



# Welcome and Introduction



Jacob Revis BGS, CRSS  
Clinical Program Manager  
Peer Recovery Support  
Services



Deborah Curington CRSS  
Drug Court  
Peer Support Specialist

# Disclaimer

The preparation of the presentation was supported by UAB Community Justice Programs staff, a component of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine. Points of view or opinions in this presentation are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



The University of Alabama at Birmingham

# Reminders

Please present your questions to the presenters during the Q&A period of the presentation. The presenters will address as many questions at the end as time permits.

There are significant challenges within our criminal justice system. As of mid 2022, the United States had 663,100 individuals in local jails and 1,230,100 in state and federal prisons. This is collectively more people than it would take to fill both Alabama and Auburn football stadiums combined nearly 10 times over. 64% of these individuals show symptoms consistent with mental health diagnoses. Additionally, 65% have been diagnosed with a Substance Use Disorder.





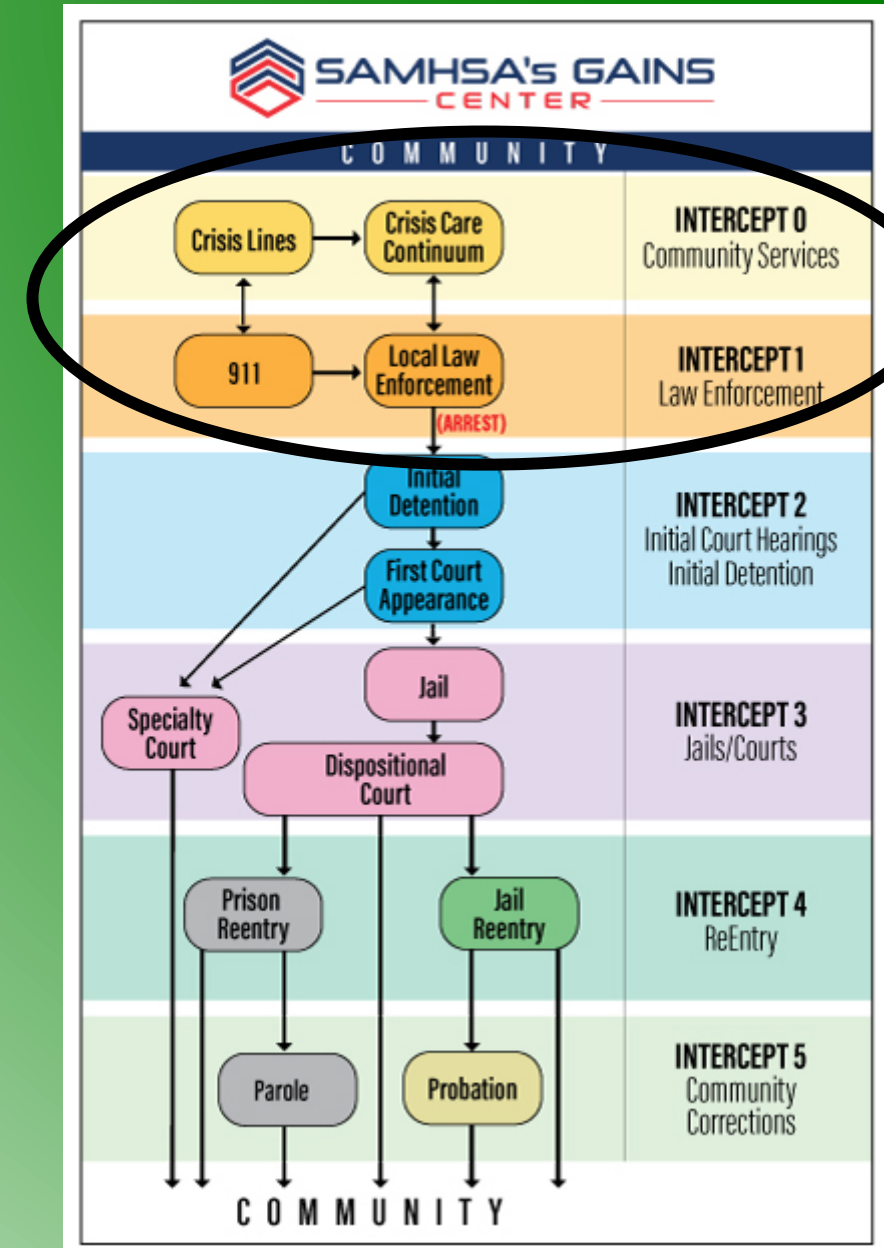
# Peers in Criminal Justice Settings

- Peers working in the justice system are often referred to as forensic peer support specialist
- Forensic peers use all basic tenants of peer support including advocacy, many pathways to recovery, self directed care, individual mentoring, and case management
- Since a large number of CRSS have previously been justice involved, we are uniquely qualified to build rapport with justice involved clients
- Forensic peers are being effectively used in roles spanning the entire Sequential Intercept Model, which illustrates the spectrum of possible points of intervention from pre-arrest through completion of community supervision

# Sequential Intercept Model

## Intercepts 0 & 1

The first two intercepts are community based, pre-arrest settings. The goals are to minimize law enforcement involvement and formal arrests from occurring. Peers involvement in this intercept is crucial and shown to be effective. Examples include community outreach, harm reduction, crisis intervention teams, answering hotlines, staffing emergency departments, or joining with emergency services to respond to calls. The JBS Craig Crisis Center is also a great example of deflection in these intercepts.

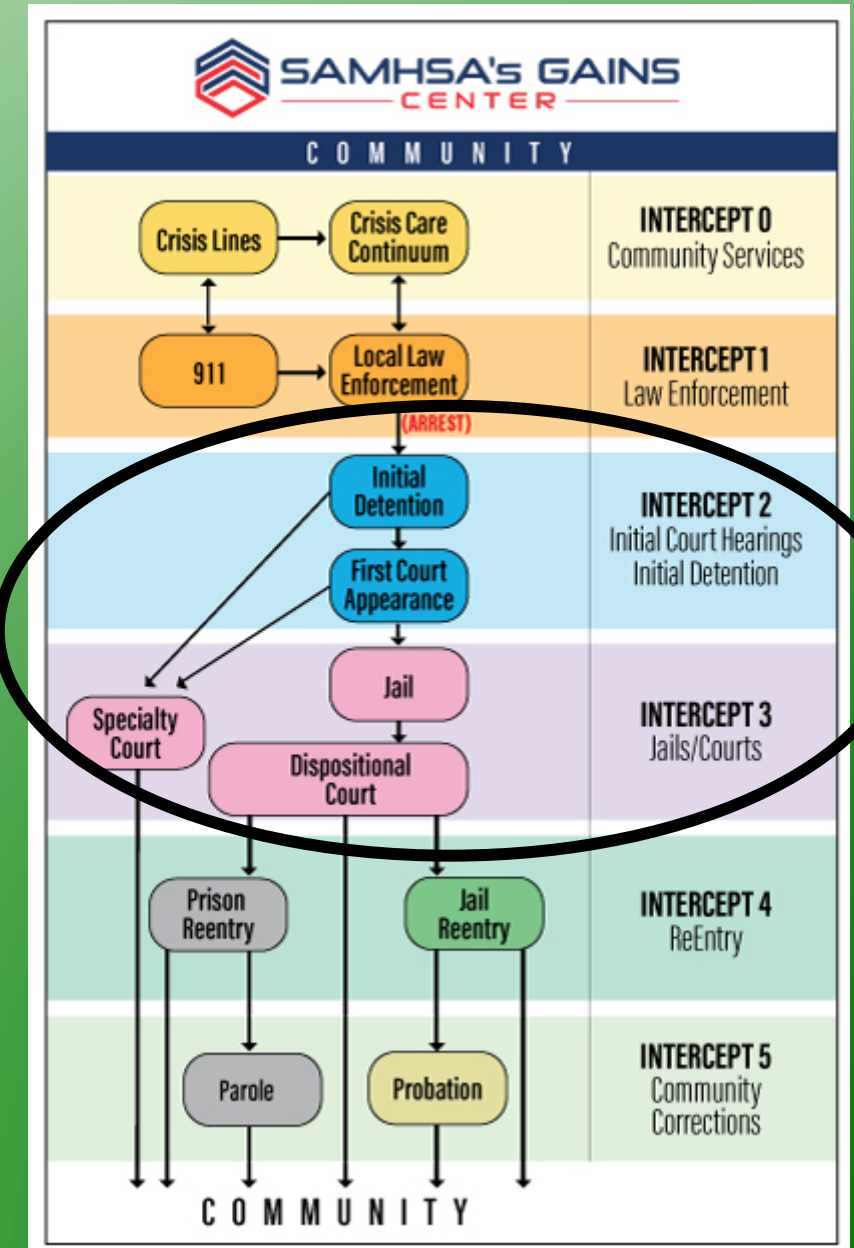




# Sequential Intercept Model

## Intercepts 2 & 3

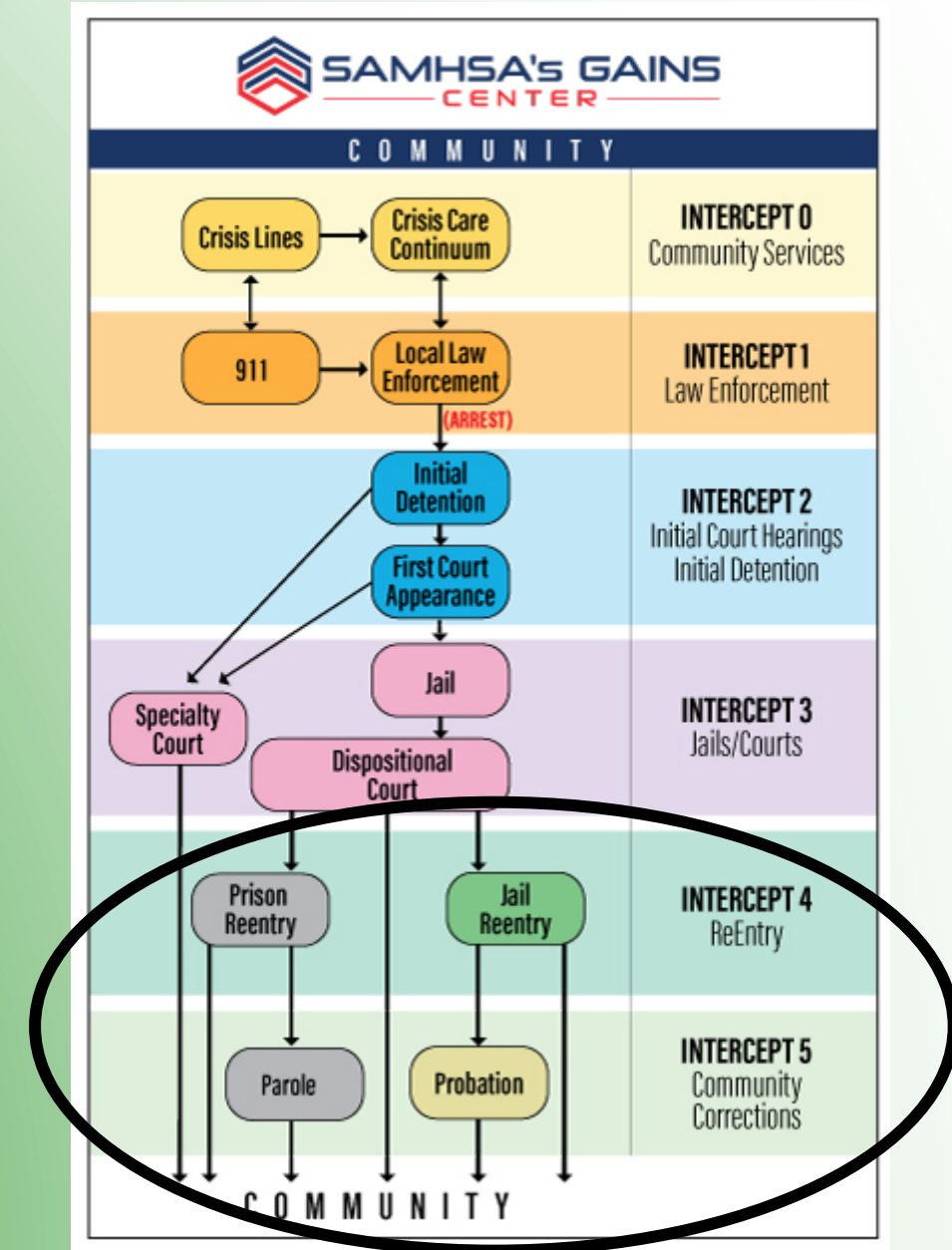
The next two intercepts are the moment of arrest through incarceration to pre-release and reentry. Peers connect with individuals in need of service from the time they are booked to provide clarity of the justice process, advocacy in jail and court, navigation of mental health/substance use providers, individual mentoring and group facilitation. This intercept is where clients begin participating in treatment courts if appropriate. There are even programs where incarcerated persons are being trained as a CRSS to provide peer support to others in the same facility.



# Sequential Intercept Model

## Intercepts 4 & 5

The last two intercepts are from release or reentry from incarceration through the completion of community supervision. These intercepts focus on successful transition and reintegration into society from incarceration as well as maintaining all necessary supervision requirements. Peers are indispensable in assisting with transition plans, transportation from jail/prison, community resource connection, community supervision navigation, and recovery community integration.



# Overview of Specialty/Treatment Court Programs

Specialty courts, also called treatment courts or therapeutic courts, are specialized dockets that offer treatment, comprehensive case management, and support instead of traditional court processing and incarceration. Specialty courts combine treatment, recovery support, and case management with judicial oversight and personal accountability to help individuals make positive changes in their lives. Peers and case managers work one-on-one with each participant to develop individualized case plans. There are different types of these courts across the United States, serving individuals with unique criminal charges and personal needs.

# Overview Cont'd

Treatment courts are considered the most successful justice intervention for people with substance use and mental health disorders. For three decades, treatment courts have proven that a combination of treatment and compassion can lead people with substance use and/or mental health disorders into lives of stability, health, and recovery. Treatment courts are a public health approach to justice reform in which providers ensure individuals before the courts receive personalized, evidence-based treatment. These providers work as a team with law enforcement, community supervision, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges to provide ongoing support and recovery services.

# History of Treatment Courts

- Began as Drug Treatment Court in 1989 in Miami-Dade County Florida
- By 1997 there were 370 courts in operation, by 2007 there were over 1,000
- Expansion from exclusively drug offenses to include mental health, veterans, theft, and other disproportionately represented groups
- Currently there are over 4,000 treatment courts in operation
- Every state in the U.S. has treatment courts
- 150,000+ Individuals served by treatment courts each year

# Benefits of Treatment Courts

- ✓ \$4,000 - \$12,000 tax dollars saved per participant
- ✓ \$27 of value benefits are returned for every \$1 invested into these courts
- ✓ The national completion rate for treatment courts is around 60%
- ✓ 75% of these individuals who graduate will not be arrested again in the subsequent two years
- ✓ Education of participants and involved families reduces the stigma around MH and SUD
- ✓ Deferred prosecution allows clients to avoid the long-lasting effects of convictions

# Provided Services

- Comprehensive screening and assessments
- Individualized case planning and case management
- Referrals to community providers for substance use treatment, mental health, and medical needs
- Referrals to address emergency needs (i.e. shelter, clothing, food)
- Bus passes and referrals for housing assistance
- Employment preparation, job search & placement assistance
- Assistance with obtaining ID, birth certificate, social security card
- Application assistance for SSI/SSDI, food stamps & and other benefits
- Peer support: one-on-one and group settings
- Linkage to community resources

# Types of Treatment Courts

Drug Court

Mental Health Court

Veterans Court

Theft Court





# Drug Court

Drug court is a problem-solving program designed to provide individuals with treatment and resources to improve their health in the community and to avoid incarceration or a criminal conviction. The program provides supervision which includes drug screens, recurrent court appearances, and frequent contact with the drug court team. The team, often called referred to as a forensic care team, includes the judge, prosecutor, defense council, peer, case manager, and clinical staff.

# Mental Health Court

The mental health court program seeks to address the disproportionate involvement of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Many of these individuals have co-occurring alcohol and/or substance use problems. The forensic team includes the judge, prosecutor, defense council, peer, case manager, and clinical staff. Peers in mental health courts have specialized training in both mental health and substance use disorder.

The goal of the program is to assist the participants in achieving the highest level of stability possible. These courts offer a sincere emphasis on stabilization, which further reduces the likelihood of participants reoffending or being incarcerated in the future.

Additional goals include:

- Decreasing the ongoing cycle of criminal activity and arrests
- Decreasing the number of days of incarceration
- Increasing compliance with mental health services
- Increasing the quality of the participants' lives

# Veteran's Court

Veterans court is a unique program designed for individuals who have served in the United States military and have become involved in the criminal justice system. The team involved in client care includes the judge, prosecutor, defense council, peer, case manager, and clinical staff. Peers in veteran's courts usually have prior military experience, in addition to peer certifications. Those interested are reviewed to ensure their background meets eligibility requirements:

- Have served in the United States Armed Forces
- Be willing to be honest about your drug/alcohol use
- Be willing to join a substance use disorder and/or mental health treatment program
- Agree to take drug/alcohol tests
- Agree to an interview to help the team learn about your substance use, mental health issues, and of risk of being re-arrested

# Theft Court

Similar to drug courts, theft courts are deferred sentencing programs where individuals who have charges of theft or other similar property crimes. Clients plea into theft court where they are provided the same services as other therapeutic courts, including case management, peer support, and treatment connection. The main difference is that clients have restitution and other specific fees related to their theft case that must be paid as a central component to their successful completion. These courts usually are for individuals who have not been convicted of a felony in the past.

# Other Types of Therapeutic Courts

There are also other types of specialty courts that provide the types of services and legal assistance to persons with different needs and backgrounds. A few examples are tribal healing, DUI/DWI, family, and juvenile. Opioid intervention courts are among the newest type of court, which focus on 24 hour connection to medication and treatment for individuals using opioids. These courts are showing promising results in reducing overdoses in the community.

# Peer Specialist in Specialty Courts

- Peer support services in the criminal legal system are evidence-based practices that have been proven highly effective in supporting the recovery of justice involved individuals.
- Critical components of effective peer services involve the belief that recovery is possible for individuals with behavioral health conditions and belief in the mutually beneficial relationship between individuals with similar life experiences.
- Peers increase engagement in treatment and recovery
- Peers promote a sense of hope and self-empowerment
- Peers improve social functioning and overall quality of life
- Peers decrease incarcerations in both frequency and duration of stay

# Key Findings

- **Reduction in Recidivism:** One of the key benefits of integrating CRSS into the criminal justice system is a reduction in recidivism rates. Research has shown that individuals who receive support from CRSS have lower rates of reoffending compared to those who do not receive such support. This can be attributed to the personalized support, guidance, and resources provided by CRSS, which help individuals navigate the challenges of reentry and maintain their recovery.
- **Increased Access to Treatment:** Integrating CRSS into the criminal justice system has been found to increase access to substance abuse treatment for justice-involved individuals. CRSS play a crucial role in connecting individuals with appropriate treatment programs and supporting them throughout the recovery process. This increased access to treatment has been associated with improved outcomes in terms of reduced substance use and better overall well-being.
- **Improved Engagement and Retention in Treatment:** Research suggests that justice-involved individuals who receive support from CRSS are more likely to engage in treatment and stay connected to it for longer durations. The personalized, peer-based support provided by CRSS helps individuals overcome barriers to treatment engagement, such as stigma, lack of trust, and practical challenges. This increased engagement and retention in treatment contribute to better outcomes and long-term recovery.

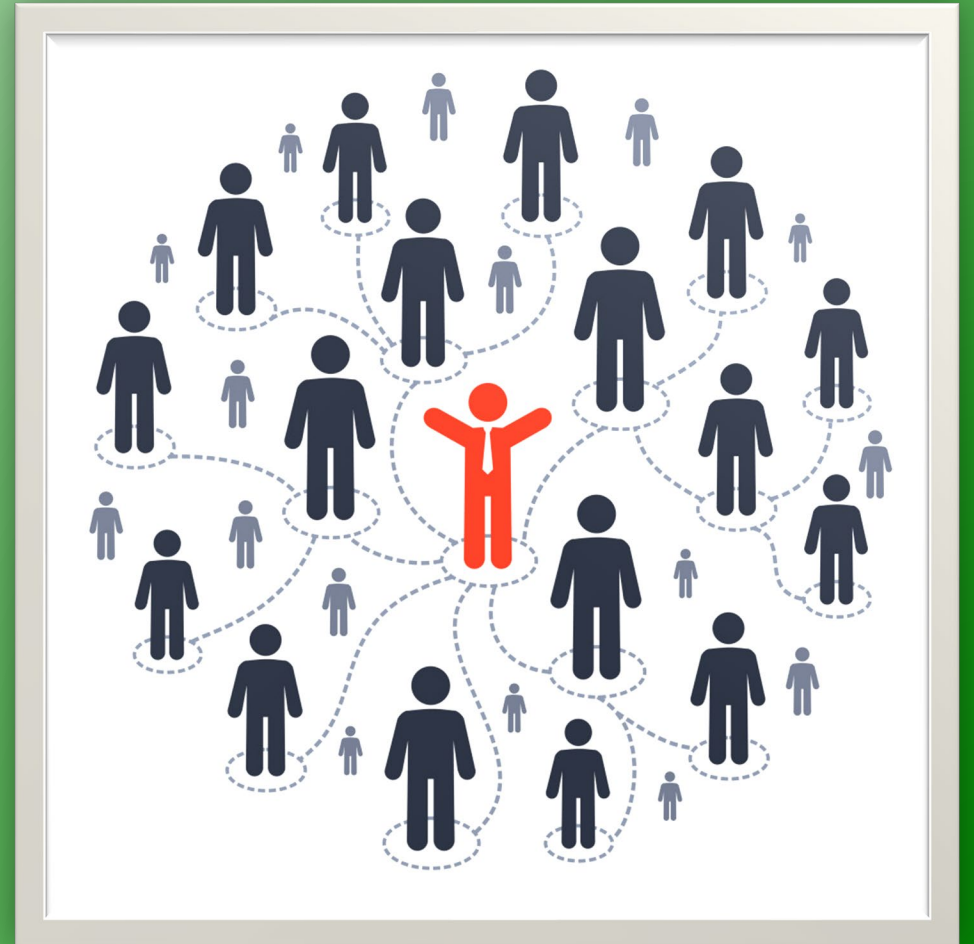
# Key Findings Cont'd

- **Enhanced Social Support:** Integrating CRSS into the criminal justice system provides justice-involved individuals with a valuable source of social support. CRSS, who have personal experience in recovery, understand the unique challenges faced by individuals reentering society. They offer empathy, understanding, and guidance, helping individuals build a strong support network and develop healthy relationships. This social support has been shown to be crucial in maintaining recovery and preventing relapse.
- **Cost Savings:** Integrating CRSS into the criminal justice system has the potential to generate cost savings. By connecting individuals to appropriate support services and treatment programs, CRSS help reduce the burden on the criminal justice system, including costs associated with incarceration, repeated offenses, and emergency healthcare services. Additionally, the positive outcomes achieved through CRSS support, such as reduced substance use and improved mental health, can lead to long-term cost savings in terms of healthcare and societal costs.



# Relationships & Collaborative Partnerships

- Relationships are INVALUABLE but take time, effort, and care
- Required for collaborative partnerships within the forensic care team and community partners
- Remarkably useful and effective tool for problem solving and conflict resolution
- Relationships exponentially expand our connection to clients and services
- Necessary for providing the highest level of services to our clients



# Benefits of Collaborative Partnerships

- Partnerships within the forensic care team allow for honest, vulnerable, and difficult communication to occur, which is paramount for cohesive service delivery
- Partnerships with judges and prosecutors are particularly important, due to the power they wield over treatment courts and their participants
- Establishing and maintaining working relationships with law enforcement allows is a powerful tool to fight stigma in a group that often only sees the pain and suffering of substance use, not the beauty of recovery
- Community partnerships are beneficial because they allow for effective flow of communication, ease of transition for clients, and to stay informed of service availability or new services.
- Peers are naturals at building and strengthening these partnerships because many have personal experience with the providers

# TREATMENT COURTS IMPACT STATEWIDE

Adult treatment court programs provide eligible, nonviolent felony offenders the opportunity to participate in a highly structure, court-supervised treatment program instead of incarceration/felony conviction. Since the inception of the first program in 1995, Alabama's adult treatment court programs have expanded to 57 out of the 67 counties in the state.

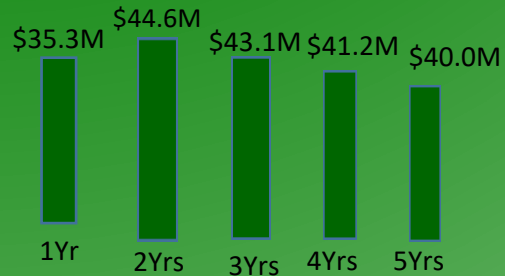
## **Fact Sheet**

Current Program cost of DOC incarceration per person: **25,000 (yearly)**

Estimated cost of Drug Court per person: **9,000 (yearly)**

### **Graduates Wages Earned**

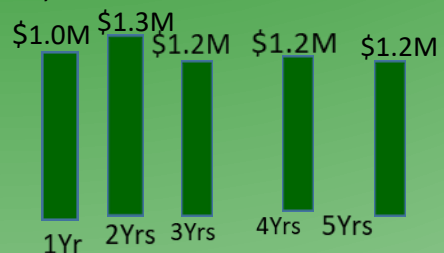
4,067 Graduates Post Admission from FY'18-FY'19



**\$204 Million**  
in Total Wages Earned

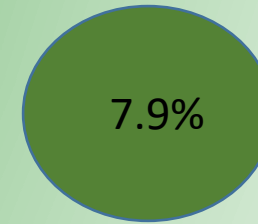
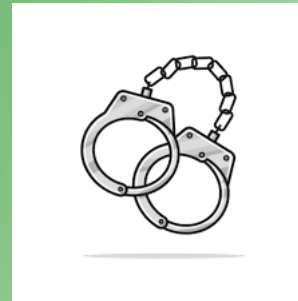
### **Taxes to be paid**

4,076 Graduates Post Admission from FY'18-FY'19



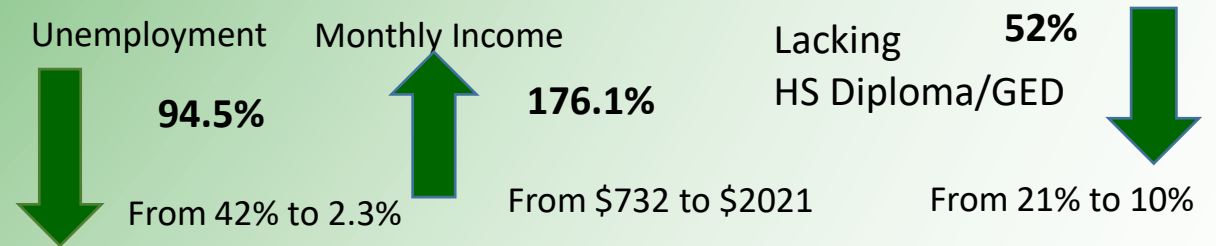
**\$6.1 Million** in Total  
Tax Revenue

Re-arrest rates among 8,545 Graduates 3Years out since 2015:



Treatment Court Graduates

### **Outcome Comparisons for FY'20-21 Treatment Court Graduates Between Entry and Graduation**



\*Alabama Bureau of Prisons

\*Alabama School of Alcohol and other Drugs Studies

\*Alabama Dept of Mental Health

**QUESTIONS  
&  
COMMENTS**