

State of Michigan

51st DISTRICT COURT

HON. RICHARD D. KUHN, JR.
CHIEF JUDGE

HON. TODD A. FOX
CHIEF JUDGE PRO TEMPORE

JENNIFER E. THOM
COURT ADMINISTRATOR



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Report: 51st District Court Sobriety Court and Veterans Treatment Court, Other Problem-Solving Courts Successful in Lowering Recidivism, Unemployment among Graduates

Waterford, MI, April 11, 2023 – The Michigan Supreme Court has released its [FY 2022 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report](#), tracking the progress and highlighting the success of 207 problem-solving courts (PSCs) across Michigan from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. Waterford is fortunate enough to have the 51st District Court Sobriety Court and North Oakland County Veterans Treatment Court, which help justice-involved individuals in our community by helping them overcome underlying issues such as substance use disorder, mental illness, and veteran-specific issues.

“It has been an honor and privilege to preside over Waterford’s Sobriety Court (21 years) and the North Oakland County Veterans Treatment Court (7 years). Our problem-solving courts have been extraordinarily successful in solving problems and savings lives”, said Judge Richard D. Kuhn, Jr., Chief Judge of 51st District Court in Waterford. “I have witnessed first-hand hundreds of individuals who entered the criminal justice system with a substance use disorder or some other underlying issue and facing incarceration, who received life-saving treatment and the chance to repair their lives, reconnect with their loved ones, and become productive members of society,” Kuhn said.

“Problem-solving courts exemplify how we are working to increase public trust and confidence in the judiciary through collaboration and compassion—an overarching goal of our Michigan Judicial Council,” said Justice Kyra H. Bolden, the PSC liaison for the Supreme Court. “What struck me the most about this report is that these pages are not just filled with numbers and milestones; they are filled with hope and humanity.”

Key report findings:

- Michigan’s adult drug and sobriety programs grew from 98 programs in FY 2018 to 109 programs in FY 2022.
- Graduates of adult drug court programs were, on average, **more than 3 times less likely** to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program.
- Sobriety court graduates who used an ignition interlock device were **nearly 5 times less likely** to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission.

- Unemployment dropped by **88 percent** for adult drug court graduates, 86 percent for sobriety court graduates, and 85 percent for hybrid court (drug/sobriety) graduates.
- Average **99 percent improvement** in mental health and 95 percent quality of life improvement.
- Graduates of veterans treatment courts (VTCs) were **nearly 2 times less likely** to reoffend within three years of admission to a program.
- Unemployment dropped by **88 percent** among VTC graduates.
- Michigan remains a national leader with 28 VTCs.

[Problem-solving courts](#) focus on providing treatment and intense supervision to offenders as an alternative to incarceration. These include drug and sobriety, mental health, veterans, and other nontraditional courts. The Supreme Court, through its State Court Administrative Office, assists trial court judges in the management of these courts by providing training, education, operational standards, monitoring, certification requirements, and funding.