

How Drug Courts Began Nationally

In 1989, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida was the first in the nation to implement Drug Court, a diversion and treatment program for drug offenders which is overseen by the Court. The drug court concept was pioneered in Miami-Dade County in response to the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s and the resulting explosion of drug cases. Its main components are: early identification of appropriate candidates, diversion from the ordinary course of prosecution, and rehabilitation of defendants with intensive supervision by the drug court judge and treatment specialists. The program offers drug offenders the chance to avoid prosecution, get off drugs and change their lives in a positive direction. Thousands of people have taken this change in Miami-Dade County's Drug Court and have succeeded in building a drug free life. Miami-Dade County's Drug Court was established by State Attorney General Janet Reno prior to her appointment as US Attorney General.