



news

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Denver Adult Drug Court celebrates 20th anniversary
Special graduation ceremony also marks National Drug Court Month

DENVER – The Denver Drug Court will hold a special graduation ceremony on Wednesday, May 21, 2014, to celebrate its 20th anniversary in conjunction with National Drug Court Month, which honors the 25th anniversary of the first drug courts in the United States.

Twenty four men and women are slated to graduate from the Denver Drug Court program on Wednesday, bringing the total number of graduates to date in 2014 to 74. There were 158 graduates from Denver Drug Court in 2013. Graduation marks a drug court participant's completion of an intensive treatment program which also includes probation supervision, in-court review hearings, substantial judicial oversight, and full accountability by the drug court participant.

The Denver Drug Court continues to have a positive impact by reducing drug use and recidivism, reuniting families and making the community safer while providing alternatives to incarceration that cost less and are more effective.

The ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. in the Cisneros Jury Assembly Room, Room 100, of the Lindsey-Flanigan Courthouse, 520 W. Colfax Ave. In celebration of its 20 years, the Denver Drug Court will premiere a film comprising interviews of previous drug court participants.

Denver Drug Court was established in 1994 as one of the first drug courts in the country. In 2007, the Denver Drug Court was redesigned in an effort to become more effective. Today, the court is absorbing nearly 40 percent of the criminal drug filings that would otherwise land on a traditional District Court docket.

Since 2007, Denver Drug Court has served nearly 4,000 participants and more than 2,000 have graduated. Currently, the court has more than 700 participants and six specialty tracks: veterans; co-occurring mental health and substance use; women with childhood trauma; developmentally disabled/traumatic brain injury; young men with children; and HOPE, an intensive supervision program for repeat offenders.

National Drug Court Month is coordinated by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, which was established in 1994 to assist in the planning, implementation and operation of drug courts. What started in a Florida courtroom 25 years ago has become the nation's most successful strategy for dealing with substance-abusing offenders. The Denver Drug Court graduation is being held in concert with graduations in many of the 2,800 Drug Courts and other problem-solving courts across the country. Activities and commemorations during the month will center on the theme "Celebrating 25 years of Drug Courts."