



SUMMARY OF DRUG COURT AUDIT

SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
STAFF: STEPHEN JARDINE

ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

The Office of the Utah State Auditor released [A Performance Audit of Utah's Adult Felony Drug Courts](#) on January 21, 2015. In a media interview the auditors stated, "Utah is ahead of the curve in drug courts. We do a lot of things really well . . . This audit addresses things that we believe will increase the ability of drug courts to accomplish its mission, which is ultimately to rehabilitate people and help them to become contributing members to society." [<http://kuer.org/post/audit-finds-utah-drug-courts-could-be-improved>]. The audit contains 3 main findings applicable to the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee:

- 1) Concerns regarding the lack of Utah-specific data to support the evidence-based program,
- 2) Drug courts may expand and achieve greater outcomes through partnering with the Department of Workforce Services' jobs and eligibility programs, and
- 3) The importance of sufficient oversight to ensure drug courts provide consistent treatment that lead to successful outcomes.

Considerations

Two considerations from the audit that have relevance for the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee are:

- 1. Recognize the identified savings when maximizing eligible Medicaid funding (\$650,000 to capture the savings or \$3,100,000 if the captured savings are used to divert 113 qualified offenders in drug court instead of prison)**

"It appears that 122 drug court participants were eligible for but not enrolled in Medicaid . . . The use of . . . Medicaid for qualified FDC participants would reduce annual drug court costs . . . The state could potentially offset its annual FDC treatment costs by approximately \$650,000 or increase capacity in FDCs by 113 participants by coordinating with DWS to enroll eligible FDC participants in Medicaid . . . The reduction in state costs could have been used to divert 113 qualified offenders into FDC from more expensive programs, like prison. Enrolling 113 additional FDC participants could have reduced prison costs by more than \$3.1 million, assuming the qualified clients were incarcerated rather enrolled in an FDC." (Performance Audit No. 14-06, A Performance Audit of Utah's Adult Felony Drug Courts, pp. 18-19)

- 2. Request an interim report from the Department of Workforce Services and the Administrative Offices of the Courts on improved coordination with the DWS Workforce Development program**

"Improved coordination with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS)—specifically with eligibility and employment specialists—could likely improve outcomes for FDC clients and offset some state treatment costs. FDC clients who are employed full time at discharge from the drug court program are up to 30 percent more likely to graduate from FDCs." (A Performance Audit of Utah's Adult Felony Drug Courts, p. 5)

The Legislature could consider adopting the following intent language:

The Legislature intends the Department of Workforce Services and the Administrative Offices of the Courts provide a report to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst no later than September 1, 2015. The report shall include, at a minimum: 1) a summary of efforts to improve coordination between the Drug Court program and DWS' Workforce Development Division in order to improve Drug Court success, 2) data indicating the success of the efforts, and 3) any identified savings or additional funding of drug court recipients as a result of improved coordination efforts.