



# Treatment Court Month *Toolkit*

A practical guide to help Michigan Treatment Courts  
celebrate National Treatment Court Month  
and share their success stories.

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Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals

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# Welcome

## 1. Welcome to National Treatment Court Month

Each May, communities across the country recognize National Treatment Court Month, an opportunity to highlight the life-changing impact of treatment courts and the professionals who make them work. In Michigan, treatment courts have become an essential part of the justice system's response to substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and other underlying causes of criminal behavior.

Treatment courts bring together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers, and community partners to support individuals working toward recovery and accountability. Through this collaborative approach, participants receive structured supervision, evidence-based treatment, and the support needed to rebuild their lives.

National Treatment Court Month provides an opportunity to share these successes with the public. Graduations, community events, and media outreach help demonstrate the important role treatment courts play in strengthening families, improving public safety, and supporting recovery.

The Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals (MATCP) encourages treatment court teams across the state to take part in this effort by sharing their stories and celebrating the individuals who achieve recovery through these programs.

## 2. Why Treatment Courts Matter in Michigan

Treatment courts have become one of the most effective responses to addressing the intersection of substance use, mental health, and the justice system.

Across Michigan, treatment courts:

- Reduce recidivism and improve public safety;
- Help individuals achieve long-term recovery;
- Strengthen families and communities;
- Reduce costs associated with incarceration and repeated justice system involvement.



# Welcome

Michigan has more than 200 treatment courts, including drug courts, sobriety courts, mental health courts, juvenile drug and mental health courts, family treatment courts, veterans treatment courts, and tribal healing-to-wellness courts. These programs operate in courts throughout the state and serve thousands of individuals each year.

Participants in treatment court programs commit to a rigorous process that may include frequent court appearances, substance testing, treatment services, and close supervision. While the program is demanding, successful graduates demonstrate that recovery and lasting change are possible.

Treatment courts succeed because they focus on accountability, treatment, and support, addressing the root causes of criminal behavior while helping participants build healthier and more productive lives.

### 3. How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help Michigan treatment courts promote their programs during National Treatment Court Month and throughout the year.

Inside you will find practical guidance and ready-to-use resources to help your court:

- Plan events and activities during Treatment Court Month
- Engage local officials, community leaders, and partner organizations
- Work with local media to highlight your program
- Share success stories and key facts about treatment courts
- Promote your court through social media and community outreach

Each section of the toolkit focuses on a specific aspect of outreach and advocacy, with checklists, templates, and examples that can be adapted for your local program.

Treatment court teams already see the impact of their work every day. National Treatment Court Month is an opportunity to ensure that your community sees it as well.

MATCP stands ready to support treatment courts across Michigan as they share the message that treatment courts change lives and strengthen communities.



# Quick Start Guide

## How to Participate in Treatment Court Month

National Treatment Court Month is an opportunity to highlight the life-changing work of treatment courts and the individuals who achieve recovery through these programs. Participation does not require a large event, many courts participate successfully with just a few simple activities. Use the steps below to quickly plan your court's involvement.

### Step 1 - Plan One Activity

Choose at least one activity to recognize Treatment Court Month.

Common activities include:

- **Treatment Court Graduation Ceremony**

Invite community members and celebrate participant achievements.

- **Community Presentation**

Speak to local civic organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, or veterans groups.

- **Invite an Elected Official to Court**

Invite a local official to observe a treatment court session or attend a graduation.

- **Community Service Event**

Participants and team members participate in a community service activity.

**Even a single event can help raise awareness about the impact of treatment courts.**



# Quick Start Guide

## Step 2 - Share Your Story

Help your community understand how treatment courts improve lives and strengthen public safety.

You can share your story by:

- Highlighting a graduate success story
- Posting information about Treatment Court Month on social media
- Speaking to community groups about your program
- Sharing program statistics and outcomes

Stories about participants overcoming challenges and achieving recovery are often the most powerful way to communicate the value of treatment courts.

## Step 3 - Invite Your Community

Consider inviting community leaders and partners to your event or court session.

Possible guests include:

- Local elected officials
- Law enforcement leaders
- Treatment providers and community partners
- Civic organizations
- Local media outlets

**These invitations help build awareness and long-term support for treatment courts.**



Treatment Courts are making a difference, and it is time to share that life-saving message with your community.



# Quick Start Guide

## Step 4 - Promote Your Event

Let people know about your event or activities.

Simple ways to promote your court include:

- Posting announcements on social media
- Sending a press release to local media
- Sharing information with community partners
- Inviting community leaders to attend

Photos and stories from graduations or events can help highlight the positive impact of treatment courts.

## Step 5 - Share Your Success

After your event, consider sharing your success with MATCP.

You can send:

- Event photos
- Graduate success stories
- Media coverage
- Community outreach activities

Sharing these stories helps highlight the impact of treatment courts across Michigan.

**Remember:**

**Treatment courts change lives, strengthen families, and improve public safety.**

**National Treatment Court Month is an opportunity to share those successes with your community.**



# Part 1 - Plan Your Treatment Court Month

## 4. Treatment Court Month Planning Overview

National Treatment Court Month provides an opportunity for treatment courts across Michigan to highlight the important work they do every day. Planning ahead will help ensure that your court can effectively share its story with the community, local leaders, and the media.

Treatment Court Month activities do not need to be complex or time-consuming. Even a single event, such as a graduation ceremony, community presentation, or outreach effort, can help raise awareness about the impact of treatment courts.

When planning your activities, consider focusing on three key goals:

### **Celebrate Success**

Recognize the accomplishments of treatment court participants and graduates who have worked hard to achieve recovery and stability.

### **Educate the Community**

Help community members understand how treatment courts work and why they are an effective response to substance use and mental health challenges within the justice system.

### **Build Support for Your Program**

Engage local officials, community organizations, and media partners to strengthen long-term support for treatment courts.

**Successful events often highlight both the data and the human stories behind treatment courts. Sharing participant success stories alongside program outcomes can help illustrate the value of these programs to the broader community.**



# Part 1 - Plan Your Treatment Court Month

## 5. Suggested Timeline for Mid-April – May

While early planning is helpful, many courts will begin organizing their Treatment Court Month activities in April. The following timeline provides a practical guide for planning activities in a shorter timeframe.

### Mid-April (When the Toolkit is Released)

- Review the toolkit with your treatment court team.
- Select at least one activity or event for Treatment Court Month (for example, a graduation ceremony or community outreach event).
- Identify potential speakers or graduates who may be willing to share their story.
- Decide whether to invite elected officials, community leaders, or media representatives.

### Late April

- Schedule your graduation ceremony or community event.
- Send invitations to elected officials and community leaders.
- Contact local media outlets to inform them of your event.
- Prepare key talking points about your treatment court program.
- Begin sharing Treatment Court Month information through social media.

### Early May

- Confirm attendance of invited guests and speakers.
- Send a media advisory or press release about your event.
- Continue posting Treatment Court Month messages on social media.
- Finalize event logistics and materials.

### During Treatment Court Month (May)

- Hold your graduation ceremony or community event.
- Share photos and updates through social media and community partners.
- Highlight participant success stories and program achievements.

### After Your Event

- Send thank-you messages to elected officials, speakers, and community partners.
- Share photos, stories, and media coverage with MATCP.
- Consider how outreach efforts can continue throughout the year.



# Part 1 - Plan Your Treatment Court Month

## 6. Treatment Court Month Planning Checklist

Use this checklist to help ensure your court is prepared for Treatment Court Month activities.

### Planning Your Event

- Select a graduation ceremony or community event date
- Identify speakers or participants willing to share their story
- Confirm event location and logistics

### Community Engagement

- Invite elected officials and community leaders
- Contact local civic organizations or partners
- Consider involving treatment court graduates

### Media and Outreach

- Prepare talking points about your program
- Send a media advisory or press release
- Plan social media posts promoting the event

### Event Preparation

- Prepare materials describing your treatment court program
- Assign a spokesperson to speak with media
- Confirm attendance of speakers and invited guests

### After the Event

- Send thank-you messages to participants and guests
- Share photos and success stories with MATCP
- Consider additional outreach opportunities later in the year

**“No Time to Plan a Large Event?”**

**Simple ways to participate in Treatment Court Month:**

- **Post Treatment Court Month messages on social media**
- **Invite a local official to observe a treatment court session**
- **Highlight a graduate success story**
- **Share a press release with local media**



# Part 1 - Plan Your Treatment Court Month

## 7. Event Ideas for Your Community

Treatment Court Month events can take many forms. The most effective activities are those that highlight the success of participants while engaging the broader community.

### Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation ceremonies are one of the most powerful ways to demonstrate the impact of treatment courts. Inviting community members, elected officials, and media to attend allows them to witness firsthand the achievements of participants who have completed the program.

### Community Presentations

Treatment court team members can speak to local civic organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, veterans' groups, churches, or schools. These presentations provide an opportunity to explain how treatment courts operate and how they benefit the community.

### Community Service Projects

Courts may organize or participate in service activities such as park cleanups, donation drives, or charitable events. These activities highlight the commitment of participants and graduates to giving back to their communities.

### Awareness Events

Some courts choose to host community awareness events such as walks, runs, sporting events, or open houses. These activities can bring together participants, treatment court teams, and community members in a positive setting.

**When planning any event, consider how it will help communicate the central message of Treatment Court Month: treatment courts change lives and strengthen communities.**



# Part 2 - Engage Your Community

## 8. Be an Advocate for Your Treatment Court

Treatment courts are highly effective programs, but many members of the public, including community leaders, may not fully understand how they work or the impact they have on public safety and recovery. Treatment Court Month provides an opportunity for treatment court teams to serve as advocates for their programs and educate their communities.

Advocacy does not require a formal campaign or large event. Often, simply sharing information about the success of treatment courts and the individuals who graduate from these programs can have a significant impact.

When speaking about your treatment court, consider focusing on three key messages:

### **Treatment courts change lives.**

Participants receive treatment, support, and accountability that help them overcome substance use and mental health challenges.

### **Treatment courts improve public safety.**

By addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, treatment courts reduce recidivism and help individuals become productive members of the community.

### **Treatment courts strengthen communities.**

Graduates often reunite with their families, obtain employment, and contribute positively to their communities.

**Sharing these messages with community members, civic organizations, and local leaders helps build understanding and support for treatment courts.**



# Part 2 - Engage Your Community

## 9. Engaging Local and State Elected Officials

Elected officials play an important role in supporting treatment courts through legislation, funding, and public awareness. Inviting them to attend treatment court events during Treatment Court Month is one of the most effective ways to demonstrate the value of these programs.

Officials may be interested in attending:

- Treatment court graduation ceremonies
- Regular treatment court sessions
- Community outreach events
- Recognition ceremonies for graduates

**Seeing the program in action can help elected officials better understand the structure and success of treatment courts.**

Tips for Inviting Elected Officials

- Contact the official's office and speak with the staff member responsible for scheduling.
- Provide the date, time, location, and purpose of the event.
- Explain that the event is part of National Treatment Court Month.
- Offer the opportunity for the official to speak or present a certificate to graduates.

Even if the elected official is unable to attend, a staff member may attend on their behalf. This still provides an opportunity to build relationships and share information about your program.

Following the event, consider sending a brief thank-you note to acknowledge their participation and support.



# Part 2 - Engage Your Community

## 10. Requesting a Local Resolution or Proclamation

Another effective way to recognize Treatment Court Month is to request that a local governing body adopt a resolution or proclamation recognizing the importance of treatment courts.

Possible entities that may issue such recognitions include:

- County commissions
- City councils
- Township boards
- Village councils

These resolutions help raise awareness within the community and demonstrate public support for treatment courts.

When requesting a resolution or proclamation:

1. Contact the clerk or administrative office of the governing body.
2. Ask about the process for submitting a proposed resolution or proclamation.
3. Provide background information about treatment courts and their impact in your community.
4. Offer to attend the meeting where the resolution will be presented.

**Many courts find that local officials are eager to recognize programs that promote recovery and public safety.**

A sample resolution is included later in this toolkit in the Appendixes and can be adapted to reflect your local program.



# Part 2 - Engage Your Community

## 11. Partnering with Community Organizations

Treatment courts succeed because they involve strong partnerships between the justice system, treatment providers, and community organizations. Treatment Court Month is an opportunity to strengthen these partnerships and expand community awareness.

Consider reaching out to local organizations such as:

- Civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs)
- Veterans organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Schools or colleges
- Local chambers of commerce

Members of the treatment court team, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and coordinators, can provide presentations about how treatment courts operate and the outcomes they achieve.

If appropriate, a treatment court graduate may also be willing to share their experience and describe how the program helped them rebuild their life.

**These presentations help community members better understand the work of treatment courts and may lead to additional support, partnerships, or volunteer opportunities.**



# Part 3 - Promote Your Court

## 12. Creating Your Message

When promoting your treatment court, it is important to communicate a clear and consistent message about the work your program does and the impact it has on the community. Many people are unfamiliar with how treatment courts operate, so simple and direct messaging is often the most effective.

Your message should focus on three key themes:

### **Recovery and Accountability**

Treatment courts combine evidence-based treatment with close supervision and accountability. Participants are required to meet strict program requirements while working toward recovery.

### **Public Safety**

By addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior, such as substance use disorder or mental health challenges, treatment courts help reduce repeat offenses and improve community safety.

### **Community Impact**

Treatment court graduates often reunite with their families, obtain employment, and contribute positively to their communities.

When speaking with community members, media, or elected officials, it is helpful to be able to summarize your message in a simple statement such as:

- “Treatment courts change lives and strengthen communities.”
- “Treatment courts address the root causes of crime.”
- “Treatment courts provide accountability, treatment, and support.”

**Clear and consistent messaging helps the public understand why treatment courts are an important part of Michigan’s justice system.**



# Part 3 - Promote Your Court

## 13. Key Talking Points About Treatment Courts

When promoting your program, it is helpful to have a few key facts readily available. These talking points can be used in presentations, media interviews, social media posts, and conversations with community leaders.

### National Impact

- There are more than 4,000 treatment courts across the United States.
- Treatment courts are widely recognized as one of the most effective justice system responses to substance use and mental health disorders.
- Research shows that treatment courts reduce recidivism and improve long-term recovery outcomes.

### Michigan Impact

Michigan has more than 200 treatment courts, including drug courts, sobriety courts, mental health courts, juvenile drug and mental health courts, family treatment courts, veterans treatment courts, and tribal healing-to-wellness courts.

Participants in treatment court programs receive:

- Individualized treatment services
- Frequent alcohol and drug testing
- Regular court appearances
- Close supervision and support from a multidisciplinary team

These programs help participants break the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior while improving public safety.

Updated Michigan statistics from the Michigan Supreme Court's annual Problem-Solving Courts report should be incorporated into your materials whenever possible. The 2025 statistics can be found in the Appendixes under Talking Points.



# Part 3 - Promote Your Court

## 14. Telling the Story of Your Court

While statistics are important, the most powerful way to explain the impact of treatment courts is through real stories.

Treatment court participants often face significant challenges when entering the program. Through treatment, supervision, and support from the treatment court team, many are able to achieve long-term recovery and rebuild their lives.

When speaking about your program, consider describing:

- The challenges participants face when entering treatment court
- The support and accountability provided by the court team
- The achievements of participants who successfully complete the program

These stories help community members better understand how treatment courts work and why they are effective.



# Part 3 - Promote Your Court

## 15. Using Graduate Success Stories

Treatment court graduates provide some of the most compelling examples of the impact these programs can have. When graduates are willing to share their experiences, their stories can help illustrate the benefits of treatment courts to the public.

A graduate's story may highlight:

- Their personal journey through addiction or mental health challenges
- The structure and accountability provided by the treatment court program
- The progress they made during the program
- Their life after graduation, including employment, family relationships, and continued recovery

If a graduate is willing to share their story publicly, whether at a graduation ceremony, community event, or media interview, it can have a powerful impact on audiences.

Before sharing any participant story publicly, be sure the individual fully understands the nature of the event or media coverage and is comfortable sharing their experience.

**Graduate success stories demonstrate the central message of Treatment Court Month: recovery is possible and treatment courts help make that recovery possible.**



# Part 4 - Working with the Media

## 16. Getting the Media's Attention

Local media outlets are often interested in stories that highlight positive developments in the community, especially those involving recovery, public safety, and personal success. Treatment Court Month provides a strong opportunity to share these stories with your community.

Graduation ceremonies, community outreach events, and participant success stories can all be newsworthy. Local newspapers, radio stations, and television outlets may be willing to cover these events if they understand the impact of treatment courts in their community.

When reaching out to the media, focus on the human story behind your program. While statistics are helpful, stories about individuals overcoming challenges and achieving recovery are often what attract media attention.

You may wish to invite media representatives to attend:

- Treatment court graduation ceremonies
- Community awareness events
- Presentations recognizing Treatment Court Month
- Special events involving graduates or community partners

Providing media outlets with advance notice of your event can increase the likelihood that they will attend.



# Part 4 - Working with the Media

## 17. Writing a Press Release

A press release is a simple way to inform local media about your event or highlight the work of your treatment court. Many local newspapers and radio stations will publish press releases, especially if they relate to community events.

A press release should typically include:

- A clear headline describing the event or announcement
- The date, time, and location of the event
- A brief description of the treatment court program
- A quote from a judge, coordinator, or community leader
- Contact information for someone who can answer questions

Press releases should generally be one page in length and written in clear, straightforward language.

Sending a press release one to two weeks before your event can help ensure that media outlets have enough time to consider covering the story.

A sample press release is contained in the Appendixes.



# Part 4 - Working with the Media

## 18. Writing an Op-Ed

An opinion editorial, commonly called an op-ed, allows treatment court leaders to share their perspective on the importance of treatment courts and the impact they have on the community.

Op-eds are typically published in local newspapers and can help educate the public about how treatment courts work and why they are effective.

When writing an op-ed:

- Begin with a strong opening that captures the reader's attention.
- Focus on the impact of treatment courts in your community.
- Include a short example or story that illustrates the program's success.
- Keep the article concise—generally 500 to 600 words.
- End with a clear message about the importance of treatment courts.

Tying your op-ed to National Treatment Court Month can help provide context and make the article timelier.

A sample Op-ed is contained in the Appendixes.



# Part 4 - Working with the Media

## 19. Media Interview Tips

If a reporter attends your event or contacts your court for an interview, preparation can help ensure that your message is clear and effective.

Consider the following tips when speaking with the media:

### **Keep your message simple.**

Avoid legal or technical language. Explain treatment courts in terms that any member of the public can understand.

### **Focus on the community impact.**

Explain how treatment courts improve public safety, support recovery, and strengthen families.

### **Use real examples.**

Sharing stories about participant success can help illustrate how treatment courts work.

### **Designate a spokesperson.**

Many courts choose the judge or program coordinator to speak with the media.

If a graduate is willing to speak with reporters, their perspective can be especially powerful. However, participants should only speak with the media if they fully understand the situation and feel comfortable sharing their story.

**Media coverage during Treatment Court Month can help raise awareness about the important work treatment courts perform every day and highlight the individuals whose lives have been changed through these programs.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 20. Using Social Media to Promote Your Court

Social media is one of the easiest and most effective ways to share the impact of treatment courts with your community. A single post highlighting a graduate, event, or success story can reach hundreds or even thousands of people.

Courts do not need to be active on every platform. Most treatment courts find that focusing on one or two platforms, such as Facebook or LinkedIn, is sufficient to reach their community.

Social media posts during Treatment Court Month can help:

- Raise awareness about treatment courts
- Highlight the success of program participants
- Promote upcoming events or graduations
- Recognize community partners and team members

**Photos from graduation ceremonies, community events, and team activities are especially effective in helping people understand the positive impact of treatment courts.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 21. Simple Social Media Strategy

Promoting your court on social media does not require a complicated plan. A few posts throughout the month of May can help share the message that treatment courts change lives.

A simple approach may include:

**Post 1: Recognize Treatment Court Month**

Share a message explaining what Treatment Court Month is and why it matters.

**Post 2: Highlight a Graduate or Success Story**

Share a short story about a participant who completed the program and rebuilt their life.

**Post 3: Share Facts About Treatment Courts**

Post statistics showing how treatment courts improve recovery and reduce crime.

**Post 4: Promote a Local Event or Graduation**

Invite the community to attend a graduation ceremony or outreach event.

**Post 5: Celebrate Your Team**

Recognize the judges, attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers, and partners who make treatment courts successful.

**Even posting once each week during May can help raise awareness about treatment courts.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 22. Ready-to-Use Social Media Posts

The following sample posts can be used or adapted by your court during Treatment Court Month.

### Post Example 1

- May is National #TreatmentCourtMonth.
- Treatment courts help individuals overcome addiction, rebuild their lives, and strengthen our communities.

### Post Example 2

- Treatment courts bring together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, and probation officers to support individuals working toward recovery and accountability.
- Treatment courts change lives.
- #TreatmentCourtMonth

### Post Example 3

- Graduates of Michigan treatment courts work hard to complete demanding programs that include treatment, supervision, and accountability. Their success demonstrates that recovery is possible.
- #TreatmentCourtMonth

### Post Example 4

- Today we recognize the dedication of our treatment court team members who work every day to support recovery and improve public safety in our community.
- #TreatmentCourtMonth



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 23. Simple Posting Schedule for May

Courts may find it helpful to plan a few posts throughout the month. The following schedule provides a simple structure.

### **Week 1: Announce Treatment Court Month**

Explain what Treatment Court Month is and why it matters.

### **Week 2: Share a Success Story**

Highlight a graduate or participant achievement.

### **Week 3: Share Facts About Treatment Courts**

Post statistics or information about how treatment courts improve public safety and recovery.

### **Week 4: Celebrate Your Program**

Share photos from a graduation ceremony, community event, or treatment court team.

### **Social Media Tips**

- Use photos whenever possible.
- Keep posts short and easy to read.
- Tag MATCP or partner organizations when appropriate.
- Use the hashtag #TreatmentCourtMonth.
- Encourage team members and partners to share posts.

**Even a few posts during May can help your community better understand the impact of treatment courts.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## Photography Guide:

### 5 Photos Every Treatment Court Should Capture During Treatment Court Month

Photos help tell the story of treatment courts in ways that statistics and written descriptions cannot. Images showing participants, families, and the treatment court team can help the public better understand the impact of these programs.

When possible, consider capturing the following types of photos during Treatment Court Month activities.

#### 1. The Graduation Moment

One of the most powerful photos is the moment when a participant receives their graduation certificate.

Examples include:

- The judge presenting a certificate
- A graduate shaking hands with the judge
- Applause from the treatment court team or audience
- These photos capture the achievement and significance of completing the program.

#### 2. Graduate with Family or Supporters

Recovery is often supported by family members, mentors, or friends. Photos showing graduates with loved ones help illustrate the broader impact of treatment courts.

Examples include:

- Graduate with family members
- Graduate with a mentor or sponsor
- Group photos celebrating the graduate's achievement

**These images help demonstrate how treatment courts strengthen families and support networks.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 3. The Treatment Court Team

Treatment courts succeed because of strong collaboration among professionals and community partners.

Consider taking a group photo of the treatment court team, which may include:

- Judge
- Prosecutor
- Defense attorney
- Probation officer
- Treatment providers
- Court coordinator
- Law enforcement partners

**These photos help show the teamwork behind successful treatment court programs.**

## 4. Community Leaders or Elected Officials Visiting the Court

If elected officials, community leaders, or other partners attend an event or court session, capturing a photo of their visit can be helpful for outreach.

Examples include:

- Elected officials attending a graduation ceremony
- Community leaders speaking at an event
- Officials meeting with the treatment court team

**These photos can help demonstrate community support for treatment courts.**



# Part 5 - Social Media & Digital Outreach

## 5. The Celebration Photo

A final photo showing graduates celebrating together can capture the spirit of the event.

Examples include:

- Graduates holding certificates
- Group photo of the graduating class
- Graduates celebrating with the treatment court team

**These images often communicate the message of hope, recovery, and new beginnings.**

### Practical Tips

- Always ensure that participants are comfortable being photographed before sharing images publicly.
- Consider designating a team member to take photos during events.
- Photos can be used for social media, media outreach, community presentations, and future reports.



# Part 6 - Event Resources

## 24. Planning a Treatment Court Graduation or Event

Graduation ceremonies are one of the most effective ways to demonstrate the impact of treatment courts. These events allow community members, elected officials, and the media to witness firsthand the achievements of participants who have completed the program.

Graduations also provide an opportunity to recognize the hard work of treatment court participants and the commitment of the professionals and partners who support them.

When planning a graduation or community event during Treatment Court Month, consider the following steps:

### **Choose a Date and Location**

Select a date that works for your treatment court team and allows enough time to invite guests. Graduation ceremonies are often held in a courtroom or community meeting space.

### **Invite Guests and Community Leaders**

Consider inviting elected officials, law enforcement leaders, treatment providers, community partners, and local media representatives.

### **Identify Speakers**

Many programs include brief remarks from the judge, a treatment court team member, and one or more graduates who are willing to share their experiences.

### **Prepare Program Materials**

Some courts prepare simple printed programs recognizing graduates and describing the treatment court program.

### **Plan for Media Coverage**

If media representatives attend, designate a spokesperson to speak with reporters and provide information about the program.

**Even a modest ceremony can have a powerful impact on participants, families, and the community.**



# Part 6 - Event Resources

## 25. Sample Invitation Email

Courts may wish to invite elected officials, community partners, and other guests to attend a graduation ceremony or event. A sample Invitation is contained in the Appendixes.

## 26. Sample Media Advisory and/or Press Release

A media advisory is a short notice sent to media outlets to inform them of an upcoming event. A sample press release is contained in the Appendixes.

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

#### **Treatment Court Graduation Celebrates Recovery and Second Chances**

##### **WHAT:**

Graduation ceremony recognizing participants who have successfully completed the [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program.

##### **WHEN:**

[Date and Time]

##### **WHERE:**

[Location]

##### **DETAILS:**

The ceremony is part of National Treatment Court Month, which highlights the important work treatment courts perform in addressing substance use and mental health challenges within the justice system.

Graduates will share their experiences and the impact the program has had on their lives.

##### **CONTACT:**

[Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

### **Practical Tip**

When planning events during Treatment Court Month, remember that the goal is to share the success of your program and the achievements of your participants. Even small events can help raise awareness and demonstrate the important work treatment courts perform every day.



# Part 7 - After Your Event

## 27. Thanking Elected Officials and Community Partners

Following a Treatment Court Month event, it is important to thank those who participated or supported your program. A brief message of appreciation helps strengthen relationships and encourages continued support for treatment courts.

Consider sending thank-you messages to:

- Elected officials who attended or sent staff representatives
- Community partners or organizations that participated
- Guest speakers
- Treatment providers and program partners
- Media representatives who covered the event

**Acknowledging their participation demonstrates appreciation for their time and reinforces the importance of their support.**

## 28. Continuing the Conversation

While National Treatment Court Month provides a special opportunity to highlight the success of treatment courts, community outreach does not have to end when May concludes.

Courts may wish to continue sharing their message throughout the year by:

- Providing presentations to civic organizations or community groups
- Sharing program updates through social media
- Highlighting participant success stories
- Inviting community leaders to observe treatment court sessions or graduations

**Ongoing outreach helps ensure that community members and leaders remain aware of the important work treatment courts perform.**



# Part 7 - After Your Event

## 29. Share Your Success with MATCP

MATCP encourages treatment courts across Michigan to share their successes and experiences during Treatment Court Month.

Courts are invited to submit:

- Photos from graduation ceremonies or events
- Media coverage or news articles
- Participant success stories
- Examples of community outreach activities

**These stories help MATCP highlight the impact of treatment courts statewide and support continued awareness and advocacy efforts.**

Materials may be shared with MATCP by contacting:

Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals (MATCP)

Website: [matcp.org](http://matcp.org)

Email: [info@matcp.org](mailto:info@matcp.org)



# Final Thought

Treatment courts change lives every day. National Treatment Court Month provides an opportunity to celebrate those successes and ensure that communities understand the important role these programs play in promoting recovery, accountability, and public safety.

By sharing your stories and engaging your community, you help strengthen support for treatment courts across Michigan.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## A. Sample Resolution / Proclamation

### Resolution Recognizing May as Treatment Court Month

WHEREAS, treatment courts are a proven and effective approach for addressing substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and other underlying issues that contribute to criminal behavior; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts bring together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers, and community partners to provide accountability, treatment, and support to individuals working toward recovery; and

WHEREAS, participants in treatment courts are required to complete rigorous programs that may include treatment services, frequent testing, regular court appearances, and close supervision; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts have been shown to reduce recidivism, improve recovery outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance public safety; and

WHEREAS, Michigan has more than 200 treatment courts serving communities across the state and helping thousands of individuals each year; and

WHEREAS, National Treatment Court Month provides an opportunity to recognize the dedicated professionals, community partners, and participants who make these programs successful;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the [City/County/Township/Organization] hereby recognizes May as Treatment Court Month and encourages residents to learn more about the important work of treatment courts in strengthening communities and supporting recovery.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## B. Invitation to Elected Officials

Subject: Invitation to Treatment Court Graduation – National Treatment Court Month

Dear [Title and Name],

On behalf of the [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program, we would like to invite you to attend our upcoming treatment court graduation ceremony.

This event recognizes individuals who have successfully completed the program and achieved significant milestones in their recovery and personal growth.

### Event Details

Date:

Time:

Location:

The ceremony is part of National Treatment Court Month, which highlights the important role treatment courts play in supporting recovery, improving public safety, and strengthening communities.

We would be honored if you were able to attend and help us celebrate the accomplishments of these graduates. If your schedule allows, we would also welcome the opportunity for you to share brief remarks.

Please contact [Name/Title] at [phone/email] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Court/Program Name]



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## C. Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Treatment Court Celebrates Graduates During National Treatment Court Month

[City, State] — The [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program will celebrate the accomplishments of program participants during a graduation ceremony on [date] at [location].

Treatment courts bring together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, and treatment providers to help individuals address substance use disorders and other underlying issues while remaining accountable for their actions.

Participants in treatment court programs must meet rigorous requirements that may include treatment services, regular court appearances, frequent testing, and close supervision.

“[Insert quote from judge or program leader],” said [Name/Title].

The graduation ceremony is part of National Treatment Court Month, a nationwide effort to recognize the impact of treatment courts in promoting recovery and improving public safety.

For more information about the event or the [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program, please contact:

Name

Title

Phone

Email



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## D. Sample Op-Ed

### Treatment Courts Are Changing Lives in Our Community

Every day in communities across Michigan, individuals struggling with substance use and other challenges are working to rebuild their lives through treatment courts.

Unlike traditional court programs, treatment courts bring together a team of professionals, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, and treatment providers, to support participants as they work toward recovery and accountability.

Participation in a treatment court program is demanding. Individuals must attend frequent court hearings, participate in treatment, undergo regular testing, and meet strict supervision requirements. The program requires commitment, perseverance, and hard work.

But the results are powerful.

Participants who successfully complete treatment court programs often reconnect with their families, gain employment, and become productive members of their communities. Treatment courts help individuals break the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior while improving public safety.

May is National Treatment Court Month, a time to recognize the dedicated professionals and participants who make these programs successful.

Here in [community name], our treatment court has helped individuals take meaningful steps toward recovery and stability. Their success stories remind us that recovery is possible and that treatment courts play an important role in strengthening our communities.

By continuing to support treatment courts, we can help ensure that individuals facing serious challenges have the opportunity to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to our community.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## E. Media Contact List Template

Courts may wish to develop a simple list of local media contacts for outreach.

Media Outlet	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Notes
Local Newspaper				
Local TV Station				
Local Radio Station				
Community Newsletter				
Online News Site				

Tip: Maintaining a list of media contacts can make future outreach easier.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## F. Sample Thank-You Email

Subject: Thank You for Supporting Our Treatment Court

Dear [Name],

Thank you for attending our recent Treatment Court Month graduation ceremony for the [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program.

Your participation helped recognize the accomplishments of individuals who have worked hard to complete the program and achieve important milestones in their recovery.

We appreciate your support of treatment courts and your commitment to strengthening our community.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact Information]



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## F. Sample Thank-You Email

Subject: Thank You for Supporting Our Treatment Court

Dear [Name],

Thank you for attending our recent Treatment Court Month graduation ceremony for the [Name of Court] Treatment Court Program.

Your participation helped recognize the accomplishments of individuals who have worked hard to complete the program and achieve important milestones in their recovery.

We appreciate your support of treatment courts and your commitment to strengthening our community.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact Information]



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## G. Event Planning Worksheet

Courts can use this worksheet to organize a Treatment Court Month event.

### Event Type

- Graduation Ceremony
- Community Presentation
- Awareness Event
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Event Details

Date:

Time:

Location:

### Event Speakers

- Judge
- Treatment Court Team Member
- Graduate Speaker
- Community Leader

Names:

### Guests to Invite

- Elected Officials
- Community Partners
- Treatment Providers
- Media Representatives

### Event Preparation

- Send invitations
- Prepare agenda
- Prepare press release
- Assign spokesperson
- Arrange photos

### After the Event

- Send thank-you messages
- Share photos on social media
- Send materials to MATCP



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## H. Local Impact Worksheet

### Highlighting the Impact of Your Treatment Court

While statewide and national statistics are helpful, the most persuasive information often comes from local program results. Community members, elected officials, and media are often most interested in understanding how treatment courts are making a difference in their own community.

Use the worksheet below to gather information about the impact of your treatment court. This information can be helpful when speaking with legislators, community groups, or the media.

### Program Overview

Name of Court / Program:

Court Location:

Type of Court:

- Adult Drug Court
- Sobriety Court
- Mental Health Court
- Veterans Treatment Court
- Juvenile / Family Treatment Court
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Program Began:



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## H. Local Impact Worksheet *continued*

### Program Impact

#### **Participants Served**

Total number of participants served since program began:

Number of participants currently enrolled:

#### **Program Graduates**

Total number of program graduates:

Graduates in the past year:

#### **Program Outcomes**

Graduation rate (if available):

Recidivism outcomes or other success measures:

Employment or education outcomes (if available):

#### **Estimated Cost Savings**

Estimated taxpayer savings associated with the program (if available):

Sources used for estimates (studies, reports, etc.):

#### **Community Partnerships**

List key organizations that partner with your treatment court:

*Examples may include treatment providers, recovery organizations, law enforcement agencies, veterans groups, housing programs, or other community partners.*

#### **Participant Success Stories**

Example story or key themes:

*Short examples of participant success stories can be powerful tools when speaking with the public or elected officials.*

#### **Helpful Tip**

When speaking with community members or policymakers, combining local program results with participant success stories can help illustrate the real impact of treatment courts in your community.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## I. Michigan Treatment Court Talking Points and Facts

### What Are Treatment Courts?

Treatment courts are specialized court programs that address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, such as substance use disorders and mental health challenges through a structured combination of treatment, supervision, and accountability.

These courts bring together a multidisciplinary team that typically includes:

- Judges
- Prosecutors
- Defense attorneys
- Probation officers
- Treatment providers
- Law enforcement
- Community partners

Participants in treatment court programs must comply with rigorous requirements, which often include frequent court appearances, treatment participation, regular drug and alcohol testing, and close supervision.

Treatment courts focus on helping individuals achieve recovery while improving public safety and reducing repeat offenses.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## I. Michigan Treatment Court Talking Points and Facts *continued*

### National Impact of Treatment Courts

Treatment courts have become one of the most effective justice system responses to substance use and mental health challenges.

Key national facts include:

- There are more than 4,000 treatment courts operating across the United States.
- Treatment courts are widely recognized as one of the most successful justice system interventions for individuals with substance use disorders.
- Research consistently shows that treatment courts reduce recidivism and improve long-term recovery outcomes.
- Treatment courts combine accountability and evidence-based treatment, helping participants break the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior.
- Studies show treatment courts can save an average of more than \$6,000 per participant through reduced criminal justice costs.

### Treatment Courts in Michigan

Michigan is a national leader in the development and implementation of treatment courts.

Across the state there are more than 200 treatment courts, including:

- Adult Drug Courts
- Sobriety (DWI) Courts
- Mental Health Courts
- Veterans Treatment Courts
- Juvenile and Family Treatment Courts
- Tribal Healing-to-Wellness Courts

These courts serve thousands of individuals each year and operate in courts throughout Michigan.

All Michigan problem-solving courts must meet certification standards established by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to ensure compliance with best practices.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## I. Michigan Treatment Court Talking Points and Facts *continued*

### Program Structure

Participation in a treatment court program is demanding and requires significant commitment.

Typical program requirements may include:

- Frequent court appearances
- Individualized treatment services
- Random drug and alcohol testing
- Intensive supervision
- Participation in counseling and recovery programs
- Employment or education requirements

Participants who successfully complete the program demonstrate substantial personal progress and commitment to recovery.

### Michigan Outcomes

Data from Michigan's problem-solving courts demonstrate strong outcomes for participants who complete treatment court programs.

Examples of program impact include:

- Approximately 72% of participants discharged from drug or sobriety courts successfully complete the program.
- Graduates of adult drug court programs are more than four times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years.
- Sobriety court participants who use ignition interlock devices are nearly five times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years.
- Veterans Treatment Courts retain approximately 88% of participants over a 12-month period, allowing sufficient time for treatment engagement and recovery.
- Mental Health Court graduates demonstrate significant improvements in mental health and quality of life outcomes.



# Appendix - Ready-to-Use Templates

## I. Michigan Treatment Court Talking Points and Facts *continued*

### Community Impact

Treatment courts have a positive impact that extends beyond individual participants.

Benefits to communities include:

- Reduced crime and recidivism
- Increased public safety
- Improved employment outcomes for participants
- Strengthened families and reduced foster care placements
- Increased community stability

Treatment courts demonstrate that addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior can lead to long-term positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

### Key Messages

When discussing treatment courts with community members, elected officials, or the media, the following messages may be helpful:

#### **Treatment courts change lives.**

Participants receive the treatment and support needed to achieve recovery and rebuild their lives.

#### **Treatment courts improve public safety.**

By addressing substance use and mental health challenges, treatment courts reduce repeat offenses.

#### **Treatment courts strengthen communities.**

Graduates often reconnect with their families, gain employment, and contribute positively to their communities.

#### **Recovery is possible.**

Treatment courts provide the structure, accountability, and support that help individuals achieve long-term recovery.



# Common Messaging Mistakes to Avoid

Treatment court teams are experts in justice and treatment, but many professionals do not regularly interact with the media or speak publicly about their programs. The following suggestions can help ensure clear and effective communication.

## **Avoid Legal or Technical Language**

When speaking with community members or reporters, avoid legal terminology that may be unfamiliar to the public. Use clear and simple language to explain how treatment courts work.

For example, instead of describing program requirements in technical terms, focus on the structure of the program and the support provided to participants.

## **Focus on People, Not Just Statistics**

Data and statistics are important, but audiences often connect most strongly with personal stories. When possible, describe how treatment courts help individuals overcome challenges and rebuild their lives.

## **Protect Participant Privacy**

Participant confidentiality is essential. Always ensure that individuals who share their stories publicly do so voluntarily and fully understand the nature of the event or media coverage.

Avoid discussing confidential details about participants who have not agreed to share their experiences.

## **Emphasize Public Safety and Recovery**

When explaining treatment courts, it is important to highlight both:

- Accountability and supervision
- Treatment and recovery
- Treatment courts improve public safety by addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior.

## **Coordinate Messaging**

When interacting with media or public officials, it may be helpful for treatment court teams to coordinate messaging in advance. Many courts designate a spokesperson, such as the judge or program coordinator, to speak with the media.

This helps ensure that information about the program is clear and consistent.



# Share!

We hope this Toolkit is helpful to you as you share the life-changing work of your Treatment Court with your community!

Do you have successes to share?

Email stories, photos, and video clips to [info@matcp.org](mailto:info@matcp.org).



Photos used:

On the cover (left to right):

1. A graduate of Michigan's 36th District Adult Drug Court laughs with Judge Shannon Holmes. *Reprinted with permission of the 36th District Court and Judge Shannon Holmes.*
2. A graduate with Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Mental Health Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*
3. Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Mental Health Court with a graduate and the graduate's support person of the 29th District Mental Health Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*
4. An excited graduate at the 36th District Court treatment court graduation. *Photo property of MATCP.*

Page 4: A graduate with Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*

# Thank You!

The following publications were relied on, or referenced, in the MATCP Treatment Court Month Toolkit (not listed in any specific order):

- **National Treatment Court Month All Rise Toolkit**, May 2026.
- **FY 2025 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report**, Michigan Supreme Court.
- **DWI Court Field Kit**, December 2012. Prepared by the National Center for DWI Courts, (NCDC), a professional services division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). (*Now Impaired Driving Solutions, a division of All Rise.*) This Field Kit is available on the MATCP website under National Resources

Thank you to the **2025-2026 MATCP Communications Committee** for their assistance in developing this Toolkit. Committee members include:

- **Committee Chair: David Wallace**, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Huron County
- **Andrea Krause**, Prosecuting Attorney, Cass County
- **Shelly McFarlane**, Defense Attorney, Genesee County Adult & Juvenile Recovery Courts
- **Eric J. Horwood**, MS, CCJP-M, Probation Services Supervisor, 8th District Court





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