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DALLAS COUNTY AIM COURT RECIDIVISM AND COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

PREPARED BY
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We commend the AIM Court for permitting the Meadows Institute to conduct a transparent review of its participant files with the goal of improving Court documentation, processes, and outcomes data collection. We truly hope that the AIM Court staff find these results and recommendations useful.

Executive Summary

Project Purpose and Context

In the Fall of 2019, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office requested that the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (Meadows Institute) conduct an impact and cost-benefit analysis for the Achieve. Inspire. Motivate. (AIM) Court, a Dallas County Specialty Court. This report includes a rigorous recidivism and cost-benefit analysis that may be used by Dallas County to inform future program development. We also describe the characteristics of AIM Court clients who complete the AIM program (compared to those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM) for future tailoring of program content.

AIM Enrollment and Completion

Since the inception of the AIM Court in 2016 through August of 2020, 231 clients were enrolled in AIM. Among the 217 clients who were discharged from AIM, more than two-thirds (70%) – or 151 clients – successfully completed AIM and graduated the program.

Recidivism

Two-year recidivism rates¹ were calculated to assess the impact of AIM participation on re-arrest for AIM participants compared to demographically and criminogenically similar probationers. Two years after beginning AIM Court, 16.3% of AIM participants were arrested for a new offense,² compared to 42.5% of controls ($p < .001$). After accounting for any residual differences in criminogenic risk levels, AIM participants were 74% less likely to be arrested for a new offense in the two years after beginning AIM compared to probationers.³

-74%

**Reduction in Recidivism
among AIM Court
Participants vs. Probationers**

Cost-Benefit

The net-benefit of AIM Court compared to probation was calculated using the following inputs: future labor market earnings, legal system costs associated with the lower recidivism rate observed between AIM Court participants versus probationers, and the higher cost of AIM Court compared to probation.

¹ Texas Department of Public Safety. (2021, June). Computerized Criminal History.

www.dps.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/administration/crime_records/docs/guidetocchsystem.pdf

² This includes all 153 AIM participants who enrolled in AIM between February of 2016 and May of 2019, regardless of completion status who had a Texas Risk Assessment Score available. Twenty-one participants without risk scores were removed from the recidivism analysis.

³ When models were limited to AIM graduates only, we identified a 94% reduction in recidivism among AIM graduates compared to probationers after accounting for differences in criminogenic risk.

Overall, the AIM program had a net benefit ratio of 6.86 over two years (2 years),⁴ translating to a cost savings of \$6.86 to the participant and the legal system jointly for every dollar (\$1) invested.⁵ AIM graduates earned (and saved) \$25,336 over the two years following Court enrollment, while those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM had net costs of -\$5,600. This highlights the need to screen and identify the individuals who will be optimally suited for AIM Court.

\$6.86
Savings for Every \$1 Invested in AIM Court vs. Probation

Characteristics of AIM Graduates vs. Unsuccessfully Discharged Participants

We compared AIM graduates with participants who were unsuccessfully discharged to identify the characteristics that might contribute to client success in AIM. Participants with the following characteristics were most likely to graduate from AIM Court:

- Higher socio-economic status (indicating that the participant came into AIM Court with a high school diploma, enrolled in school or having some part-time employment) and identified as non-Hispanic White. This effect was almost entirely explained after accounting for employment, educational attainment, and living environment
- Living independently from family or with a partner
- Low or low/moderate criminogenic risk

Summary and Recommendations

Our analysis identified substantial reductions in recidivism among AIM Court participants compared to similar individuals who were placed on probation. As a result, the net benefit ratio of AIM Court was 6.86, indicating substantial cost savings to the legal system and participants in AIM compared to probation as usual (\$6.86 in savings for every dollar invested).

Recommendations

Based upon these findings, we have identified four (4) recommendations for improving, expanding, and evolving AIM Court moving forward. These recommendations are discussed in detail beginning on page 39:

⁴ A value of 1.0 would indicate a program with no net benefits or costs (i.e., a neutral effect) and values less than one (1) identify programs that cost more than they save.

⁵ The net benefits attributable to AIM are conservative estimates based on a two-year post-treatment period to mirror the recidivism analysis. Tracking participants and measuring avoided costs over a longer time frame will yield a larger benefit-cost ratio.

- Expand pre-enrollment jail-based criminogenic risk and need screening for prospective AIM participants.
- Establish a database to improve the tracking of participant progress, program requirements, substance use screening test results, incentives and sanctions, track and phase (along with date of entry for each track / phase change) and other indicators of compliance and completion of program requirements.
- Track AIM Court participant outcomes for two years after discharge.
- Increase rate of enrollment and completion of the AIM Court among people of color by: 1) using translator services or recruiting diverse and bilingual staff to accommodate prospective participants who are not proficient in English; 2) identifying opportunities for dual-language case management and behavioral health treatment services; 3) removing fees for Court participation; and, 4) expanding the use of community advisory boards and family counseling.

Introduction

Background and Context

The Achieve. Inspire. Motivate. (AIM) Court is a pre-trial Specialty Court program that is intended for youth and young adults between the ages of 17 and 24. AIM began as a pilot program in 2016 and launched as a Specialty Court in 2017 with the goal of diverting young people with first-time, low-level offenses from entering the justice system. The AIM program is designed to address various social and emotional needs including housing, transportation, substance use treatment, vocational training, and educational services needed to address the root causes of criminal activity and prevent future involvement with the justice system. Individuals must meet the eligibility criteria described below and obtain the District Attorney's Office and AIM program staff approval to enter the program. AIM participants are assigned to either the shorter Compliance Track or the more intensive Specialty Court Track based upon their supervision, treatment, and functional requirements as determined by the AIM Court team, and the duration of the AIM program is entirely dependent upon the participants' needs, rate of program requirement completion. Participants who complete the AIM program have their case dismissed, and potentially, granted expunction.⁶

Eligibility and Acceptance Process

Prosecutors and defense attorneys informally identify individuals as potentially eligible for AIM Court. Prospective participants submit a formal application which is reviewed by AIM staff and the District Attorney's office. The following minimum eligibility criteria⁷ were established to guide AIM enrollment decisions:

- Age of 17 to 24 years old;
- Pending felony charges for an eligible offense⁸ committed within Dallas County;
- Reside within Dallas County or contiguous counties;
- No prior offenses, probations or pending felony charges in other jurisdictions;
- Not a registered sex offender; and,
- Self-identify as "Willing to make a change for the better";

If an applicant is identified as eligible for AIM, he/she must observe Court, review the AIM handbook, and be assessed by the AIM clinician prior to admission. Once a participant is accepted into the AIM program, he/she goes through the orientation process and meets his or her assigned AIM Court case manager.

⁶ We identified 46 participants whose records appeared to be expunged as of August 2020.

⁷ Exceptions to these eligibility criteria were often granted by AIM staff.

⁸ Individuals charged with aggravated felonies, family violence, child abuse, burglary, arson, and habitation were ineligible for the AIM program.

Goals of the Current Evaluation

The goal of the current AIM Court evaluation is to understand its impact on participant recidivism and quantify the costs and benefits associated with AIM participation compared to similarly situated individuals who were placed on probation. To guide future programmatic and eligibility decision-making, we will identify the characteristics of AIM Court participants who graduated the program compared to those who were unsuccessfully discharged.

Description of Our Approach

Data Abstraction from AIM Records

To assess the program’s impact and cost-benefit as described above, the Meadows Institute collected available data on AIM Court participants who enrolled in AIM from its onset in February 2016 through August 2020.⁹ To gather information about AIM participants (including unsuccessfully discharged participants), a member of the Meadows Institute team manually identified the information described in Table 1 below and hand coded each file. Data entry was reconciled by three team members to ensure completeness and accuracy. These data were stored in an Airtable database and exported to Stata software for data analysis.

Table 1. Description of Data Abstracted from AIM Participant Files

Table 1. Description of Data Abstracted from AIM Participant Files		
Demographics	Texas Risk Assessment System (TRAS) risk level, risk factors and identified needs	Program requirements
Employment	Dates of entry and discharge from AIM	Incentives earned and sanctions received
Educational attainment	Program outcome status (graduated, unsuccessfully discharged, or currently enrolled)	Substance use screening tests administered Rate of positive substance use screening test results and drug(s) used

Selection of Control Group of Probationers

The Meadows Institute worked with Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) to identify a group of nearly three thousand (3,000) probationers – matched on sex, race/ethnicity, enrollment year (2016-2019), and age -- that were presumably eligible for AIM Court but were instead placed on probation.¹⁰ Dallas County provided TRAS risk

⁹ AIM Court took a brief hiatus from admitting new participants between November 2016 and March 2017.

¹⁰ Controls were selected from existing probation and pretrial “ALLDI” lists, internal Dallas County reports that include all offenders actively on supervision in Dallas County, for the same timeframe as the AIM participants (2016-2019). At the time of the selection, all controls selected were active and had a status of Direct, Indirect, or Pre-trial. Additionally, probation controls were selected if they met all the following criteria: 1) committed a felony offense; 2)

scores for each prospective control. Using this information, we selected a matched control group of 612 individuals who were placed on probation. All members of the control group had felony charges¹¹ and were statistically equivalent to AIM participants in terms of sex, race/ethnicity, age, and criminogenic risk level.

Recidivism Data Abstraction

Recidivism data were captured from the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Computerized Criminal History Program to measure risk and recidivism for a new offense during the two years following the date of AIM (or probation) enrollment.¹² A two-year window for recidivism was used given the variable length of the AIM program and the need to measure recidivism that occurs both during and after AIM participation.¹³ Because we calculated two-year recidivism rates, a subset of AIM participants who were enrolled in AIM after May of 2019 are not included in this analysis.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Our approach to the cost-benefit analysis mirrored the analysis performed for the Dallas County DIVERT Court.¹⁴ We gathered information from on the metrics described in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Description of Data Used to Calculate Cost-Benefit of AIM Court

Program Costs	Program Benefits
Substance use screening	Expected labor market earnings ¹⁵
Nights spent in jail	Future Court / Incarceration costs averted due to reduced recidivism among AIM participants
Behavioral health treatment	Administrative costs (mileage, travel, computer equipment, etc.)
Transitional housing costs	
Staff salary / fringe	

were similar age to AIM group participants; 3) were not on supervision for a 3G offense or other aggregated felony offense, sex offense, or arson; 4) did not have a status of “deported” or “incarcerated”; and 5) had a TRAS assessment score on file.

¹¹ Individuals who had a felony for a 3G offense or other aggravated felony offense, sex offense, or arson were not included in the control group to match the eligibility criteria for the AIM Court.

¹² Texas Department of Public Safety. (2021, June). Computerized Criminal History. www.dps.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/administration/crime_records/docs/guidetocchsystem.pdf

¹³ Fabelo, T., Tyler, J., & Oshatz, L. (2017, January 30). Evaluation of Program Fidelity and Outcomes of Dallas Specialty Courts. Final Report to Dallas Community Supervision and Corrections Department. Council of State Governments Justice Center. Austin, TX.

¹⁴ Fomby, T. B. & Rangaprasad, V. (2002, August 31). DIVERT Court of Dallas County: Cost-Benefit Analysis. <http://faculty.smu.edu/TFomby/divertfinal.pdf>

¹⁵ Data from the US Census’ American Community Survey were used to develop estimates for foregone labor earnings associated with re-arrest and incarceration.

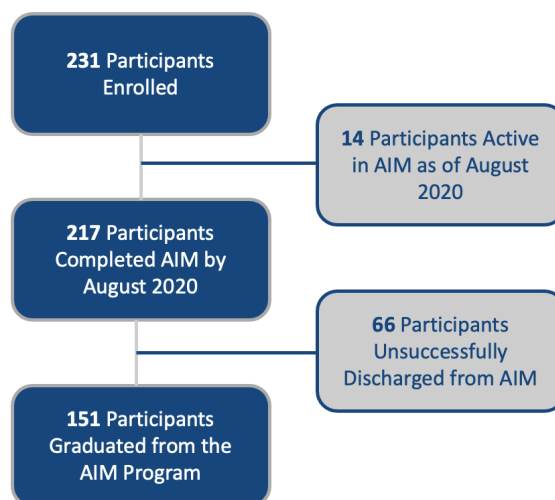
Administrative costs (mileage, travel, computer equipment, etc.)	
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Description of AIM Court Participants

Enrolled Participants

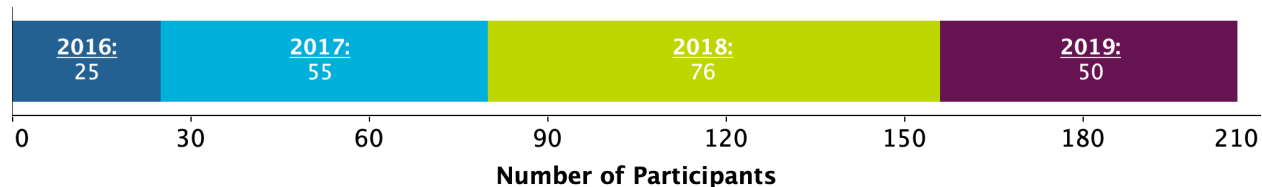
The AIM program enrolled a total of 231 participants since its inception in 2016. Figure 1 shows the flow of the participants through the program. As of August of 2020,¹⁶ fourteen (14) participants were actively enrolled in the program, leaving 217 participants who had been discharged (either graduated or were unsuccessfully discharged). Of these 217 discharged participants, two-thirds (70%) graduated AIM (151 participants). The remaining thirty percent (30%, or 66 participants) were unsuccessfully discharged. Of those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM, nine out of ten (90%) were administratively ‘terminated’ for non-compliance, with the remaining ten percent (10%) being listed as ‘absconded’.

Figure 1. Flow of Participants Enrolled in AIM Court (2016 – August 2020), N=231



The breakdown of the number of participants and graduation rate by year is available in Figures 2a and 2b, respectively. During the pilot year of the program (2016), twenty-five (25) participants enrolled into AIM. AIM enrolled fifty-five (55) participants during its first full year as a Specialty Court (2017), and the largest number of individuals were enrolled in the AIM program in 2018 (76 participants).

Figure 2a. AIM Program Participants by Year, 2016-2019 (N=206)

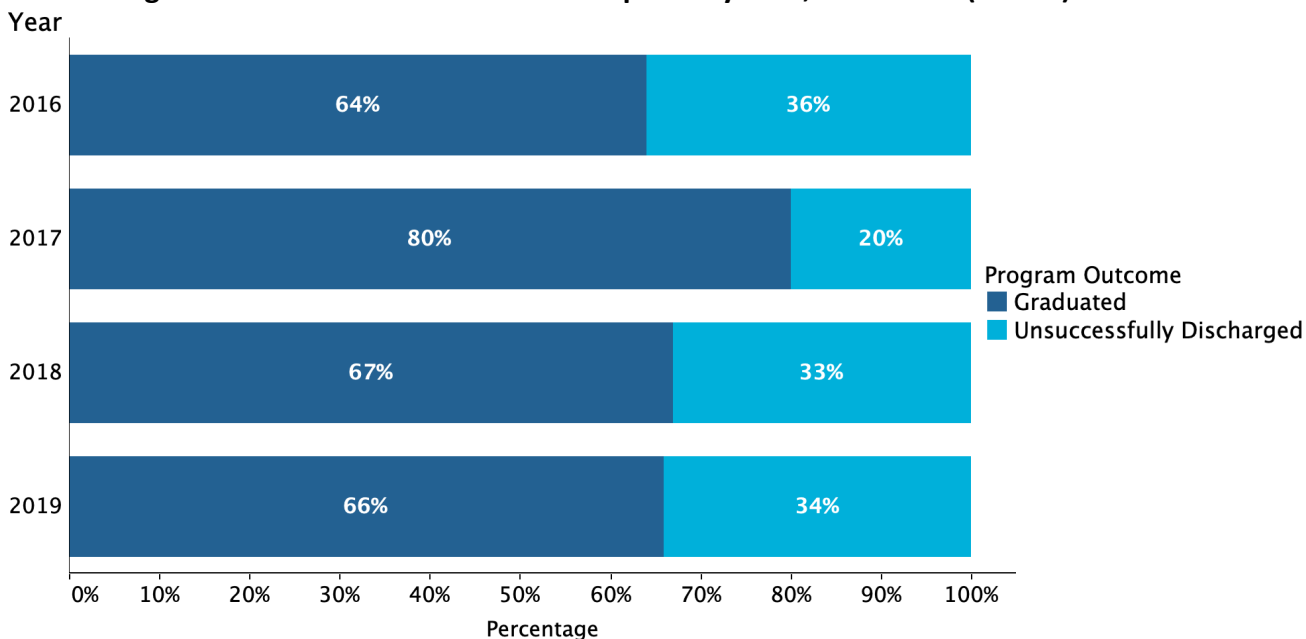


The graduation rate ranged from 64% in 2016 and 2020 (through August) to 80% in 2017 (Figure 2b). On average, two-third of participants graduated from AIM. However, a spike in the

¹⁶ August of 2020 is used as a cutoff point throughout this report because the Meadows Institute began manual data abstraction during that month.

graduation rate is evident during the first full year of AIM Court (2017), when 80% of participants graduated.

Figure 2b. Program Outcome Status of AIM Participants by Year, 2016-2019 (N=206)¹⁷



AIM staff retained records of each referral to the AIM Court between January 2017 and August 2020. As shown in Table 3, 325 individuals applied to AIM but did not participate. Of these, 92% were not admitted. The remaining eight percent (8%, or 26 applicants) were admitted but declined the invitation to participate. Commonly coded reasons for rejection to the program included the following: 1) criminal history; 2) facts of the case; 3) new offenses; 4) failure to appear / missed assessments; and 5) participant did not need program or needed the services of a different Specialty Court. Notably, no participants were denied from participating in the Court program due to insufficient staffing or capacity.

Table 3. Referrals to AIM Court for Individuals Who Did Not Participate in AIM (2017-2020)¹⁸

Year	Total Applicants that Did Not Participate	Not Admitted N (%)	Declined to Participate N (%)	AIM Participants
2017	85	78 (92%)	7 (8%)	55
2018	85	77 (91%)	8 (9%)	76
2019	125	114 (91%)	11 (9%)	50

¹⁷ Participants enrolled in 2020 were not included due to only partial year data available.

¹⁸ Information on the number of referrals who were rejected or declined to participate were not available for 2016.

Year	Total Applicants that Did Not Participate	Not Admitted N (%)	Declined to Participate N (%)	AIM Participants
2020 (through August)	31	29 (94%)	2 (6%)	Incomplete Year

Sociodemographic Characteristics

A description of the 217 AIM participants who were discharged from AIM as of August 2020 is provided in Table 4. The median age at admission to AIM Court was 20 years (range of 17.3 to 25.7). Seventeen (17) individuals were older than age 24 at the time of admission to AIM, although many of these may have been 24 years of age at the time the qualifying offense. An equal proportion of participants were Black or African American (39%) and non-Hispanic White (39%). One-fifth of AIM participants identified as Hispanic or Latinx (20%). Only five AIM participants identified as multi-racial or Asian / Pacific Islander race (<3%).

One-third of AIM participants (33%) did not have a high school diploma, 38% reported a high school diploma or equivalent (GED), and one-fifth (21%) had some college or vocational training. Only four participants (2%) completed college or vocational training, and seven percent (7%) were actively enrolled in high school programming at their AIM intake date. For those with available data, most participants were employed full-time (32%) or unemployed (30%) at intake. Most participants had some form of stable housing, with the greatest proportion of participants stated they were staying with family members (75%) or had their own dwelling (21%).

Table 4. Demographic Description of AIM Participants and Referrals^{19,20,21}

	Referred to AIM Court but did not Participate	AIM Court Participants
Overall	326	217
Age at Admission Median (Range) ²²	---	20.0 (17.3 – 25.7)
Sex		
Male	258 (79%)	162 (75%)
Female	67 (21%)	55 (25%)

¹⁹ Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Counts may not sum to total due to missing data. Education data was available for 184 participants, employment data was available for 171 participants, and living arrangement data was available for 168 participants.

²⁰ Only sex and race & ethnicity was available for individuals who were referred to AIM Court but did not participate.

²¹ Information on the number of referrals who were rejected or declined to participate were not available for 2016.

²² Age at admission was missing for 30 AIM participants.

Table 4. Demographic Description of AIM Participants and Referrals^{19,20,21}

	Referred to AIM Court but did not Participate	AIM Court Participants
Race and Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	61 (19%)	84 (39%)
Black or African American	147 (45%)	85 (39%)
Asian American	2 (1%)	4 (2%)
Multiple Races / Other	5 (2%)	1 (<1%)
Hispanic or Latinx	111 (34%)	43 (20%)
Education Level (N=184)		
Less than High School Diploma	---	60 (33%)
Current High School Student	---	12 (7%)
High School Diploma or GED	---	69 (38%)
Some College or Some Vocational Training	---	39 (21%)
Vocational Training Graduate	---	2 (1%)
College Graduate	---	2 (1%)
Employment Status at the Start of AIM (N=171)		
Employed Full-Time	---	54 (32%)
Employed Part-Time	---	37 (22%)
Student	---	29 (17%)
Unemployed	---	51 (30%)
Living Arrangement (N=168)		
In Own Dwelling or With Partner	---	35 (21%)
With Family	---	126 (75%)
Other ²³	---	7 (4%)

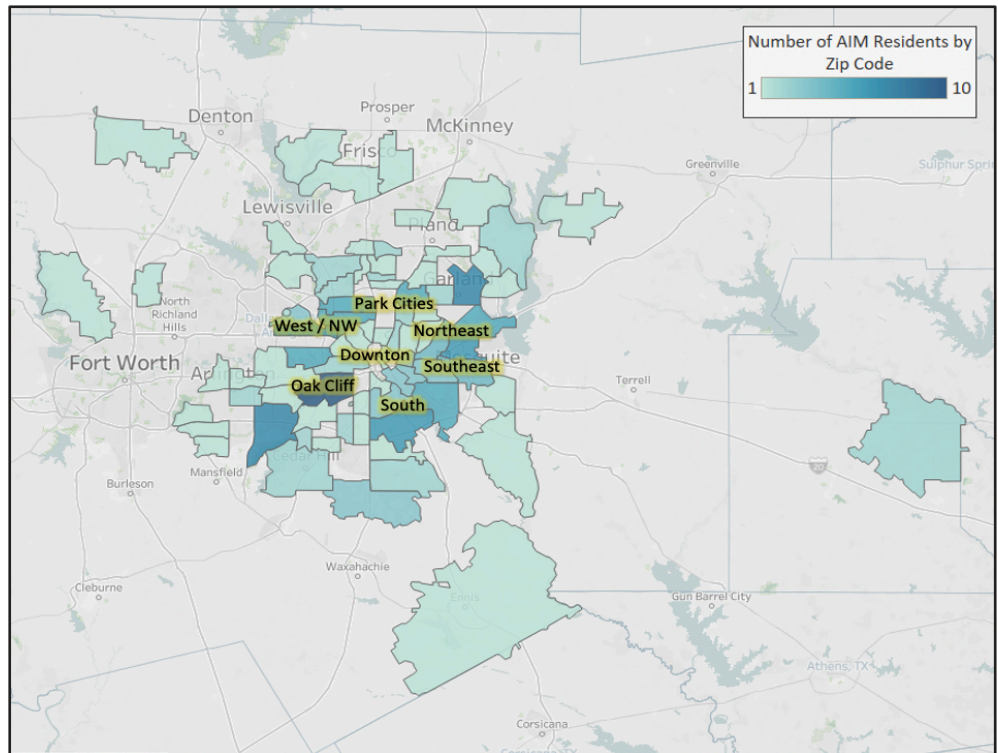
As also shown in Table 4, 326 individuals were referred to AIM Court between January 2017 and August 2020 but did not participate. The gender distribution was similar for referrals when compared to AIM Court participants. However, people who identified as Hispanic or Latinx were substantially less likely to be enrolled in AIM Court (representing 34% of referrals but only 20% of Court participants), and those who identified as White were over-represented in AIM Court programming (19% of referrals and 39% of Court participants).

²³ Homeless or Living in a Shelter, Jail, or Treatment Center/Hospital.

Compared to the general population of those booked into the Dallas County Jail,²⁴ AIM Court participants were more likely to be female (21% of book-ins compared to 25% of AIM Court participants) and White (25% of book-ins compared to 39% of AIM Court participants). AIM Court participants were slightly less likely to identify as Hispanic / Latino (20% of AIM participants versus 25% of book-ins). These demographic trends – specifically, the over-representation of Whites and females – are characteristic of Specialty and Drug Courts nationwide.

Map 1 describes the residential location of AIM participants by zip code. While AIM participants were not clustered in a single region of Dallas County, AIM participants most commonly resided in the outer boundaries of Dallas County, including East and Northeast Dallas; West and Northwest Dallas, and Oak Cliff (particularly, South Oak Cliff).

Map 1. Location of Residence of AIM Participants (N=177)

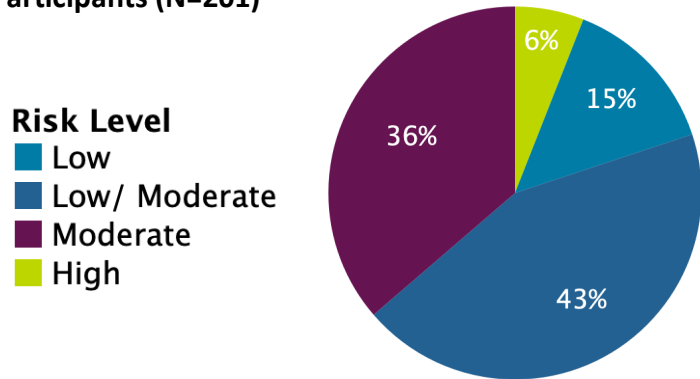


²⁴ Dallas County Criminal Justice Department. (2021, October 25). Previously Cited.

Participant Risk and Need Description

Criminogenic risk level and needs were identified using the Texas Risk Assessment System (TRAS) by the AIM clinician before admission to the program. Figure 3 shows the proportion of AIM participants at each risk level. More than half of participants (58%) were identified as having “low” or “low to moderate” criminogenic risk. An additional 36% were “moderate” risk, and the remaining 12 participants (6%) were identified as “high” risk.

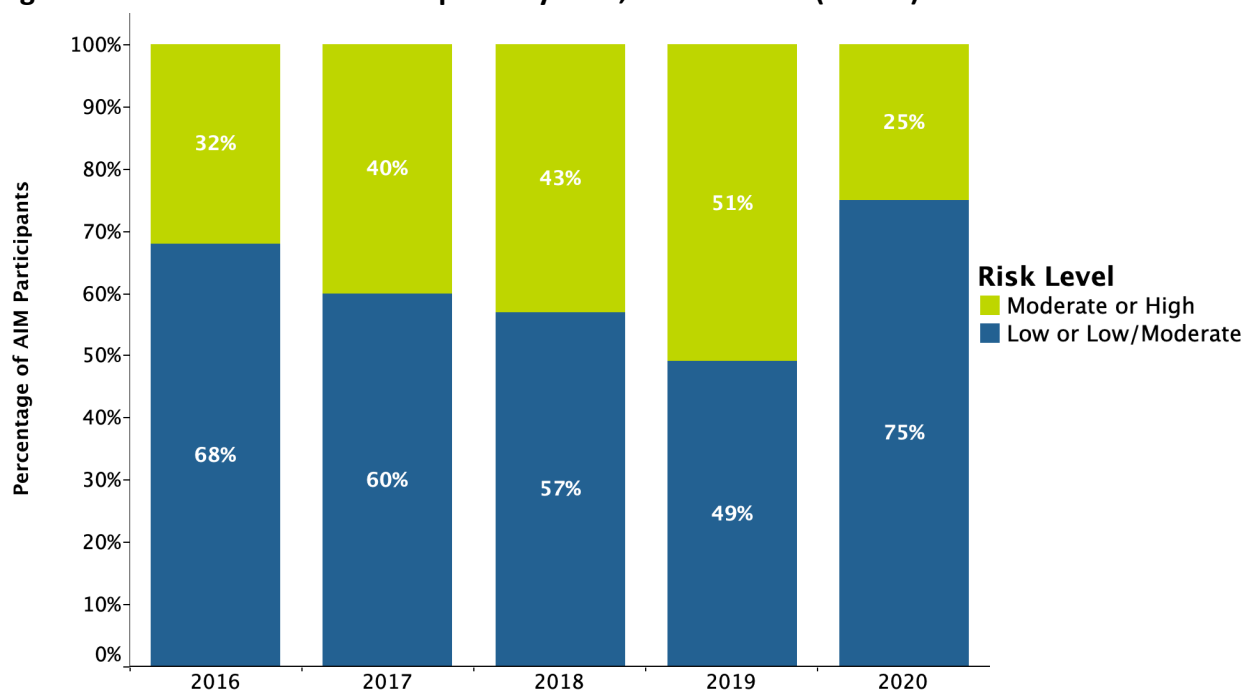
Figure 3. Criminogenic Risk Level of AIM Court Participants (N=201)



A description of AIM Court participants’ risk levels by year is shown in Figure 4 (below). Overall, except for 2019, at least half of AIM participants were characterized as “low” or “low-moderate” risk each year.²⁵ The rate of “low” and “low-moderate” risk participants was declining annually until 2020, when the rate spiked from 49% in 2019 to 75% in 2020. The proportion of AIM participants in the “high” risk category has remained relatively steady across years (between six and eight percent [6 – 8%]).

²⁵ In 2019, almost half (49%) of AIM participants were identified as “low” or “low-moderate” risk.

Figure 4. Risk Level of AIM Participants by Year, 2016 to 2020 (N=190)²⁶



Criminogenic needs are assessed at intake to Court to inform each participant’s treatment plan. Overall, 113 participants reported *at least* one criminogenic need, with the breakout of needs available in Table 5. Substance use was the most identified need (29%), followed closely by deviant peer associations and education/employment/financial circumstances, each representing one-quarter of program participants.

Table 5. Type of Criminogenic Needs Identified Among AIM Participants (N=113)²⁷

Criminogenic Needs	%
Neighborhood	12%
Criminal Attitudes and Behavioral Patterns	16%
Deviant Peer Associations	25%
Criminal History	4%
Education/Employment/Financial Situation	26%
Family and Social Support	21%
Substance Use	29%

Finally, AIM participants’ TRAS criminogenic risk factors and the magnitude of risk associated with each risk factor is presented in Table 6 below. The table displays the criminogenic risk factors of the 132 participants with *at least* one risk factor. Antisocial personality pattern was the least frequently identified risk factor, with 52% of participants having no risk. “Leisure or recreation” and “school or work” were the most frequently identified risk factors, with 93% and 91% of participants having low or greater risk, respectively. The “substance use” risk factor had

²⁶ Data on risk level was missing for 27 participants. The year 2020 is partial year data through August 2020.

²⁷ Criminogenic needs reported for 119 participants. Participants may report multiple needs. Missing data cannot be distinguished from participants assessed as having no criminogenic needs.

the greatest percentage of participants in the highest severity category, with more than half of AIM participants (51%) having a risk level between “moderate” and “high”.

Table 6. Criminogenic Risk Factors Among AIM Participants with at Least One Risk Factor (N=132)

Criminogenic Risk Factor	None	Low or Low/Moderate	Moderate to High
Antisocial behavior	46 (35%)	56 (42%)	30 (23%)
Antisocial cognition	48 (36%)	57 (43%)	27 (20%)
Antisocial peers	23 (17%)	56 (42%)	53 (40%)
Antisocial personality pattern	69 (52%)	43 (33%)	20 (15%)
Family	26 (20%)	62 (47%)	44 (33%)
Leisure or recreation	9 (7%)	61 (46%)	62 (47%)
School or work	12 (9%)	57 (43%)	63 (48%)
Substance use	27 (20%)	38 (29%)	67 (51%)

Although limited data were available on the substances used, we identified eighty-two (82) participants who were recorded as meeting the DSM-V criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) at the AIM clinician intake assessment (Table 7). Cannabis and alcohol use disorders were the most commonly identified SUDs among AIM participants with at least one SUD identified by the AIM clinician (93% and 17%, respectively). Between five (5) and eight (8) participants were found to have disorders related to cocaine, opiates, benzodiazepines, and methamphetamine.

Table 7. Substance Use Disorders Identified at AIM Clinician Assessment (N=82)²⁸

Substance	Participants Meeting DSM-V Criteria for Substance Use Disorder (%)
Any Substance Use Disorder	82
Alcohol	14 (17%)
Cannabis	76 (93%)
Cocaine	6 (7%)
Opiates / Heroin	5 (6%)
Methamphetamine	5 (6%)
Benzodiazepines	8 (10%)
Other ²⁹	5 (6%)

Approximately thirty percent (30%) of the participants identified as having a SUD met the DSM-V criteria for more than one type of SUD (25 participants). Cannabis was the most common overlapping substance, with 100% of those with a benzodiazepine use disorder, 83% of those

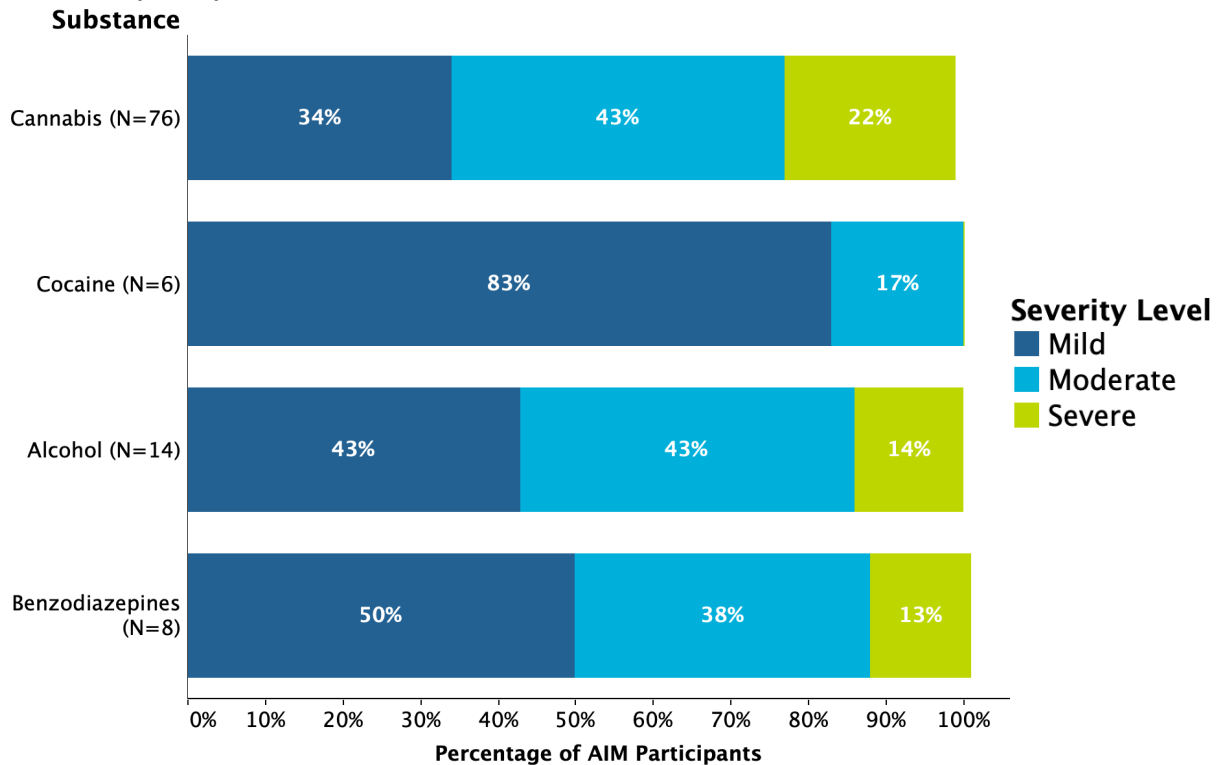
²⁸Information on DSM-V substance use criteria was assessed at by the AIM clinician prior to admittance into the program. Substance use disorders are not mutually exclusive and sum to greater than 100%.

²⁹ Other drug refers to Adderall, dextromethorphan, codeine, or unidentified pain medications.

with cocaine use disorder, and 80% of those with an opiate use also meeting the DSM-V criteria for cannabis use disorder.

When a participant was identified as meeting the DSM-V diagnostic criteria for a SUD, the severity of the disorder was subsequently classified as “mild”, “moderate”, “severe”. Figure 5 below shows the level of severity for substance use disorders identified among the 80 participants who met the DSM-V criteria for disordered use of cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, or benzodiazepines. Most individuals classified with cocaine use disorder were in the “mild” severity category (83%). Cannabis use disorder had the highest percentage of participants in the “severe” category (22%).

Figure 5. SUD Severity at AIM Intake Among Participants Meeting DSM-V Criteria for One or More SUDs (N=80)^{30,31}



³⁰Severity levels are not reported for opiate, methamphetamine, benzodiazepine, or other substance use disorders with small values. Substance use disorders are not mutually exclusive and sum to greater than 100%.

³¹ DSM-V substance use diagnostic criteria was gathered by the AIM clinician prior to admittance into the program.

Justice Involvement Among AIM Participants

Information on prior criminal justice involvement was collected by the AIM clinician during the intake assessment. Data on prior criminal history was available for 117 participants, with forty percent (40%) having a criminal justice involvement prior to the index arrest that led to admission into AIM.³² The range of prior criminal justice involvement events was one to six, with 16 participants having two or more prior events.



Data on the current offenses and former criminal justice system involvement was available for most AIM participants (182, 84%). A description of the charges for AIM participants were collected from Adult Information System printouts, AIM referral documents, AIM intake assessment documents, and from the Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Division database are included in Table 8. Approximately half (49%) of all AIM participants were charged with a state jail felony, twenty-nine percent (29%) were charged with third degree felonies, and sixteen percent (16%) were charged with second-degree felonies. All AIM participants were initially admitted for felony charges, although some participants had charges reduced after unsuccessful discharge from the program.

Table 8. Description of Charge for AIM Index Offense (N=182)³³

Initial Charge	Total (%)
First Degree Felony	11 (6%)
Second Degree Felony	29 (16%)
Third Degree Felony	53 (29%)
State Jail Felony	89 (49%)

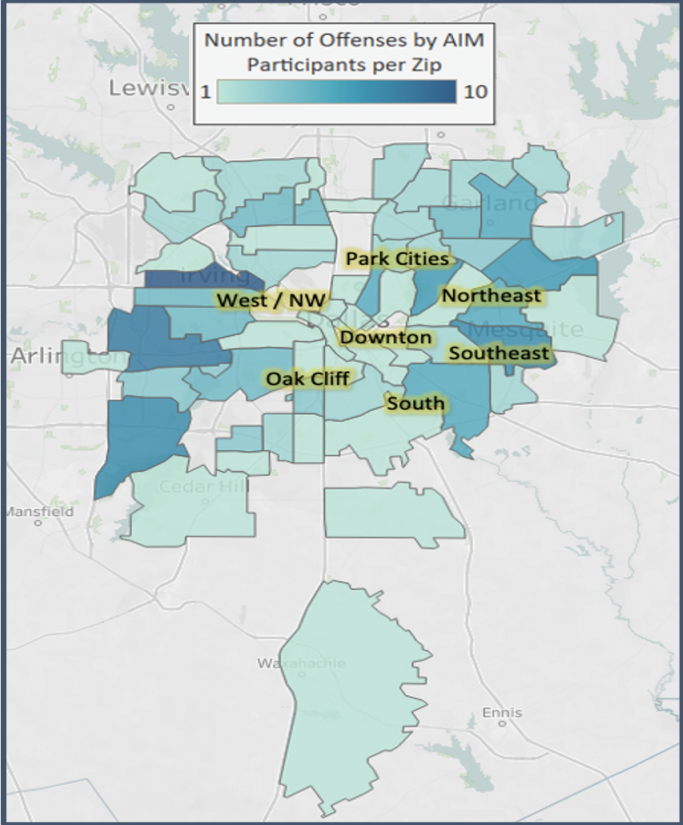
Map 2 depicts offense locations for the index offense that led to each participants’ involvement in AIM Court. Although AIM Court participants largely resided in central Dallas, most offenses occurred in the western and eastern portions regions of the city.³⁴ While large numbers of AIM participants resided in the Oak Cliff neighborhood, a relatively small number of offenses occurred in that region.

³² Data on prior criminal history was only available for 117 AIM participants.

³³ Data on charges that led to admission in AIM Court was missing for 35 participants, due to missing and expunged information.

³⁴ The top four zip codes for offenses were 75062, 75050, 75052, and 75149.

Map 2. Location of Initial Offense Leading to AIM Enrollment (N=160)



Recidivism Analysis

This section describes the two-year recidivism rates among AIM participants who enrolled between February 2016 and May 2019.³⁵ Recidivism rates for 153 AIM participants³⁶ (111 graduates and 42 unsuccessfully discharged participants) were compared to a matched sample of 612 matched controls.³⁷

Table 9 details the overall two-year recidivism rates for AIM participants (regardless of discharge status) and matched controls. Only 25 AIM participants (16%) were re-arrested within two years after starting the program compared to 43% of probationers ($p < 0.001$).³⁸ Because AIM Court participants were matched to controls on risk level, this finding cannot be attributed to differences in the levels of criminogenic risk among AIM participants compared to controls (see Appendix Two, Table A1).

Table 9. Two-Year Recidivism Among AIM Participants and Matched Controls (2016-2019)

	Total Participants	Two-Year Recidivism Status	
		No Recidivism (%)	Arrested for a New Offense (%)
Total	765	63%	37%
AIM Participants	153	84%	16%
Controls	612	58%	43%

Note: Recidivism was calculated from date of program entry.

As shown in Appendix Two, Table A2, the recidivism rate varied greatly between AIM graduates and participants who were unsuccessfully discharged. Specifically, only five percent (5%) of AIM graduates were rearrested on a new offense over two years, while nearly half (48%) of AIM participants who were unsuccessfully discharged were re-arrested ($p < 0.001$).³⁹ The recidivism rate among AIM participants who were unsuccessfully discharged was not significantly different

³⁵ This cutoff date was used so that all participants included in the recidivism analysis had an equal two-year follow-up window from their program start date.

³⁶ Twenty-one (21) AIM participants without a criminogenic risk score were omitted from this analysis to generate a matched control group that was matched on risk level to AIM participants.

³⁷ Controls were selected from probation and pretrial databases provided by Dallas County.

³⁸ A Chi-square test was used to assess whether an association exists between recidivism status and group (AIM participants and probation-matched controls). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

³⁹ A Chi-square test was used to assess whether an association exists between recidivism status and group (AIM graduates and unsuccessfully discharged participants). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

than the recidivism rate observed among the matched controls ($p=0.52$).⁴⁰ Arrest for a new offense constituted grounds for dismissal from AIM, and this likely contributed to the similarity in the recidivism rate between unsuccessfully discharged AIM participants and controls.

Table 10 summarizes the relative odds of recidivism among AIM participants compared to controls.⁴¹ These results suggest that the AIM program was associated with a statistically significant, 74% reduction in the odds of recidivism compared to controls. Additional models that account for residual variation in risk levels, and analyses for AIM graduates only are provided in Appendix Two, Table A3.

Table 10. Logistic regression of Two-Year Recidivism among AIM Participants compared to controls

	AIM participants vs. Controls Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval)
AIM Court Participation	.26 (.17 - .42)

Note. **Bolded** values represent statistically significant effect sizes ($p<.05$).

⁴⁰ A Chi-square test was used to assess whether an association exists between recidivism status and AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

⁴¹ This table displays the results of logistic regression analyses that were conducted to determine whether AIM Court participants were significantly less likely to recidivate compared to the matched sample of controls.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Our cost-benefit analysis set out to estimate the net benefits and net costs of participation in the AIM Court compared to probation. Net costs represent the difference in costs associated with AIM Court participation relative to traditional processing and adjudication, and the net benefits are the expected future benefits resulting from lower recidivism for AIM Court participants. Additional details on the cost-benefit analytic approach, including specific inputs into the model, are described in Appendix Three. The two equations below summarize the net benefits and net costs approach.

- **Net benefits** = Average increase in estimated labor market earnings for AIM Court participants compared with the control group + reduction in future court and jail costs for rearrests for AIM Court participants relative to the control group
- **Net costs** = costs of the AIM Court program per participant – costs of traditional adjudication for control group

According to the model presented in Table 11, the benefits to society associated with avoiding the legal system and jail costs associated with re-arrest for AIM Court graduates is \$28,239.70. This includes the legal system cost savings by preventing re-arrests (accounting for \$19,824.22) and expected earnings over a two-year period (\$8,415.48). This translates to a benefit-cost ratio of 9.73:1, meaning that each additional dollar put into the AIM Court generated a savings of \$9.73 in averted legal system costs and participant earnings for AIM Court graduates. For AIM Court participants who were unsuccessfully discharged, this benefit-cost ratio is negative (-\$1.34 per additional dollar spent). Given the seventy percent (70%) graduation rate, we estimated an overall benefit-cost ratio of 6.86 for the program.

Table 11. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the AIM Court

AIM Cost Differential	AIM Court Graduates	Participants who were Unsuccessfully Discharged
Intake Coordinator	\$259.30	\$259.30
Higher Probation Costs	\$1,826.87	\$1826.87
Treatment and Housing Costs	\$518.15	\$238.75
Substance Use Testing Cost Differences	\$279.99	\$49.05
Incentives	\$19.42	\$19.42
(Payments)	-\$161.34	\$0
Total	\$2,903.74	\$2,393.38
Program Benefits		
Avoided Legal System Costs	\$19,824.22	-\$2,660.62
Reduction in Lost Earnings	\$8,415.48	-\$545.64
Total	\$28,239.70	-\$3,206.26
Net Benefits		
	\$25,335.96	-\$5,599.64
Benefit-Cost Ratio	9.73	-1.34
Overall Program Net Benefits		
	\$16,148.09	
Overall Program Benefit-Cost Ratio	6.86	

Cost-Benefit Conclusions

We found a substantial cost-savings for the legal system and earnings for individual participants, and as expected, benefits were substantially greater for AIM Court graduates. Our benefit-cost ratio of 6.86 overall, 9.73 for graduates, and -1.34 for participants who were unsuccessfully discharged depicts the importance of identifying the Court participants who are most likely to be successful. It is also notable that these findings are similar to the cost savings identified in the prior assessment of DIVERT Court,⁴² which had a slightly longer window of post-program follow-up time (40-months).

⁴² Fomby, T. B. & Rangaprasad, V. (2002, August 31). Previously Cited.

Predictors of Graduation among AIM Court Participants

In this section, we describe characteristics of AIM Court participants and program requirements that were statistically associated with success, or graduation from the AIM Court program. These analyses were conducted to identify any patterns in the characteristics of participants who complete the program to inform future programming targets and inform discussions around the equity in Court assignment and completion rates.

As described above, much of the data on participant demographics, Court requirements, and risk assessment results were manually abstracted from electronic and paper files. The lack of a formal, electronic data management system caused some items to remain missing for some participants but not others, and so each risk factor described below has a different number of people who had valid entries for that risk factor in the data. The number of AIM participants included in each analysis is identified in the title of each table or figure. In addition, approximately forty-six (46) graduates had Court records expunged after their successful completion of AIM Court.⁴³ Although we were able to obtain some information about these individuals (including re-arrests), most of the risk factors were not available for these individuals.

Table 12 includes demographic characteristics of AIM participants, stratified by program outcome status (i.e., graduate or unsuccessfully discharged). AIM graduates and unsuccessfully discharged participants were significantly different on age, race/ethnicity, education level, employment status upon program entry, and living arrangement. Specifically,

- AIM graduates were older, on average, than unsuccessfully discharged participants with a median of 20.5 years at entry to AIM compared to 18.9 years for unsuccessfully discharged participants.
- AIM participants who identified as White were significantly more likely to graduate from AIM, with ninety percent (90%) of non-Hispanic White participants graduating AIM (Figure 6). For comparison, slightly more than half (52%) of all Black or African American participants and sixty-three percent (63%) of Hispanic or Latinx graduated from AIM Court.⁴⁴
- The AIM Court graduation rate increased with education level ($p < 0.001$; Figure 7).⁴⁵ The majority of individuals who reported “less than a high school degree” did not complete

⁴³ The Institute did not receive a list of participants who were granted expunctions. The forty-six (46) participants who appear to have been granted expunctions were based entirely on our examination of the missing data patterns.

⁴⁴ A Fisher’s exact test was used to assess whether an association exists between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) and reported race and ethnicity. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

⁴⁵ A Fisher’s exact test was used to assess whether an association exists between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) and reported highest educational attainment. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

the program (58%). All four participants who completed college or vocational training graduated from AIM Court.

- Participants who were “unemployed” were more likely to be unsuccessfully discharged from AIM (53% vs. 47% for graduates; Figure 8). Roughly three-quarters of participants who were employed part-time, full-time, or identified as a student graduated (p=0.004).⁴⁶
- AIM graduates were significantly more likely to live in their own dwelling or with a partner versus with their family (p=.02).
- No gender differences in graduation rates were identified.

A description of the factors that almost entirely explain the effect of race / ethnicity on graduation rates are discussed in the section entitled, “Potential Factors Explaining the Differential AIM Court Completion Rates by Race / Ethnicity” on pages 28-29.

Table 12. Demographic Characteristics of AIM Participants (N=217)

	Total Median (Range) or (% of total)	Program Outcome		
		Graduated Median (Range) or N (%)	Unsuccessfully Discharged Median (Range) or N (%)	Significance Test ⁴⁷
Overall	217	151	66	--
Age (n=186)				
Age at Admission ⁴⁸	20.0 (17.3 – 25.7)	20.5 (17.8 – 25.1)	18.9 (17.3 – 25.7)	p<0.001 ⁴⁹
Sex (n=217)				
Male	162 (75%)	112 (74%)	50 (76%)	p=0.85
Female	55 (25%)	39 (26%)	16 (24%)	
Race and Ethnicity (n=217)				
Non-Hispanic White	84 (39%)	76 (50%)	8 (12%)	p<0.001
Black or African American	85 (39%)	44 (29%)	41 (62%)	
Asian American	4 (2%)	3 (2%)	1 (2%)	
Multiple Races / Other	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	0	

⁴⁶ A Chi-square test was used to assess whether an association exists between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) and reported employment status. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

⁴⁷ A p-value of <.05 indicates a statistically significant difference between graduates and participants who were unsuccessfully discharged. These significant p-values are identified using bold text.

⁴⁸ Data on age at admission, education level, employment status at the start of the program, and living arrangement was missing for between 31 and 49 participants.

⁴⁹ A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to assess the difference between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) and age at admission. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

	Total Median (Range) or (% of total)	Program Outcome		
		Graduated Median (Range) or N (%)	Unsuccessfully Discharged Median (Range) or N (%)	Significance Test⁴⁷
Hispanic or Latinx	43 (20%)	27 (18%)	16 (24%)	
Education Level (N=184)				
Less than High School Diploma	60 (33%)	25 (21%)	35 (54%)	p<0.001
Current High School Student	12 (7%)	7 (6%)	5 (8%)	
High School Diploma or GED	69 (38%)	50 (42%)	19 (29%)	
Some College or Vocational Training	39 (21%)	33 (28%)	6 (9%)	
Vocational Training Graduate	2 (1%)	2 (2%)	0	
College Graduate	2 (1%)	2 (2%)	0	
Employment Status at the Start of AIM (N=171)				
Employed Full-Time	54 (32%)	41 (36%)	13 (23%)	p=0.004
Employed Part-Time	37 (22%)	28 (25%)	9 (16%)	
Student	29 (17%)	22 (19%)	7 (13%)	
Unemployed	51 (30%)	24 (21%)	27 (48%)	
Living Arrangement (N=168)				
In Own Dwelling or With Partner	35 (21%)	29 (26%)	6 (10%)	p=0.02
With Family	126 (75%)	78 (71%)	48 (83%)	
Homeless or Living in a Shelter	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	
Jail	2 (1%)	0	2 (3%)	
Treatment Center or Hospital	3 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (2%)	

Figure 6. Completion Rates of AIM Court Participants by Race and Ethnicity (N=217)

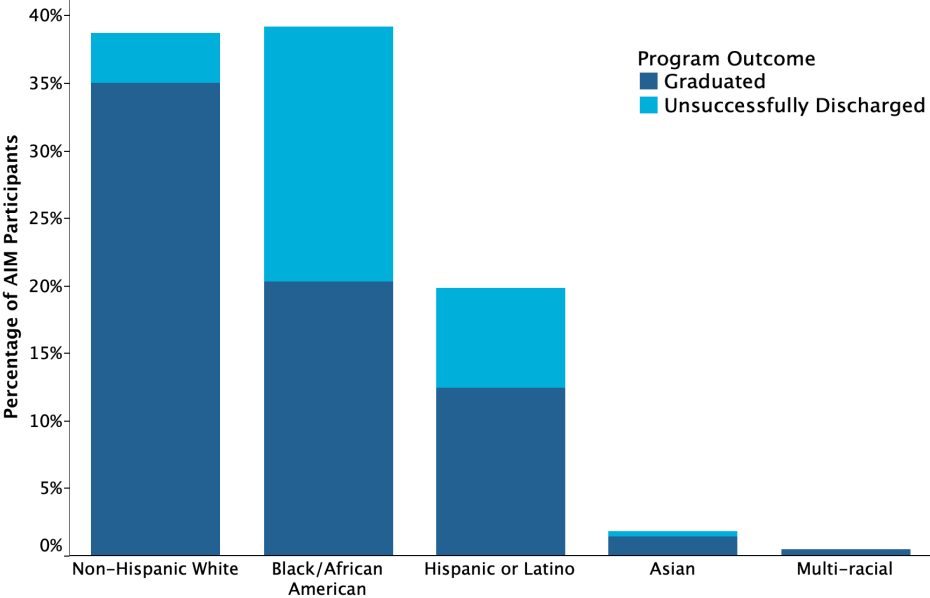


Figure 7. Education Level of AIM Court Participants, By Program Outcome Status (N=184)

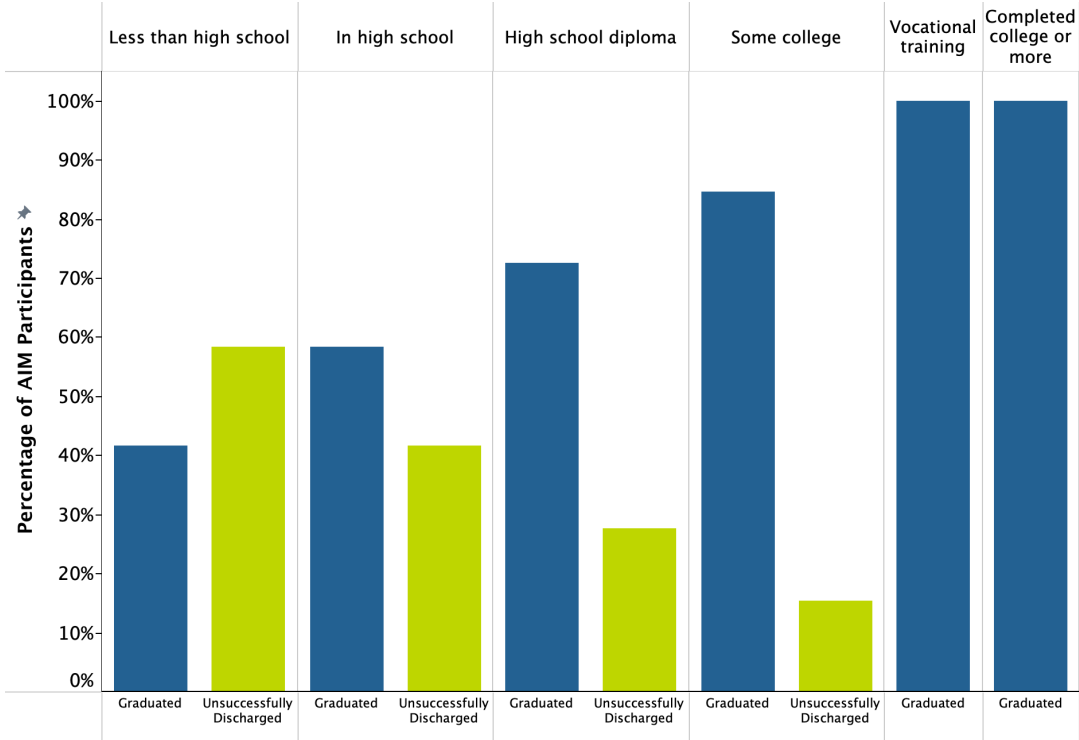
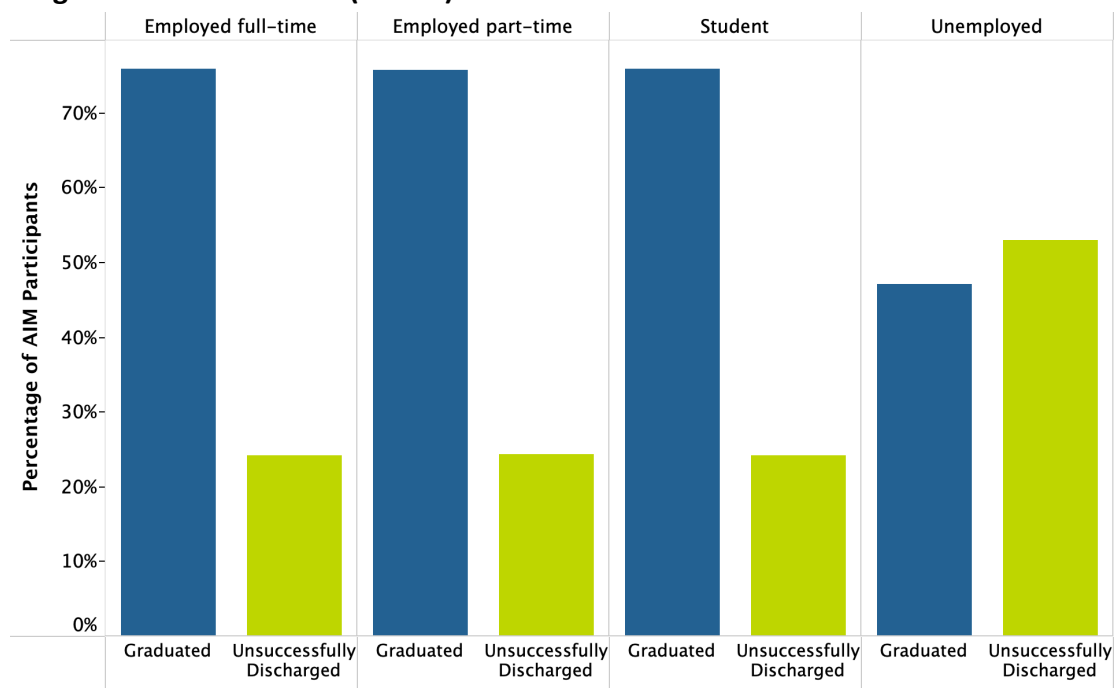


Figure 8. Employment Status of AIM Court Participants at the Beginning of the Program, By Program Outcome Status (N=171)



Potential Factors Explaining the Differential AIM Court Completion Rates by Race / Ethnicity

Upon request of the AIM Court staff, we conducted exploratory regression modeling to identify the underlying factors driving the disparate graduation rates observed among people of color. First, we identified measures that could plausibly be confounding – or potentially explaining – the observed association between race / ethnicity and program outcome. To meet these criteria, the measure must be statistically associated with both race / ethnicity and program outcome. Of the available measures in this section, the following were identified as potential confounders:

- educational attainment
- employment status
- living environment

The statistical association between race / ethnicity and living environment was marginal ($p=.08$); therefore, we fit two regression models:

Model 1: Program outcome = race / ethnicity + employment + educational attainment

Model 2: Program outcome = race / ethnicity + employment + educational attainment + living environment

The results from Model 1 suggested that employment status and educational attainment jointly explained the lower graduation rate observed among Hispanic / Latinx AIM Court participants but not Black or African American participants (compared to Whites). However, after accounting for living environment, the effect of racial and ethnic disparities on graduation rates was almost entirely explained. This suggests that living environment is a more salient risk factor for Black / African American AIM Court participants, and in conjunction with education and employment, explains much of the disparity in graduation rates.

Criminogenic Risk Level, Offense and AIM Court Program Outcome Status

This section describes the relationship between criminogenic risk, needs, charges leading to AIM Court enrollment, and graduation rates. Overall, AIM participants who were lower risk (e.g., low or “low-moderate” risk), had fewer social support related criminogenic needs around their personal relationships (i.e., family and social support or deviant peer associations), and criminogenic risk factors (i.e., protective factors) related to school, work, recreational activities and antisocial personality patterns were associated with greater rates of AIM Court completion. Participants who were charged with first degree felonies were most likely to graduate from AIM.

Table 13. Criminogenic Risk Level of AIM Participants According to Discharge Status (N=190)

Criminogenic Risk Level	Program Outcome Status	
	Graduated (N=136) N (%)	Unsuccessfully Discharged (N=54) N (%)
Low	22 (16%)	6 (11%)
Low / Moderate	70 (52%)	12 (22%)
Moderate	38 (28%)	30 (56%)
High	6 (4%)	6 (11%)

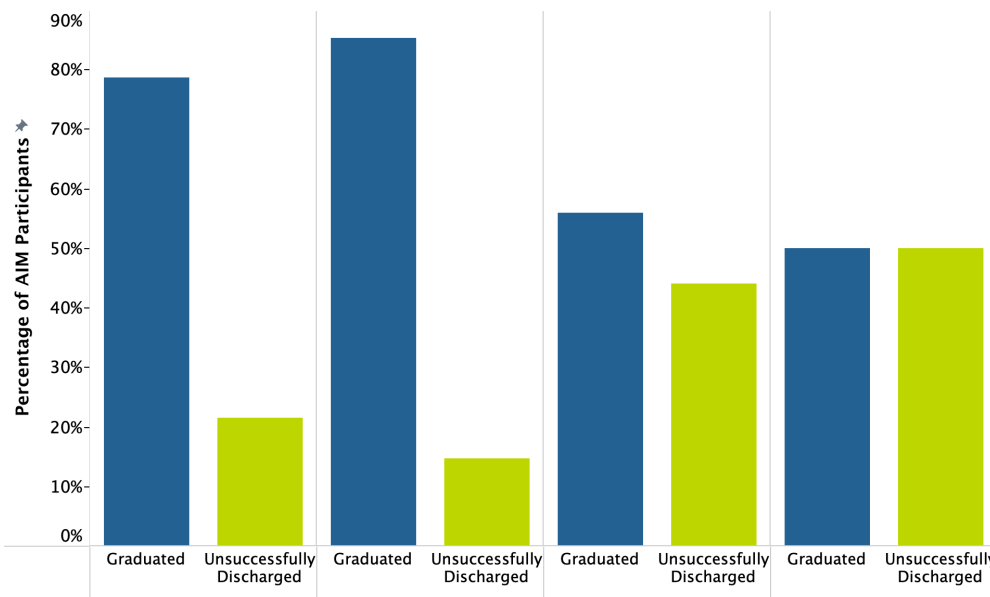
Table 13 and Figure 9 display the proportion of graduates and participants who were unsuccessfully charged by criminogenic risk level. Participants identified as “low” and “low / moderate” risk were significantly more likely to graduate from AIM compared to those in the

“moderate” or “high” risk groups (p<0.001).⁵⁰ The lowest graduation rate was observed among “high” risk participants, with only half (50%) graduating from AIM Court.

The distribution of charges leading to AIM Court enrollment by program outcome status are depicted in Figure 10. The

graduation rate ranged from fifty-eight percent (58%) for participants charged with a third-degree felony to eighty-two percent (82%) for participants who were charged with a first-degree felony. The difference observed between program outcome status and the level of the initial charge was not statistically significant (p=0.32).⁵¹

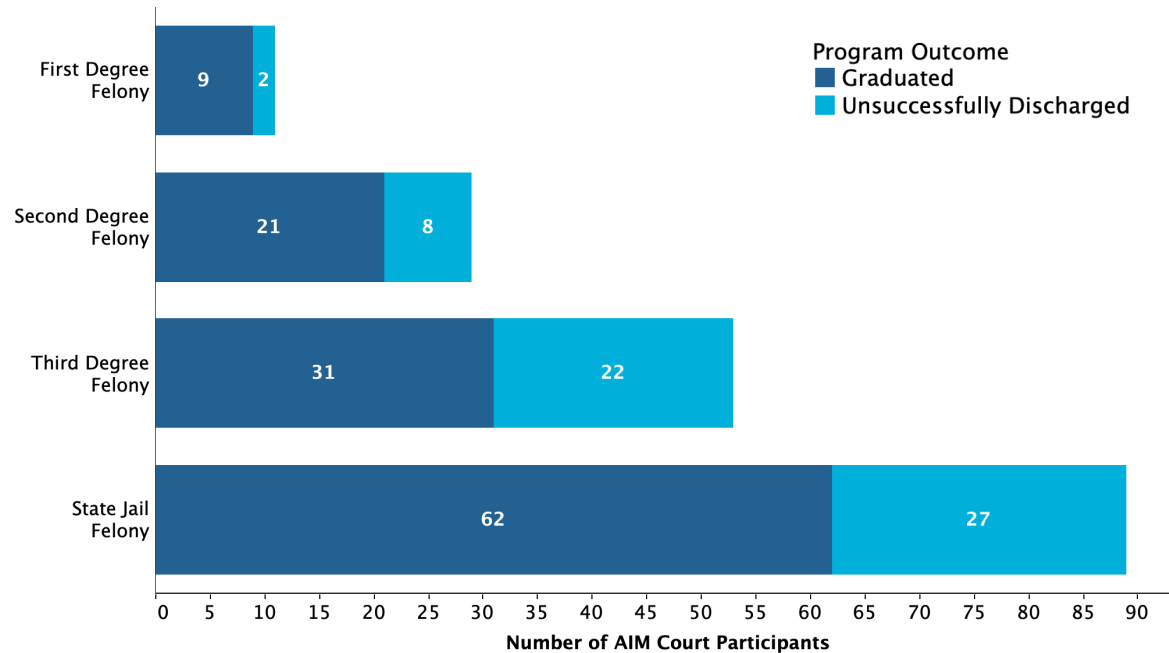
Figure 9. Criminogenic Risk Level of AIM Participants by Program Outcome Status (N=190)



⁵⁰ A Chi-square test was used to assess whether an association exists between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) and criminogenic risk level. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

⁵¹ A Fisher’s exact test was used to assess whether an association exists between AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged) by the level of the index offense. A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

Figure 10. Level of Index Offense Among AIM Participants by Program Outcome Status (N=182)

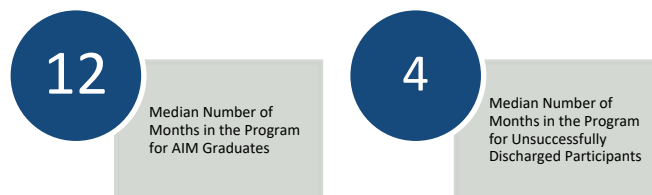


AIM Court Programming Requirements Associated with Graduation

This section describes the AIM Court program requirements, such as substance use screening tests administered and completed, sanctions and incentives received, program duration, and other characteristics that were associated with graduation.

Compared to AIM participants who were unsuccessfully discharged, graduates:

- spent a longer time (in months) in the AIM Court program (twelve months for graduates compared to four months for participants who were unsuccessfully discharged); and,
- had fewer programmatic requirements that address education, employment, and social functioning (Table 14).



Overall, AIM Court participants were most frequently required to complete programming related to education and social functioning (65% of participants), employment (60%), and substance use treatment (45%; Table 14). The maximum number of Court requirements assigned to a single participant was five (5).

Table 14. Court Requirements of AIM Participants by Graduation Status (N=146)

Court Requirements	Overall N=146 N (%) ⁵²	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=99	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=47
Education	95 (65%)	54 (55%)	34 (72%)
Employment	87 (60%)	46 (46%)	36 (77%)
Social Functioning	95 (65%)	49 (49%)	37 (79%)
Health	27 (18%)	16 (16%)	11 (23%)
Community Service / Fines	7 (5%)	6 (6%)	1 (2%)
Substance Use Treatment	62 (42%)	41 (41%)	20 (43%)

Bold indicates that the proportions were significantly different (p<.05).

Participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court were significantly more likely to have education, employment, and social functioning related program requirements needed for graduation compared to graduates. AIM participants who were unsuccessfully discharged had a larger number of requirements needed for graduation (i.e., finding employment or attending substance use treatment) than AIM graduates. Specifically, those who were unsuccessfully discharged had a median of three (3) requirements needed for graduation compared to two (2) for graduates.⁵³ This could indicate that those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court had a larger number of criminogenic needs.

Substance Use and Screening Requirements

Substance use testing patterns and positive test results differed between AIM Court participants who graduated compared to those who were unsuccessfully discharged. Overall, AIM Court graduates:

- were administered more substance use screening tests per month (median of 4.3 tests per month for graduates compared to 2.8 tests per month among unsuccessfully discharged participants)
- tested positive for alcohol and prescription opioids (when positive tests occurred)
- had fewer positive substance use screening test results

These factors are described in greater detail below.

⁵² Program requirement data were available for 161 participants. Participants may have more than one requirement; therefore, the sum of percentages exceed 100%.

⁵³ A Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate the association between the number of court requirements and program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

Table 15 includes a breakdown of screening tests administered by AIM Court program outcome status. More than six thousand (6,538) substance use screening tests were recorded as administered to AIM Court participants. Nearly all participants (98%) were administered at least one substance use screening test during the program, and the average participant received twenty-eight (28) substance use screening tests.⁵⁴ AIM Court graduates received significantly more screening tests (median of 55) compared to unsuccessfully discharged participants (median of 13). This is likely a function of their longer duration in the program.

Nearly half (48%) of all enrollees to the AIM program tested positive on one or more substance use screening tests (Table 16). The rate of positive screening test results was significantly lower for AIM Court graduates compared to

Table 15. Substance Use Screening Test Frequency and Results (N=161)

	Overall N=161	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=108	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=53
Total Substance Use Screening Tests Administered	6,538	5,633	905
Number of Screening Tests Administered (Median, Range)	28 (0 – 110)	55 (1 – 110)	13 (0 – 69)
Number of Screening Tests / Month, Median (Range)	3.5 (0 – 13)	4.3 (0.2 – 13)	2.8 (0 – 6.5)
Number (%) of Positive Screening Test Results⁵⁵	699 (10.7%)	415 (7.4%)	284 (31.4%)
Rate of Positive Screening Tests / Month, Median (Range)	0.2 (0 – 5)	0.1 (0 – 3)	1.2 (0 – 5)
Number of Positive Tests (Median, Range)	2 (0 – 36)	1 (0 – 36)	4 (0 – 27)

participants who were unsuccessfully discharged, with graduates testing positive on seven percent (7%) of screening tests recorded as positive compared to nearly one-third (31%) of tests recorded as positive among participants who were unsuccessfully discharged. The rate of positive screening test results per month was significantly higher for unsuccessfully discharged participants (median of 1.2 per month) compared to AIM Court graduates (median of .1 positive tests per month) (p=0.003).⁵⁶ Participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court had four times the number of positive substance use screening tests compared to graduates (four versus one, respectively).

⁵⁴ Four (4) participants had no recorded substance use screening results. The maximum number of tests was 110.

⁵⁵ Substance use screening test results identified as “diluted” were coded as “positive”.

⁵⁶ A Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess the association between the number of positive substance use screening test and AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged). A p-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Table 16 includes a description of the substance(s) identified in substance use screens and the graduation rate among participants who tested positive for that substance at least one time. Of those who had at least one screening test administered, two-thirds (104 or 65%) of participants screened positive at least one time. Cannabis was detected in more than two-thirds of positive tests (64%). Alcohol was detected in one-fourth (26%) of positive screening tests, and more than ten participants tested positive for cocaine (13%), amphetamines (13%), and prescription opioids (13%) at least one time. An additional sixteen (16) participants tested positive; however, the specific drug used was unknown given insufficient concentration in the specimen.

Table 16. Substance Use Screening Test Results Overall and Among AIM Court Graduates (N=104)

Substance(s) Detected in Substance Use Screening Tests ⁵⁷	Unduplicated Participants Overall ⁵⁸	Program Outcome Status	
		Graduated N=108	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=53
1+ positive tests	104	62	42
Alcohol	27 (26%)	18 (66%)	9 (21%)
Cannabis	67 (64%)	34 (51%)	28 (67%)
Cocaine	13 (13%)	7 (54%)	6 (14%)
Amphetamines	13 (13%)	6 (46%)	7 (17%)
Benzodiazepines	12 (12%)	6 (50%)	6 (14%)
Prescription Opioids	13 (13%)	10 (77%)	3 (7%)
Methamphetamine	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
PCP	1 (1%)	1 (100%)	0
Undetectable ⁵⁹	16 (15%)	15 (94%)	1 (2%)

Of those who tested positive, sixty-two percent (62%) proceeded to graduate from AIM Court. Participants who screened positive for prescription opioids and alcohol were especially likely to graduate from AIM, with graduation rates of sixty-six (66%) and seventy-seven (77%), respectively. This could indicate that treatment or other required programming is more effective in targeting prescription opioid use and / or alcohol, or that prescription drug and alcohol use is perceived more charitably and treated more leniently by Court staff. Conversely, just over half of participants who tested positive for cocaine (54%) and cannabis (51%), and less

⁵⁷ According to the AIM Court manual, participants who are using psychiatric or mood-altering medication are required to provide their case manager with a medication list. We did not have data on participant prescriptions for this analysis; therefore, results of substance use screening tests may indicate medical or non-medical use for some drug classes (i.e., amphetamines or opioids).

⁵⁸ Participants may have tested positive for multiple substances during a single testing occasion or may have multiple separate positive test results. Therefore, the sum of the percentages exceeds 100%.

⁵⁹ Test results were identified as “diluted”, meaning that there was not sufficient concentration of the substance to result in a definitive positive test. These results were considered “positive” for our analysis.

than half of participants who tested positive for amphetamines (46%) graduated from AIM Court. Notably, nearly all AIM Court participants who had an “undetectable” screening test result went on to graduate (94%).

The number and rate of missed Court-ordered substance use screening tests by program outcome status is provided in Table 17. Of the 6,838 total screening tests ordered among 160 unduplicated

Table 17. Court-Ordered Substance Use Screenings Not Attended Among AIM Participants (N=161)

Substance Use Screening Tests	Number Overall N=161	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=108	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=53
Total Court Ordered Substance Use Screening Tests	6,838	5,770	1,068
Total (%) Not Attended ⁶⁰	300 (4.4%)	137 (2.4%)	163 (15.3%)
Median (Range) Number of Screening Tests Not Attended	1 (0 – 18)	1 (0 – 7)	1 (0 – 18)

participants, three hundred (300), or four percent (4%), were not attended. Participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court were more likely to miss Court-ordered screening tests (15.3% of screening tests compared with 2.4% of tests not attended) than graduates. The median number of missed screening tests was the same for both graduates and unsuccessfully discharged participants (one missed screening test).

Court Appearances, Sanctions, and Incentives

Below is a summary of patterns in Court appearances, sanctions and incentives differentiating AIM Court graduates from participants who were unsuccessfully discharged. Expectedly, AIM Court graduates missed fewer Court appearances, and received more incentives (Tables 18, 19 and 20) than participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM.

AIM graduates who attended all Court dates were more likely to graduate from AIM Court; however, missing a Court date did not always precede an unsuccessful discharge from the program. A total of 117 court dates were not attended,⁶¹ and fifty-six participants (35%) missed one or more Court sessions. Of these, nearly half (25 participants, or 45%) went on to graduate from AIM Court (Table 18). However, as anticipated, graduates missed significantly fewer Court dates compared to participants who were unsuccessfully discharged (median of zero sessions missed versus one, respectively) ($p < 0.001$).⁶²

⁶⁰ Data for 2020 was available through August 2020 (partial year data).

⁶¹ Data on court dates not attended were available for 161 participants.

⁶² A Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate the association between the number of missed court dates and program outcome (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

Table 18. AIM Court Dates Not Attended Among AIM Participants (N=161)⁶³

Missed Court Dates	Overall N=160	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=108	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=53
Total Participants (%) who Missed 1+ Court Date	56 (35%)	25 (23%)	31 (58%)
Total Court Dates Not Attended	117	40	77
Number of Court Dates Missed (Median, Range)	0 (0 – 8)	0 (0 - 6)	1 (0 - 8)

Finally, the limited available data on the sanctions and incentives distributed to participants are provided in Table 19 (sanctions) and Table 20 (incentives).⁶⁵ A total of 1,060 sanctions were issued to 150 AIM participants,

Table 19. Sanctions Administered to AIM Participants (N=165)

	Overall N=165 ⁶⁴	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=111	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=54
All Sanctions			
Participants (%) who received 1+ Sanction	150 (91%)	99 (89%)	51 (94%)
Number of Sanctions Distributed	1,060	684	376
Sanctions / Participant (Median, Range)	6 (0 – 21)	5 (0 – 20)	6 (1 – 21)
Jail Sanctions			
Participants (%) who received 1+ Day in Jail	66 (40%)	45 (41%)	21 (39%)
Number of Days Spent in Jail	158	108	50
Days Spent in Jail (Median, Range)	0 (0 – 8)	0 (0 – 6)	0 (0 – 8)

65% of which were issued to AIM graduates (Table 19). No statistically significant differences in the number of sanctions received, including days spent in jail, between graduates and participants who did not complete AIM were detected.⁶⁶

⁶³ Court attendance data was available for 161 participants.

⁶⁴ Four additional people had available sanctions information but no other data available information. These individuals were excluded given the limited available data.

⁶⁵ Sanctions and incentives information was available for 165 participants (111 graduates and 54 non-graduates). Given the expunction of data for Court graduates, we expect that the number of incentives distributed are substantially under-represented in this table. These results may not represent the distribution of sanctions and incentives for all AIM graduates since 2016 and should be interpreted with caution.

⁶⁶ A Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess whether an association exists between the number sanctions and AIM program outcome status (graduated vs. unsuccessfully discharged). A p-value less than 0.05 denotes a statistically significant finding.

As shown in Table 20, graduates were more likely to earn at least one incentive compared to participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court (67% versus 22%, respectively; $p < 0.001$).⁶⁷ “Spinning the wheel” was the most used incentive with more than one hundred recorded instances (representing 82% of all recorded incentives earned by participants), followed by stickers (15% of incentives earned).

Table 20. Incentives Earned by AIM Court Participants by Program Outcome Status (N=165)

Incentives	Overall N=165	Program Outcome	
		Graduated N=111	Unsuccessfully Discharged N=54
Received 1+ Incentive(s) (%)	86 (52%)	74 (67%)	12 (22%)
Incentives⁶⁸			
Spun Wheel			
Gift Card	22	21	1
Applause / Standing Ovation	5	5	-
Food (pizza, candy)	11	9	2
Community Service Restitution Credits	6	5	1
Leave Court Early	6	6	-
Unknown Incentive ⁶⁹	52	43	9
Stickers	15	13	2
Lower Restitution	3	2	1
AIM Level Promotion	4	2	2
Allowed to Move Home	1	1	-

⁶⁷ Incentive distribution is likely under-represented among graduates given the expunction of participant data.

⁶⁸ Participants may have earned more than one incentive; therefore, the sum of percentages exceed 100%.

⁶⁹ Fifty-two (52) participants were noted to have “spun the wheel”, but the incentive received was not recorded.

Summary and Recommendations

This study was launched with two goals: 1) to quantify the differences in recidivism rates between AIM Court participants and similar individuals who were placed on probation; and 2) to calculate the relative costs and benefits of the Court, its associated reduction in recidivism, and other collateral benefits associated with not being incarcerated (such as employment-related income). The completion rate for AIM Court participants is higher than the average Dallas County Specialty Courts (70% in AIM Court compared to 43% on average in other Specialty Courts).⁷⁰

We identified that AIM Court participants had roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ the two-year recidivism rate of probationers after matching on demographic factors and criminogenic risk. Specifically, the recidivism rate for AIM Court graduates was very small (5%; see Table A2), even when compared to participants who completed other Dallas County Specialty Court programs⁷¹ and with similar types of programs in other states.^{72,73} The recidivism rate of participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court was very similar to probationers – 48% among participants who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM Court compared to 43% among probationers (see Table A2).

The large difference in recidivism rates translated into substantial monetary benefits for both individuals and the legal system more generally. The net benefit ratio of 6.86 over two (2) years⁷⁴ translated into a savings of \$6.86 for every \$1 invested into AIM Court.⁷⁵ For those who completed the AIM program, the justice system and participant savings averaged \$25,336 over the two years following the enrollment date. In that same time, those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM had net costs of \$5,600, highlighting the need to develop systematic procedures for screening to identify the most appropriate individuals to participate in AIM.

To home in on the opportunities for improvement in selection procedures and program requirements, we then identified the following characteristics as being significantly associated with AIM Court graduation (versus unsuccessful discharge):

- Older age

⁷⁰ Fabelo, T., Tyler, J., & Oshatz, L. (2017, January 30). Evaluation of Program Fidelity and Outcomes of Dallas Specialty Courts. Final Report to Dallas Community Supervision and Corrections Department. Council of State Governments Justice Center. Austin, TX.

⁷¹ Fabelo, T., Tyler, J., & Oshatz, L. (2017, January 30). Previously Cited.

⁷² Benedict, W. R., Huff-Corzine, L., & Corzine, J. (1998). "Clean up and go straight": Effects of drug treatment on recidivism among felony probationers. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 22(2), 169-187.

⁷³ Spohn, C., Piper, R. K., Martin, T., & Frenzel, E. D. (2001). Drug courts and recidivism: The results of an evaluation using two comparison groups and multiple indicators of recidivism. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 31(1), 149-176.

⁷⁴ A value of 1.0 would indicate a program with no net benefits or costs (i.e., a neutral effect) and values less than one (1) identify programs that cost more than they save.

⁷⁵ The net benefits attributable to AIM are conservative estimates based on a two-year post-treatment period to mirror the recidivism analysis. Tracking participants and measuring avoided costs over a longer time frame will yield a larger benefit-cost ratio.

- Non-Hispanic Ethnicity; White race⁷⁶
- Completed high school level education or greater at enrollment
- Employed at least part-time at enrollment or an active student
- Lived independently from family or with a partner
- Low or Low/Moderate criminogenic risk
- Had fewer criminogenic needs related to family, social support, and deviant peers
- Were less likely to have identified criminogenic needs in the “criminal attitudes and behavioral patterns” domain
- Attendance at routine substance use screening tests and Court sessions
- Fewer positive substance use screening test results
- When positive screening tests occurred, alcohol and prescription opioids were present
- Had fewer graduation requirements that address education, employment, and social functioning
- Spent a longer time in AIM Court
- Receipt of at least one incentive

Recommendations

In this section, we offer four (4) recommendations for improving, expanding, and evolving AIM Court moving forward. These are directly informed by our detailed review of patient data and quantitative analysis, our review of the extant research literature, and our team’s expertise.

Recommendation #1: Expand pre-enrollment jail-based criminogenic risk and need screening for prospective AIM participants. Current practices include jail-based screening to inform bail decision-making but staffing and resource limitations have prevented routine screening for criminogenic risk and / or need to guide Court and probation assignments, sentencing and / or plea agreements.⁷⁷ This routine screening may increase the pool of potential AIM participants and potentially, reduce racial and ethnic disparities observed among those who participate in AIM Court.

If universal criminogenic risk screening is impractical, we recommend that AIM Court implement a protocol for administering criminogenic risk and needs assessments before admitted into the AIM Court program. This procedure will maximize the likelihood that AIM Court participants are those who are most likely to benefit from the program – high risk and high need.

⁷⁶ This effect was almost entirely explained after accounting for employment, educational attainment, and living environment.

⁷⁷ Marlowe, D. B. (2012). Previously Cited.

Recommendation #2: Establish a database to improve the tracking of participant progress, program requirements, substance use screening test results, incentives and sanctions, track and phase (along with date of entry for each track / phase change) and other indicators of compliance and completion of program requirements.

This additional documentation and detail will permit future analyses to identify the types of individuals and combinations of programming that result in graduation.

Related to this recommendation, we would also suggest that AIM Court leadership collect more detailed information at the intake interview. Periodic follow-up interviews should be conducted to assess change over time in program targets, such as educational training completion or employment status. These changes should be documented in a database, along with information about the program that was completed (i.e., GED, vocational training, etc.) or new employment location, job title and hourly wage. Portions of the intake interview and follow-up interview (or the entire follow-up interview) may be completed on a web-based platform or tablet in order to minimize the burden of re-assessments to Court staff and the participant.

Recommendation #3: Track AIM Court participant outcomes for two years after graduation.

When the Meadows Institute began this evaluation, all participant records were maintained in paper form. As a result, nearly all participants had some missing information about their programming, employment or education history, mental health or substance use disorder, etc. The breadth of missing data complicated any multivariate analyses that could be conducted to identify the most robust predictors of graduation.

Recommendation #4: Increase rate of enrollment and completion of the AIM Court among people of color by: 1) using translator services or recruiting diverse and bilingual staff to accommodate prospective participants who are not proficient in English; 2) identifying opportunities for dual-language case management and behavioral health treatment services; 3) removing fees for Court participation; and, 4) expanding the use of community advisory boards and family counseling.

We found that people who identified as Hispanic / Latinx were under-represented among AIM Court participants (Table 4), representing one-third of referrals but only 20% of Court participants. One possible explanation for this is the staffing gap, as the Court does not have enough personnel to screen and supervise individuals who do not speak English. Further, the Court does not have any contracted treatment providers who are proficient in treating youth who exclusively speak Spanish. This has limited the Court's ability to screen individuals in Spanish only and could be driving the observed ethnicity-related disparities in AIM Court enrollment. Given the lack of inpatient care providers that provide behavioral health services in different languages, it would be challenging for Spanish speaking participants to complete program requirements. Therefore, we recommend that Dallas County work to increase the

diversity of its workforce with the goal of accommodating more Spanish-speaking youth into the AIM Court program.

We also found that AIM Court participants who identified as Black or African American were significantly less likely to graduate from AIM Court compared to those who identified as White (Table 12 and Figure 6). This phenomenon has been observed in specialty courts nationwide and is not specific to AIM Court programming.⁷⁸ Given the low graduation rates we observed among youth who are Black or African American, action is needed to reduce these disparities.

The research indicates that two key policies increase racial disparities in graduation rates:

- policies that require participants to have a job or be in school to graduate from the program (increase racial disparities by 88%); and,
- Court fee payments (197%).⁷⁹

To reduce disparities, AIM Court leadership should tailor graduation requirements to accommodate the considerable effect of neighborhood, transportation, fewer job opportunities, and lower socioeconomic status facing Court participants who are Black or African American.

The AIM Court has currently implemented the Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy (HEAT) program, which was designed to increase graduation rates among participants of color.⁸⁰ HEAT is currently in its infancy and the research is currently insufficient to support its widespread implementation to reduce the racial disparities in Court graduation rates. Further, addition of another graduation requirement for Black or African American participants who already have lower graduation rates could unintentionally exacerbate disparities (ten percent of participants in a recent feasibility study of HEAT did not complete the program).⁸¹ Instead, we recommend that AIM Court leadership consider establishing or extending the following procedures to reduce disparities in graduation rates.

⁷⁸ Ho, T., Carey, S. M., & Malsch, A. M. (2018). Racial and gender disparities in treatment courts: Do they exist and is there anything we can do to change them. *Journal for Advancing Justice*, 1(1), 5-34.

<https://nyatcp.org/assets/pdfs/powerpoints2020/AJ-Journal.pdf#page=15>

⁷⁹ Ho, T., Carey, S. M., & Malsch, A. M. (2018). Previously Cited.

⁸⁰ Marlowe, D. B., Shannon, L. M., Ray, B., Turpin, D. P., Wheeler, G. A., Newell, J., & Lawson, S. G. (2018).

Developing a culturally proficient intervention for young African American men in drug court: Examining feasibility and estimating an effect size for Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy (HEAT).

[https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/15018/HEAT-Manuscript-](https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/15018/HEAT-Manuscript-PrePrint.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

[PrePrint.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/15018/HEAT-Manuscript-PrePrint.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

⁸¹ Marlowe, D. B., Shannon, L. M., Ray, B., Turpin, D. P., Wheeler, G. A., Newell, J., & Lawson, S. G. (2018). Previously Cited.

Table 21. Recommendations for AIM Court to Reduce Racial Disparities in Graduation Rates.^{82,83}

Practice	% Reduction in Graduation Rate Racial Disparities
Presence of a community advisory committee that includes community members (and potentially, program graduates)	145%
A new arrest for substance use possession does not necessitate termination from Court	105%
Offer family / domestic relations counseling	78%

Expanded use of family and / or domestic relations counseling may be of utility to AIM Court in reducing graduation disparities by race, especially among participants who identify as Black or African American. Family and community are particularly important to people of color,⁸⁴ and therefore, AIM Court should explore options for repairing family bonds and building community within the AIM Court.

⁸² Ho, T., Carey, S. M., & Malsch, A. M. (2018). Previously Cited.

⁸³ These recommendations may include activities that are already in place at AIM Court. Staff might consider expanding these activities if appropriate.

⁸⁴ Schiele, J. H. (1997). An Afrocentric perspective on social welfare philosophy and policy. *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 24(2), 21–39. <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol24/iss2/3>

Appendix One

Detailed Programmatic Information about AIM Court Eligibility and Tracks

Participants are required to complete the following requirements for graduation:

1. Pay \$500 AIM Program Fee no later than 30 days before anticipated graduation date
2. Attend AIM Court on the 2nd Monday of every month
3. Meet with Case Manger ONE time a month
4. Submit UAs upon request.
5. Successfully complete all court-ordered treatment programming
6. Satisfactorily complete all required journal entries
7. Submit proof of a physical screening
8. Provide proof of government identification, Social Security Card, and birth certificate
9. Obtain high school diploma, GED or enroll in education program
10. Provide resume
11. Proof of Job or vocational training if not in school
12. Proof of savings or checking account
13. Submit 5-year plan for [their] life
14. Proof [he/she] is registered to vote
15. Proof [he] is registered with Selective Service (males only)
16. Complete 24 hours of community service at a nonprofit chosen by AIM Team

Two tracks are available to participants – an abbreviated Compliance Track (nine months in duration) and the Specialty Court track. The Compliance Track is shorter in duration, has fewer requirements, and is intended for participants who have low needs and require minimal supervision, as well as display an overall stable level of functioning. These individuals should be maintaining steady employment or are enrolled and actively participating in an educational program, lack a substance use history, or have already maintained sobriety through ongoing recovery programs. If they have a further need for treatment or resources, they can be moved to the Specialty Court track at the discretion of the AIM Court team.

The Specialty Court Track is divided into three phases, which can be completed in a minimum of ten months. The first phase focuses on building a foundation for success, and helping the participant learn to meet basic needs, including maintaining stable housing, transportation, and personal resources, as well as a healthcare screening, obtaining identifying documents, and making payments toward restitution or program fees. Phase two focuses on life skills and planning for the future, including maintaining sobriety, pursuing educational and/or employment opportunities, budgeting and saving money, and making payments toward restitution or program fees if applicable. Finally, phase three focuses on maintaining skills learned in phases one and two in preparation for graduation, including developing a five-year plan, completing community service, and any other conditions ordered by the Court.

Appendix Two

Additional Analyses

Table A1. Two-Year Recidivism AIM Participants by Criminogenic Risk Level (2016-2019)

	TRAS Risk Level				Total (N)
	Low	Low/ Moderate	Moderate	High	
AIM Participants Overall	13.7%	43.8%	36.6%	5.9%	153
	21	67	56	9	
Graduates	14.4%	50.5%	30.6%	4.5%	111
	16	56	34	5	
Unsuccessfully Discharged Participants	11.9%	26.2%	52.4%	9.5%	42
	5	11	22	4	
Controls	13.7%	43.8%	36.6%	5.9%	612
	84	268	224	36	
Total (N)	14%	44%	37%	6%	765
	105	335	280	45	

Table A2. Two-Year Recidivism Among AIM Participants and Matched Controls (N=765)

	Total	Two-Year Recidivism Status	
		No Recidivism (%)	Arrested for a New Offense (%)
Total	765	63%	37%
AIM Participants Overall ⁸⁵	153	84%	16%
Graduates <i>Only</i>	111	96%	5%
Unsuccessfully Discharged Participants <i>Only</i>	42	52%	48%
Controls	612	58%	43%

Note: Recidivism is measured from date of program entry.

⁸⁵ Graduates and unsuccessfully discharged participants combined.

Table A3. Logistic regression of Two-Year Recidivism among AIM Participants compared to controls⁸⁶

	AIM participants vs. Controls Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval)	AIM Graduates only vs. Controls Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval)
Model 1: Bivariate		
AIM Participation	.264 (.167 - .418)	.064 (.026 - .159)
Model 2: Accounting for Residual Effects of Criminogenic Risk		
AIM Participation	.256 (.161 - .407)	.63 (.025 - .158)
Risk level (TRAS) level		
Low	Reference	Reference
Low/Moderate	.27 (.127 - .575)	.232 (.103 - .524)
Moderate	.419 (.219 - .802)	.443 (.221 - .887)
High	.669 (.348 – 1.285)	.646 (.321 – 1.303)

Note. Bolded values represent statistically significant effect sizes ($p < .05$).

⁸⁶ This table displays the results of logistic regression analyses that were conducted to determine whether AIM Court participants were significantly less likely to recidivate compared to the matched sample of controls. Model 2 accounts for any residual differences that remained after matching between AIM participants and controls. The middle column presents the results of analyses comparing AIM participants overall to controls, and the right-hand column includes results for AIM graduates only.

Appendix Three

Cost-Benefit Analysis Methodology and Calculations

Description of Cost Measures

The costs associated with AIM program administration can be divided into two categories: 1) aggregate costs and 2) per-participant costs. The aggregate costs reflect personnel and other operational costs necessary for operating the Court. Using budget information provided by Dallas County, we identified the following personnel and other fixed costs associated with AIM Court operations:

- Judge (15% of effort dedicated to AIM)
- Assistant District Attorney (30% of effort dedicated to AIM)
- Public Defender (42.5% of effort dedicated to AIM)
- Program Clinician (75% of effort dedicated to AIM),
- one Investigator (10% of effort dedicated to AIM),
- Case Manager Supervisor (25% of effort dedicated to AIM)
- one (1) Intake Coordinator (100% dedicated to AIM)⁸⁷
- Two (2) full-time case managers (100%)
- Travel and mileage reimbursement
- Office supplies
- Computer hardware and software⁸⁸
- Program incentives

Per-participant costs are expenditures that vary by participant depending on time spent in program, Court requirements (i.e., contracted treatment costs, toxicology) and participant need (i.e., transitional housing) and incentives / sanctions (i.e., gift cards and jail costs). We did not have detailed, participant-specific usage for many of these measures. Therefore, we calculated the cost per participant separately for AIM Court graduates and participants who were unsuccessfully discharged using the following assumptions:

- AIM Court graduates are in the program for approximately 2.2 times as long as participants who were unsuccessfully discharged; therefore, we assume that each graduate uses 2.2 times as much program services.
- The AIM Court completion rate was 70%, indicating that there were 2.37 graduates per participant who was unsuccessfully discharged. This translates to a weighted share of 5.12; meaning that as a group, graduates use \$5.12 of AIM Court services for every \$1 in

⁸⁷ The intake coordinator is funded through grant revenue. The salary and benefits for this position are included in the total cost of AIM Court administration.

⁸⁸ Computer equipment was only purchased in 2018, but the cost was evenly allocated across all years.

services used by participants who were unsuccessfully discharged. In other words, AIM Court graduates incur 84% of Court costs.

- Participant payments to participate in AIM Court lowered the cost of program administration to Dallas County. All participants are required to pay \$500; however, most participants do not pay the full cost. From May 2017 to September 2020, Dallas County received \$36,947 (see Table C1). When this value is divided by the number of participants who entered AIM Court (229 participants) between those dates and graduated by 2021, the per graduate payment is equal to \$161.34. Because we did not know which participants made payments, we assumed that participants who were unsuccessfully discharged did not make any payments.

Aggregate values for each of the costs defined above are presented in Table C1.

Description of Benefits Measurement

AIM program benefits are divided into two categories: 1) avoidable costs from re-arrest (Court and jail costs) and 2) the increase in participant earnings that result from workforce participation (instead of serving jail sentences). These calculations are described in detail below.⁹⁰

Avoided legal system costs. Legal costs avoided by preventing

future re-arrests were calculated using the costs shown in Table C1 for processing in AIM Court. We assume:

Table C1. Itemized list of AIM Court costs (2017-2020)⁸⁹

Fiscal Year(s)	Category	Annual Cost
2017-2020	Staff salaries	\$342,178.98
2017	Total cost of supplies, mileage, etc.	\$618.73
2018	Total cost of supplies, mileage, etc.	\$2,392.16
2019	Total cost of supplies, mileage, etc.	\$333.65
2020	Total cost of supplies, mileage, etc.	\$63.93
2018-2020	Treatment Costs	\$2,340.00
2018-2020	Transitional Housing	\$7,570.00
2018-2020	Toxicology (Substance Use Screening)	\$20,707.00
2018-2020	Treatment Collaboration with IPS	\$37,500.00
2017-2020	Participant Incentives	\$1,000.00
Payments to participate in the program		
May 2017-September 2020	Payments to the Court	\$36,947.00

⁸⁹ All cost data were obtained from Dallas County.

⁹⁰ Gaps in the data related to changes in employment over time made it impossible to conduct a participant-by-participant estimate of the net benefits of AIM Court participation. Improved data collection methods would allow for more precise analysis and assist program executives in future efforts to document the Court’s effectiveness.

- those who recidivate will be convicted of a felony and will serve a two-year sentence without parole.
- The average daily cost of a night spent in a Texas Department of Criminal Justice prison is \$62.34.⁹¹ This figure was used to estimate the cost of a two-year prison sentence for 2017-2020.

A detailed breakdown of the information used to calculate avoided legal costs is available in Table C2.

Higher wage earnings.

Individual earnings estimates were generated using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for 2016-2019.⁹² Specifically, ACS income data for young adults between the ages of 17 and 25 who

Table C2. Itemized list of AIM Court costs (2017-2020)

Costs	Formula Inputs	Total
Court	$[(\text{Personnel} + \text{Other Costs in Table C1}) / (\text{Total new AIM Court participants per year})] = (\$342,178.98 + \$852.12)/51.5$	\$6,660.80
Prison	Cost per night in prison * nights in two-year follow-up time span $= \$62.34 * 730$	\$45,508.20
Overall	Court Costs + Prison Costs $= \$45,508.20 + \$6,660.80$	\$52,169.00

resided in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan statistical area were used to quantify the wage benefits associated with reduced recidivism for AIM Court over a two-year period. All dollar values are converted into 2020 values.

Wages were estimated by calculating the average annual wage and salary income by employment status (full vs. part-time) and high school graduation status.⁹³ The breakdown of AIM Court participants according to discharge, employment and educational status is provided in Table C3.

⁹¹Legislative Budget Board. (2019, January). Criminal and Juvenile Justice Uniform Cost Report. Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.

www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy_Report/4911_Criminal_Juvenile_Uniform_Cost_Jan_2019.pdf

⁹²Flood, S., King, M., Rodgers, R., Ruggles, S.J., Warren, R., & Westberry, M. (2021). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 9.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V9.0>

⁹³Flood, S., King, M., Rodgers, R., Ruggles, S.J., Warren, R., & Westberry, M. (2021). Previously Cited.

Table C3. Summary of AIM Participant Annual Earnings Estimates

AIM Court Graduates	N (%)		
	Unemployed ⁹⁴	Employed Part-Time ⁹⁵	Employed Full-Time ⁹⁶
No High School Diploma	6 (5.6%)	12 (11.2%)	10 (9.3%)
High School Diploma	24 (22.4%)	25 (23.4%)	30 (28.0%)
Participants Unsuccessfully Discharged from AIM Court			
	N (%)		
No High School Diploma	20 (37.0%)	5 (9.3%)	8 (14.8%)
High School Diploma	12 (22.2%)	6 (11.1%)	3 (5.6%)

The total earnings over two years summed to **\$22,146** for AIM graduates and **\$10,698.88** for participants who were unsuccessfully discharged.

Assumptions for Calculations Comparing AIM Court with Probation

We used the rates identified in Table C1 to estimate the cost of traditional adjudication for those in the control group, who were eligible for – but did not participate in – AIM Court. These rates were adjusted for the per-participant costs incurred given the slightly longer duration of probation compared to AIM Court,⁹⁷ less frequent substance use screening tests administered,⁹⁸ and higher caseloads.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ The average income for participants who were unemployed was estimated to be zero (\$0).

⁹⁵ The average income among participants who were employed part-time was \$3,760.07 for non-high school graduates and \$7,041.26 for high school graduates.

⁹⁶ The average income among participants who were employed full-time was \$18,779.43 for non-high school graduates and \$25,862.15 for high school graduates.

⁹⁷ The mean time supervised for probationers was 972.74 days, or 2.67 years, under supervision.

⁹⁸ Given an average of 3.26 substance use screening tests per person on probation per year, this results in an average of 8.7 screening tests per probationer overall. Given the annual average toxicology cost of \$20,707.00 for 2018-2020 (Table C1) and an average annual 2,115 screening tests for that time period, we calculated a per test cost of \$9.79. AIM graduates average 37.3 screening tests, or 28.6 more than the control group, yielding an additional cost of \$279.99 per graduate. Those who were unsuccessfully discharged from AIM averaged 13.71 substance use screening tests administered -- 5.01 more than the control group -- yielding an additional cost of \$49.05 per unsuccessfully discharged participant.

⁹⁹ The \$73,075 salary and benefits per probation officer was divided by 30 to reflect the lower caseload in AIM Court compared to a normal caseload of 120 probationers. This yielded an extra cost of \$1,826.87 per AIM court participant.