



Impaired Driving Prevention Month

December 2019

Dear colleagues,

First, the good news: for the second year in a row, alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities have dropped. In 2017, they dropped 1.1%, and in 2018, they dropped another 3.6%, to [10,511](#). These falling numbers are encouraging, and we know that DWI courts are helping ensure this downward trend continues.

However, these numbers should be taken with a grain of salt because instances of drug-impaired driving are becoming more prevalent. The true scale of the problem is difficult to gauge due to limitations in data collection across the country, but what we do know is deeply concerning and demands our urgent attention. In fact, [data](#) released by the state of Washington's Traffic Safety Commission identify polysubstance impairment as the most common type of impairment found among drivers involved in fatal crashes.

The truth is impaired driving remains one of the single most serious threats to public safety in the United States. Until the number of these completely preventable deaths hits zero, we have more work to do.

At the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC), we understand that while prevention efforts, new technology and increased public awareness can help reduce impaired driving, it is critical that we also address the root problem for repeat, high-blood alcohol content and polysubstance drivers: addiction. That's why we're dedicated to helping communities implement, expand and improve DWI court programs that provide treatment and accountability based on research-driven best practices.

We know that DWI courts work, and Impaired Driving Prevention Month in December is an important opportunity to make sure our fellow citizens and elected officials know that, too. Throughout the month of December, we want to introduce our communities to saved lives, reunited families and safer streets.

This toolkit contains a wealth of resources to help you plan and execute events, as well as educate your elected officials and the media. For many people in recovery, the holidays can be an especially difficult time; for this reason, we've also included tips on ensuring your court staff are prepared to give participants the support they need.

We look forward to highlighting the news and photos you send us all month long on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, and we encourage you to use all the resources available to you via [Responsibility.org](#).

Thank you for the work you're doing every single day to make our communities safer.

Sincerely,



Jim Eberspacher
Director, National Center for DWI Courts

NCDC is generously supported by



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Impaired Driving Prevention Month Event Ideas

Here are a variety of event ideas for your DWI court to recognize Impaired Driving Prevention Month and foster community support for your program. Remember to invite elected officials and the media to these events!

1) Hold a graduation ceremony: If possible, schedule a graduation ceremony during the month of December, and invite local and state officials and the media to attend.



2) Engage elected officials: Whether you are scheduling a meeting or inviting them to an event, December is the ideal time to reach out to your local, state and federal elected officials.

3) Community/alumni breakfast: Host a community breakfast to allow your program participants to meet and talk with past graduates, as well as to foster local support for your program. Offer free food (ask a local restaurant or caterer to donate!) and invite the public to come learn more about their local DWI court. [Here's an example from Michigan.](#)

4) School assembly: Many courts do outreach to local schools. This is a great way for your participants to give back to the community and spread a positive message to local youth that helps prevent future impaired drivers.

5) 5K holiday run/walk: This is a fun community event that can be turned into an annual tradition and a great fundraising opportunity, especially if program alumni and current participants run or walk and ask their friends and family to sponsor them. You can even encourage participants to dress up in the holiday spirit, like this [Ugly Sweater Run.](#)

6) Bike ride: Plan a cycling event to raise awareness about impaired driving, encourage alternative forms of transportation, promote exercise and raise funds for your court program. [Here's a great example from Arkansas.](#)



7) Donation drive: December is the perfect time to organize a holiday donation drive for a local food bank or charity. Or, hold a year-end fundraiser specifically for your court program to encourage local businesses and nonprofits to support your efforts through donated funds, services or time.

Get Media to Your Graduation/Event

December is a great time to engage media and promote the success of your program. There's no better way to do this than with a graduation or special event. Here's how to get media to cover your program.

Designate a media coordinator and spokesperson for your court:

1. The **media coordinator** is responsible for identifying and contacting media for your court.
2. The **media spokesperson** is the individual providing quotes and interviews to the media. The spokesperson must be knowledgeable about your court and able to speak from a position of authority. This is often the judge but could be another key member of the team.
3. Determine if any program graduates or participants are willing to speak with the media. Write a short paragraph outlining their story for use in media advisory.

Note: Personal stories are critical. Ask successful graduates or participants nearing program completion if you can share their story. Include a short paragraph on each in your advisory. NADCP's recent publication "[Sharing Your Treatment Court Story](#)" is a great resource for helping participants and alumni. If you choose to feature a success story from your court, remember that **new participants are in a vulnerable stage and should not be profiled by the media.**

Write your media advisory. A media advisory is crucial to ensuring coverage of your event. It lets them know what the event is, where it is and why it is important for them to come cover it. We provide a sample in the addendum.

Identify media outlets to contact. Don't limit your list to local media; state and regional media may also be interested. If you've worked with reporters in the past, or know of reporters covering criminal justice issues, reach out to them directly. Otherwise, contact the outlet and ask for the assignment desk.

Send your media advisory. Email your advisory to each media outlet a week prior to the event. Include the advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment.

Follow up. Media is unlikely to attend the event unless follow-up calls are made. Often, media won't make decisions about coverage until the last minute.

Send positive media stories about your DWI court to your members of Congress and other elected officials. Include both your Representatives and Senators. You can look up contact information for your members of Congress [here](#).



For assistance with media outreach and interviews, contact Brooke Glisson, NADCP associate director of communications, at bglisson@allrise.org.

Print Media: Op-ed

One way to enhance media attention for Impaired Driving Prevention Month to ensure your message gets out across your region and the country is to write an opinion editorial (op-ed).

There's currently widespread interest in justice reform in the U.S. An op-ed is a great way to remind your legislators and the public that DWI court programs save lives, save money and increase safety.

We've provided a sample op-ed for you to adapt and use as appropriate in the addendum. Here are some general tips to help ensure that any op-ed you write gets published:

- **Find a news hook.** Your court's graduation ceremony or other event is newsworthy; give it an extra hook by relating it to the broader discussion of impaired driving, justice reform and finding proven solutions for your community. If your court is in jeopardy of losing funding, say so!
- **Know the word limit.** In general, 700-800 words is sufficient for an op-ed, but check the specific newspaper's op-ed page to find out their preferred length.
- **Humanize your piece.** Anecdotes and personal stories help illustrate and bring clarity to complicated issues. Think about personal experiences in your DWI court, and use them as examples in the op-ed (but only use names with permission).
- **Stick to a single point.** Make a single, strong point clearly and persuasively. Your first paragraph should draw the reader in, but if you choose to open with an anecdote, make sure you get to the point quickly.
- **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece: state your opinion on what's needed to ensure your court can continue to operate effectively or on what evidence-based steps can be taken to reduce impaired driving in your community (see our recommendations in the sample op-ed in the addendum).
- **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph and include a poignant quote from a key stakeholder or participant, if you have one.
- **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you or publish the piece within 1-2 weeks. If you haven't had a response in that timeframe, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, make a follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.

Social Media Overview

NCDC encourages DWI court programs to use social media to their advantage. Not only can social media help engage and educate your participants, graduates and the community, it's proven to be [one of the most effective ways to get the attention of your mayor, governor and other elected officials](#), even better than email. The vast majority of members of Congress have official social media accounts, and they take notice of comments on Facebook and Twitter.

Remember that anything you post on social media (words, photos, videos, etc.) is considered public content. As with any public content, it's critical a system be in place to ensure that content posted or shared on behalf of your court program is 1) appropriate, 2) factual and 3) in accordance with the principles and responsibilities of your court and the U.S. judicial system.

Like and follow our All Rise [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts and share the inspiring stories, news, photos and videos we'll be posting about the power of DWI courts all month long. In the addendum, we've provided sample content that you can use during Impaired Driving Prevention Month.

If you would like to see your court highlighted on our social media accounts, send your stories, photos, links to any news media and contact information to Brooke Glisson, NADCP associate director of communications, at bglisson@allrise.org.





NCDC
NATIONAL CENTER
FOR DWI COURTS

Top DWI
courts reduce
recidivism by
60%⁴

2+
million
drivers in the US
with 3 or more
DWI convictions³

The estimated cost of
alcohol-impaired crashes
in the US in 2010 was
\$44
billion¹

\$3.19
saved for every \$1
invested in DWI
courts⁶

726
DWI courts in
the US⁵

10,511
alcohol-
impaired-
driving fatalities
in 2018²

IMPAIRED DRIVING EPIDEMIC

There is a disturbing upward trend in the number of annual impaired-driving-related fatalities due to repeat driving while intoxicated (DWI) offenders and drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or higher. However, the criminal justice system's traditional response of incarceration and other punishment does not deter these offenders because it does not address the root cause of the problem: **addiction**.

DWI court participants are **19 times less likely to reoffend**.⁷ DWI courts are **changing the criminal justice system's approach** to impaired driving:

- ✓ Provide intense supervision
- ✓ Provide individualized, long-term treatment
- ✓ Change participants' thinking and behavior
- ✓ Demand accountability
- ✓ Save taxpayers' money
- ✓ Improve public safety

¹ National Center for Statistics and Analysis (2015). *Alcohol-impaired driving: 2014 data* (Traffic Safety Facts. DOT HS 812 231). Washington, D.C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

² National Center for Statistics and Analysis (October 2019). *2018 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes: Overview* (Traffic Safety Facts. DOT HS 812 826). Washington, D.C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

³ Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) (2009). *New Data Shows Disturbing Number of Repeat Drunk Drivers on America's Roadways*.

⁴ Mitchell, O., Wilson, D.B., Eggers, A. & MacKenzie, D.L. (2012). *Assessing the effectiveness of drug courts on recidivism: A meta-analysis review of traditional and nontraditional drug courts*. Journal of Criminal Justice, 40(1).

⁵ National Association of Drug Court Professionals (2015).

⁶ Carey, S., Harrison, P., Johnson, A. & Zil, C. (2014). *Minnesota DWI Courts: A summary of evaluation findings in nine drug court programs*. Portland: NPC Research.

⁷ Carey, S., Fuller, B. & Kissick, K. (2008). *Michigan DUI Courts Outcome Evaluation: Final Report*. Portland: NPC Research.

LEARN MORE: DWICOURTS.ORG

Preparing Your Team & Participants for the Holidays

It's important to remember that for people in recovery, the holidays can be a particularly challenging time for their sobriety. As DWI court professionals, it's critical to recognize this fact and prepare your team to support participants throughout the holiday season.

The efforts of your team to understand how most holiday events include and even focus on alcohol consumption, and the challenges this can present to your participants, will go a long way to help your participants feel supported during this season. During your court staffing meetings prior to each holiday, discuss the following with your team:

- Ensure each team member receives, reads and understands this page of the toolkit, especially if s/he has never struggled with a substance use disorder.
- Discuss how the court team can demonstrate understanding, empathy and support for those in recovery during the holiday season.
- Discuss how your team will interact with and prepare DWI court participants during the court sessions immediately before and after each holiday.
- Plan at least one sober holiday event for your court team, participants and families to attend. Some ideas include:
 - Party or potluck dinner
 - Bowling night (explain the event and ask bowling alley management ahead of time if they would be willing to close the bar for a few hours that evening)
 - Movie night at a local theater or community center
 - Local college or professional sporting event (such as a basketball game)
 - Your own sporting event (such as a 5K, bike ride or basketball tournament)

For your DWI court participants, be aware of the date closest to each holiday when s/he will come before the judge, and address the following:

- Ask, "What are your plans for [Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year's]?"
- Ask, "How do you plan to maintain your sobriety over the holiday?" You can also give them some specific [tips for staying sober](#) through the holiday season.
- Instruct them to plan ahead for the busy holiday season and to schedule and keep appointments with their therapist, counselor and/or case manager around each holiday.
- If they have sponsors, remind them to check in and even meet up as necessary.
- If they participate in group therapy or community organizations, encourage them not to miss these group meetings around each holiday.
- Encourage them to choose their activities and company wisely.

In addition, Responsibility.org works collaboratively with experienced partners to develop [resources for DWI system practitioners](#), from law enforcement to judges to treatment providers. These free, online publications and courses can help guide practice and improve outcomes for people in need.

Addendum

Sample Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your phone number and email address]

Local Court Marks National Impaired Driving Prevention Month with [Event]

[Name] Slated to Deliver Keynote Address

[CITY, STATE, DATE]— December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and [court name] will hold a [graduation ceremony/event] on [date] at [location]. [Name] will deliver the keynote address.

According to the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC), [court name] is one of more than 700 DWI courts in the United States helping get repeat DWI offenders off [city/county] roadways by providing them with the accountability and treatment needed to return to being productive members of society. Next week's inspiring [graduation ceremony/event] is evidence of the tremendous impact the [court name] has had on our community.

[If graduation: The graduation will recognize [number] graduates who have completed the program.] [List dignitaries who have confirmed attendance and indicate who will be the keynote speaker.]

Interviews will be available upon request. Please RSVP to [media contact].

What: [court name] [graduation ceremony/event]

When: [Date/time]

Where: [Location]

About the graduates: [If you have brief biographical information on graduates, and they are willing to share their stories with the media, include their names and a few sentences.]

About the [court name]: [Describe your court program, including when it was founded, its mission statement, etc. Provide any relevant statistics on your court.]

###

Sample Op-ed

Alcohol-Impaired Driving Is on the Rise; Here's What We Can Do About It

In 1988, Larry Mahoney drove his pickup truck down the wrong side of Kentucky's I-71, hitting a church bus head on and killing 24 children and three adults. The incident, which became known as the [Carrollton Bus Crash](#), remains the deadliest impaired-driving incident in American history. The crash received national media attention and resulted in a crackdown on impaired driving. Between 1982 and 2014, the number of annual alcohol-impaired driving fatalities decreased by 51%. But after nearly three decades of declining, these numbers once again began to climb.

The latest data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities dipped 3.6% in 2018, to [10,511](#), and while this reduction is encouraging, it is far from enough. Impaired driving remains one of the single most serious threats to public safety—and it's one that is entirely preventable. Progress has been made, but more must be done.

December marks Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and there is no better time to explore solutions to this public safety issue. To immediately reduce impaired-driving deaths, the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC) and the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility ([Responsibility.org](#)) recommend:

1. Screen and assess all driving while intoxicated (DWI) offenders.

More robust clinical screening and assessment for DWI offenders allows them to be matched to the appropriate level of supervision and treatment, and [research](#) shows that the earlier this occurs, the greater the likelihood of success.

For the majority, a DWI arrest is a huge wakeup call: many need only one arrest to never reoffend. They can change their behavior and do so out of fear of being rearrested. But others are not capable of changing without outside intervention. According to [Responsibility.org](#), repeat DWI offenders commonly suffer from mental health and substance use disorders. Left untreated, repeat offenders are statistically the most dangerous drivers on the road and overrepresented in fatal crashes. Better screening and assessment can identify drivers likely to become repeat offenders and ensure they receive more supervision, stricter accountability, and evidence-based treatment.

2. Expand and improve DWI courts.

For over two decades, drug treatment courts in the US have proven that a combination of accountability and treatment can lead people into recovery, reduce crime, and save resources. DWI courts build on the success of the drug treatment court movement by focusing on repeat and/or high blood alcohol content (BAC) DWI offenders with substance use disorders. DWI court participants are under strict supervision: they have mandated home visits, continuous alcohol monitoring, and frequent appearances in court. They undergo rigorous, evidence-based individual treatment and participate in group therapy. They must pass frequent and random drug tests. In addition to all of this, they're required to hold down a job, perform community service, or advance their education.

[Research](#) on this combination of accountability and treatment shows that DWI courts are the most successful way to reduce impaired driving, decreasing recidivism by as much as 60%, all

while saving taxpayers money: an incredible \$3.19 is saved by society, for every \$1 invested in a DWI court. Learn more at DWIcourts.org.

3. Increase evidence-based supervision technology.

Used in conjunction with clinical assessment and appropriate treatment interventions that target individual needs, technology can play a vital role in getting DWI offenders the supervision and support they need. For example, many states have adopted ignition interlock programs for repeat offenders. Ignition interlock requires offenders to pass a breath test before their car will start and has been found to reduce repeat impaired driving by about two-thirds. Continuous alcohol monitoring (CAM) technology is another effective tool for ensuring compliance with supervision requirements: it relays real-time alcohol consumption data to law enforcement. Research has found that the use of CAM improves enforcement of abstinence orders and is more effective than random drug testing.

Unfortunately, despite the passage of legislation supporting the use of such technologies, they remain underutilized by local communities in their efforts to reduce impaired driving.

Larry Mahoney was not a first-time offender on the night he took 27 lives. Several years before the crash, he was arrested and charged with a DWI. If we knew then what we know now, would the Carrollton bus tragedy have been avoided? We may never know the answer to that question, but we do know that we must do everything we can to prevent another tragedy like it. There is an urgent need to robustly implement and strengthen solutions that will protect public safety and save resources while holding impaired drivers accountable and getting them the evidence-based treatment and they need to achieve long-term recovery.

We've made tremendous progress on this issue since the 1980s, but we must act if we are to reverse this dangerous upward trend, and we must act now. Simply put, saving lives cannot wait.

Sample Facebook Posts

Here are some sample posts you can adapt and share with followers on Facebook. Remember to include photos and videos whenever possible. You can also share relevant posts from [our All Rise Facebook page](#) or the [Responsibility.org Facebook page](#) to your own page.

December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month! DWI courts all over the country are working to get impaired drivers off the road and into treatment. Through a combination of accountability and compassion, DWI courts are advancing justice by providing help and hope instead of a jail cell. See for yourself: <http://bit.ly/2hYd741>

Impaired driving is one of the biggest threats to public safety in America, and it's an even bigger threat during the holidays. December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and DWI courts across the nation are coming together to prove that these programs work. For someone like Patricia, whose family has struggled with alcohol addiction for generations, DWI court is much more effective at breaking the cycle than a prison cell. Watch her tell her powerful story in her own words: <http://bit.ly/2k5Wu1h>

Did you know that impaired-driving deaths went for the second consecutive year? This month is Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and we say no more! The [court name] is committed to leading repeat impaired drivers, like Doreen, on a path to recovery through a combination of compassion, treatment, and accountability. Listen to her story of how DWI court saved her life and changed the future for her family: <http://bit.ly/207U72N>

We all have a responsibility to end impaired driving. During Impaired Driving Prevention Month, our [court name] is celebrating the many lives we've been privileged to help lead away from the justice system and into long-term recovery. Lives like Jose's. Watch: <http://bit.ly/2CRZPAV>

The holiday season can be one of the most difficult times of the year for people in recovery. There are many strategies for enjoying the holidays while maintaining your sobriety. Here are six of them. What are yours? Share with us in the comments! <http://bit.ly/1lc6rPG>

Sample Tweets

Here are some sample tweets you can adapt and share with followers on Twitter. Remember to include photos and videos whenever possible. You can also retweet relevant posts from [our Twitter account](#) or the [Responsibility.org Twitter account](#).

It's Impaired Driving Prevention Month! DWI courts provide treatment, not handcuffs, for people struggling with addiction. Together, we're #AdvancingJustice to help #EndImpairedDriving. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2hYd741>

During Impaired Driving Prevention Month, learn how DWI courts are saving lives, breaking the cycle for future generations, and making our communities safer: <http://bit.ly/2k5WuIh>

December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month. [DWI court name] is #AdvancingJustice by working to #EndImpairedDriving every single day. Learn how: <http://bit.ly/2hYd741>

Patricia's family struggled with alcohol addiction for generations. DWI courts give people like Patricia a chance to break that vicious cycle, all while making our roads and communities safer: <http://bit.ly/2k5WuIh>

Over the holidays, be a hero. Help us save lives. Help us protect our communities. Help us #EndImpairedDriving. <http://go-faar.org/2bjpxlO>

December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and the holidays can be difficult for people in #recovery. Tell us what helps you stay sober, and watch Doreen's powerful story of recovery through DWI court: <http://bit.ly/2O7U72N>

The holidays can be a difficult time to maintain sobriety. This Impaired Driving Prevention Month, here are 12 tips for those in #recovery: <http://bit.ly/2dsRY0W>

Sample Invitation Letter

Consider inviting local, state and federal elected officials to your event. [Click here](#) for contact information.

To: [Your mayor, governor, senator, representative, etc.]
Attn: [Scheduler]
CC: [Judiciary Legislative Assistant/Staff Member]
Fax: [Office fax number]
From: [Your name, city, state]
Subject: Visit with Constituents
Date: [Current date]

Dear [Mayor/Governor/Congressman/Congresswoman/Senator] [name]:

It is my honor to invite you to provide the [commencement address/keynote address] at the [graduation ceremony/event] of the [court name] on [date] at [time], at [location].

This [graduation ceremony/event] will occur during December, which is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. The event will honor the men and women who have completed the requirements of the court program and are graduating as productive members of society in recovery.

The [court name] represents a proven solution for [location] citizens. Our court is truly making a difference, addressing the root problem of repeat impaired drivers: addiction. By providing personalized treatment and strict accountability, we are saving lives. As our [Representative/Senator] for [location], it would be an honor to have you address our [graduates/participants/alumni/families/etc.]. We have also invited [other invitees] and are working with local media to cover the event.

[Add basic information/statistics on your program.]

Thank you for your service to our community and for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, or to confirm the event details, please feel free to contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Thank You

We at NCDC would like to express our profound gratitude to you, the individuals doing the most difficult, important, rewarding work we can think of on a day-to-day basis. Without your belief in the effectiveness of DWI courts and your unwavering dedication to ensuring that your court provides real solutions to people in real need in your communities, there would not be more than 1.5 million Americans leading lives of recovery today. And the impact of your efforts doesn't stop there: it reaches every participant's family, friends, coworkers and neighbors. Because of you, our roads and communities are safer. Because of you, many millions of lives have seen a level of restoration that would not have been possible otherwise.

DWI courts are justice reform in action. You're transforming the U.S. justice system for the better every day. You're taking a bold stance by declaring that impaired driving can be reduced, substance use and mental health disorders can be treated, and lives can be saved, all while saving money and making communities safer and more productive. We could not be prouder to stand with you.

Because of you, we All Rise. Thank you.

