant was \$45,616, while the cost per comparison group member was \$41,355. The difference between the WCTC and comparison group represents a loss of \$4,261 per participant.



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