

Covid-19 Tennessee Recovery Court Responses

The Tennessee Recovery Courts have gone above and beyond in adapting their practices to ensure the lives of those we serve have maintained as much support and normalcy as possible during these times of uncertainty. We would like to share some of your new and promising practices with you so we can continue to adapt and learn together. We very much appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey.

See the charts below pertaining to the survey results:

Programs Accepting New Admissions

Not accepting new admissions 69%

Accepting new admissions 31%

How Programs Are Conducting Court

Teleconferencing 69%

Not holding court 14%

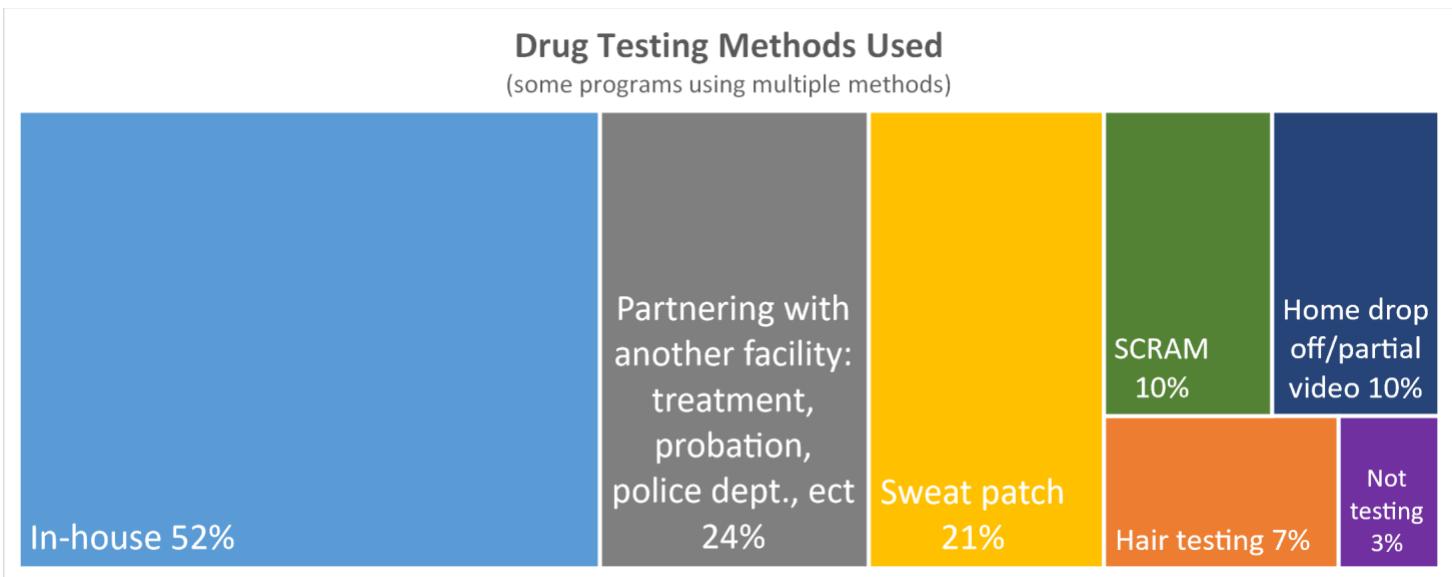
Drive-thru court 10%

Holding in-person court 7%

Teleconferencing Methods: Zoom, Go To Meeting, Blue Jeans, Scopia, Spontania

The Dekalb County Drive-thru Court





Many programs have very successfully adapted to using multiple methods for drug screenings.

“On-site, urine drug screening has been very sporadic - focusing on the most at-risk participants. I have also utilized a local clinic that does lab urine testing and hair follicle testing for a few participants. We already had some participants wearing a drug patch or an alcohol ankle monitor.”

Phase Changes

Multiple courts mentioned minimizing frequency of random drug screenings and moving participants up a phase if close to phasing up and doing well.

“Temporary changes have been made. Participants are not required to pay their \$5 weekly fee due to loss of jobs and increase in immediate needs at home. They are not required to complete CSW due to the Judge suspending CSW. They are also not required to attend HSE (GED) classes due to closings. Participants have been given leniency in employment due to many jobs being lost at this time.”

Creative Sanctions and Incentives

Successful Sanctions:

Many cited written and video essays, extra phone conversations with staff, and picking up trash solo in the community. Many programs also stated that they were suspending jail sanctions entirely or delaying jail stays.

“We have delayed jail sanctions with the agreement that if the participant makes improvements and progresses well this sanction will be lifted and they will not be reported.”

“We have been giving much more in depth writing assignments and personal reflection assignments. Have also been able to incentivize clients more with more time to send encouraging cards and text messages during this time.”

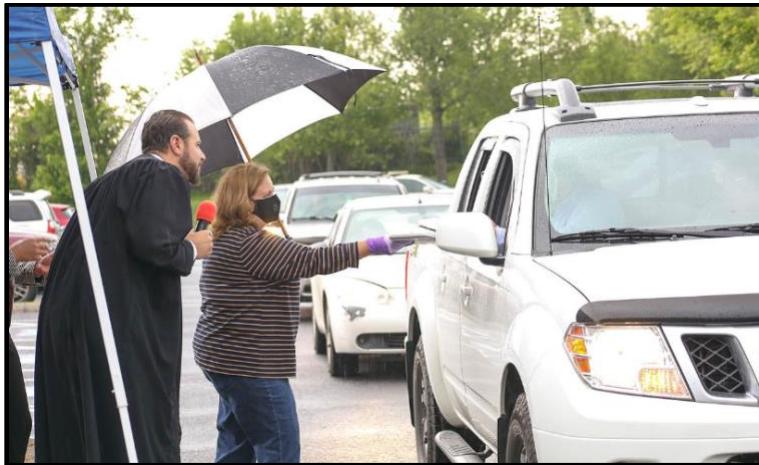
Successful Incentives:

Multiple programs reported reduction in weekly fees and gift certificates to restaurants and grocery stores.

Graduation

Many programs presented graduation certificates but held off on ceremonies for a future date.

The 10th Judicial District Recovery Court held a drive-thru ceremony in the rain. Go team!



<https://clevelandbanner.com/stories/drug-court-graduates-storm-into-their-own-new-normal,111406>

Newly Adopted Practices, Including Some Programs May Continue

“Contacting clients every two days via phone, conducting IOP classes via zoom and phone, holding staff meetings twice a week by conference call. Assessing new applicants via zoom at the jail.”

“Porch visits!”

“Zoom calls multiple times per week. I keep in contact with most participants daily via text. We have made the TNRecover APP mandatory for all participants to post daily and write in the gratitude journal.”

“We have provided some “homework” for our participants when they come to court. It’s a paper document on various topics like relapse prevention, triggers and such. They work on this “homework” and turn it back in their next time to court.”

“We have never had an option to text clients as we do not give out our personal phone numbers and we do not have work phones. However, during this time we were able to get alternate phone numbers to use at home on our personal phones to text clients and encourage more frequent communication. I feel it has greatly increased communication and engagement with clients and will be useful even after this passes. Also using Zoom video for calls and assessments needed with clients has worked well.”