

Harris County Drug Court Foundation: Strategic Plan

Adopted August 22, 2006

The purpose of this plan is to guide the process of constituting and launching the Harris County Drug Court Foundation. In its current form, this plan includes areas that have been completed by the Drug Court Foundation Strategic Planning Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

Executive summary

The Harris County Drug Court Foundation will raise community support for the Harris County Drug Court program, Success Through Addiction Recovery (STAR), along with money to pay for treatment of non-violent, non-trafficking drug dependent offenders through the STAR Program.

The plan for building the Foundation includes a Board of Directors, to consist of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than thirteen (13) members, whose main jobs will be governance, policy guidance, and money raising. A minimal staff, supported by volunteers, will aid in fundraising and the production of advocacy.

The Foundations efforts will be strictly limited to supporting the STAR Program.

The advocacy messages in support of the STAR Program, as an alternative to simple incarceration, will be as follows:

- É Drug court is a *more compassionate* way to treat non-violent, non-trafficking drug dependent offenders.
- É By addressing drug dependency among offenders, the treatment offered through the STAR Program leads to *reduced crime*.
- É Because treatment through the STAR Program costs less, drug court *prevents unnecessary waste of public money*.

The Foundation will add value to donations, by using a portion of them to attract more support (multiplying the donors' gifts), and offering rich information about the Program to donor communities.

Timelines, milestones, targets for milestone dates, and targets for money raised, are in the body of the Plan.

Mission and vision

Mission

The Harris County Drug Court Foundation exists to raise community support for the Harris County Drug Court program, Success Through Addiction Recovery (STAR). This support will be in the form of money, primarily in critical recovery support services such as; housing, medical/dental care, legal services and education. The funding may also help support staffing and infrastructure to increase capacity to subsidize substance abuse treatment for program participants in the form of advocacy and activism. This will be accomplished by building awareness of the

program and its benefits to both participants and the greater community. The Foundation does this work out of compassion for those caught in the web of substance abuse, their families, their communities, and out of a desire to support public policies that make wise use of tax dollars, while enhancing public safety.

Vision

A successful Foundation will have the following attributes:

- É An active Board of Directors that sets policy on the kind and amount of advocacy the Foundation conducts. The Board will be aware of political and fiscal environment within which the STAR Program operates, and pay attention to how the Program is performing its stated purposes, particularly in its stewardship of Foundation monetary support.
- É Committed donor supporters, raising money, with which the STAR Program may subsidize chemical dependence treatment for indigent participants, so that treatment funding will no longer be the factor limiting enrollment of non-violent offenders in the STAR Program.
- É Advocacy among diverse communities of religious faith, emphasizing a moral dimension to the work of the STAR program, centering around issues of justice and compassion.
- É Public advocacy, emphasizing the fiscal prudence of the STAR Program, as an alternative to "punishment only" approaches, that are more expensive in the short term, and less effective in the long term.

Organizational profile

Board of directors

The Board of Directors will guide the Foundation in its fundraising and advocacy activities, setting policy about the nature of advocacy, relationships with other organizations, and the internal budget of the Foundation, including costs of employing staff. Board members will personally participate in fundraising activities, both independently and in support of Foundation staff and volunteers.

As previously noted, the Board of Directors will consist of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than thirteen (13) members, to be recruited under the leadership of Mr. Elliot Gershenson, President and CEO of Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, who is acting in a consultative role to the Foundation.

Attributes of an ideal individual Board member will include:

- É Lives or works in Harris County, Texas.
- É Has a passionate desire to make Harris County better, safer from addiction-related crime, and seen to be blessed with compassionate, pragmatic leadership.
- É Is concerned about not wasting tax money.
- É Is able to absorb the technical arguments for treatment alternative approaches to illegal substance abuse.

- É Knows about politics in Harris County.
- É Is a good communicator and advocate.
- É Has substantial personal means. These may be either personal wealth, or the ability to raise donated funds by virtue of celebrity or influence with other donors.
- É Has sufficient interest and available time to fully participate in both governance and advocacy activity of the Foundation.
- É Understands good governance, financial stewardship, and public communications practices for non-profit organizations. Ideally has board of directors-level experience with successful non-profit organizations.

Not every Board member will be required to have every attribute, but these will be among the criteria used by the nominating committee in evaluating candidates for recruitment.

Desired attributes of the Board *as a whole* will include:

- É Diversity, including:
 - ó Men and women.
 - ó As wide an age range as possible, given considerations of desired personal means.
 - ó Representation of Houston's great diversity.
- É Comity, and a sense of shared purpose.
- É Agreement as to group decision making process.

The Foundation's Board will be composed of volunteers, who are not paid for their service. On the contrary, Board members will be expected to financially support the foundation with personal donations, either "given or gotten," as their personal means allow.

The Foundation Board will include the following ex-officio members who will not vote:

- É A member of the Harris County STAR Program administrative staff, ideally its Program Manager.
- É Once engaged, the President/CEO of the Foundation.

Staff

Initially, the Foundation will employ one paid staff member, with the bulk of the Foundation's activity to be performed by volunteers. The first staff member will be the *Executive Director/President/CEO*.

This executive will be accountable directly to the Board of Directors, serving at the pleasure of the Board. Main responsibilities will include:

- É Recruit and manage all other volunteer and paid staff.

- É Manage the expenditure of funds budgeted by the Board:
 - ó Relationships with outside contractors and service providers.
 - ó Purchasing of goods and services required to do the Foundation's business.
 - ó The transfer of donated funds to the Harris County STAR (Drug Court) Program.
- É Account for all expenditures, according to normally accepted standards of non-profit corporate accounting practice.
- É *With the personal support of Board members* meet potential and actual donors, tell the Foundation's story, and motivate donations to the Foundation.
- É Account for all donated resources (money, volunteer time, material goods, and services) received by the Foundation.

Advocacy approaches

The Foundation's advocacy will promote the Drug Court as a good thing for Harris County. Desirable outcomes for the Program will be:

- É Public opinion favors the Drug Court as the best way to deal with non-violent, non-trafficking drug offenders.
- É More public resources become available, with which to expand the STAR Program.

Scope of advocacy

It will be important, in all of the Foundation's activities, to limit the scope of its advocacy to promoting the Harris County Drug Court's Success Through Addiction Recovery (STAR) program.

Drug courts have their critics, including some in Harris County, that view them as "soft on crime." As a strategic matter, the Foundation will not be giving these critics extra ammunition with which to attack the STAR program, by broadening the scope of its advocacy.

Content of advocacy messages

Tactical details of the advocacy plan will reside in another document, the *Integrated Marketing and Communication Plan* (to be developed). Strategically, advocacy will strive to deliver three main messages.

Drug courts are more compassionate than purely punitive responses to addiction

Drug offenders who are brought before the Drug Court in Harris County are not accused of trafficking in drugs, or of violent offenses. Their chief crime is being addicted to illegal substances. Whether these offenders fell or jumped into the pit of addiction, they cannot, by themselves, escape. Simply throwing stones at them in the pit, even if it might deter others from coming near the pit, degrades us as individuals and as a society. As responsible people we have an ethical duty to be compassionate.

Drug court offers a chance for us to express the best side of ourselves, our principles, and, for those of us who are religious, our faith.

- *Message: We support Drug Court in Harris County, because our ethical and moral principles call us to do so.*

Drug courts make society safer from crime than purely punitive responses to illegal drug use.

Beyond the ethical duty to be compassionate, drug courts are supported by a utilitarian argument. If substance abuse/chemical dependency leads to crime (theft, drug trafficking, or violence), and mere incarceration or punishment does not stop substance abuse/chemical dependency, it follows that failing to treat substance abuse/chemical dependency will lead to theft, trafficking, or violence that might otherwise have been prevented. Even though treatment of substance abuse/chemical dependency is not 100% effective (few, if any, medical treatments are), every addict helped back onto a healthy way of life through the STAR Program represents one less potential criminal, and one or more fewer potential crime victims in the future.

- *Message: We support Drug Court in Harris County, because we care more about actually preventing drug-related crime than simply appearing tough on illegal drug use.*

Drug courts are less expensive to taxpayers than purely punitive responses to illegal drug use

The following information comes from the National Drug Court Institute:¹

A state taxpayer's return on the upfront investment in drug courts is substantial. A study of six drug courts in Washington State² reports that "a county's investment in drug courts pays off through lower crime rates among participants and graduates." The study estimates that the average drug court participant produces \$6,779 in benefits that stem from the estimated 13 percent reductions in recidivism. Those benefits are made up of \$3,759 in avoided criminal justice system costs paid by taxpayers and \$3,020 in avoided costs to victims. A total of \$1.74 in benefits for every dollar spent on drug court was realized.

Based on the Center for Court Innovation's study of New York drug courts, the State Court System estimates that \$254 million in incarceration costs were saved by diverting 18,000 non-violent drug offenders into treatment.³

In California, researchers have recently completed two studies that demonstrate significant cost-benefit savings. Both studies demonstrate a minimum savings of \$18 million per year through California drug courts. In fact, the studies concluded that California's investment of \$14 million, in combination with other funds, created a total cost avoidance of \$43.3 million over a two year period.^{4, 5} One of the two studies⁴ assessed the cost effectiveness of drug courts in terms of

¹ The National Drug Court Institute is a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, established in 1997 by the Office of [U.S.] National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President (web site www.ndci.org/courtfacts_benefits.html, accessed June 30, 2006)

² Barnoski, Robert, and Steve Aos. Washington State's Drug Courts for Adult Defendants: Outcome Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis. Washington State Institute for Public Policy www.wsipp.wa.gov, Document No. 03-03-1201, March, 2003.

³ Rempel, M., Fox-Kralstein, D., Cissner, A., Cohen, R., Labriola, M., Farole, D., Bader, A., & Magnani, M. (2003). The New York State adult drug court evaluation: Policies, participants and impacts. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.

⁴ Judicial Council of California, & the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. (2002, March). Drug court partnership: Final report. San Francisco, CA: Authors.

avoided incarceration costs and costs offset by participants' payment of fees and fines. A total of 425,014 jail days were avoided, with an averted cost of approximately \$26 million. A total of 227,894 prison days were avoided, with an averted cost of approximately \$16 million. Participants who completed a drug court program paid almost one million dollars in fees and fines imposed by the court.

The other study,⁵ of three adult drug courts in California, documented cost avoidance averaging \$200,000 annually per court per 100 participants. When projected statewide, these savings amount to \$18 million in cost avoidance per year assuming that 90 adult drug courts operate with 100 clients per year. Due to these studies and an analysis of prison days saved by drug courts, 58 percent of California's drug court funding is provided by a direct transfer of funds from the Department of Corrections budget.

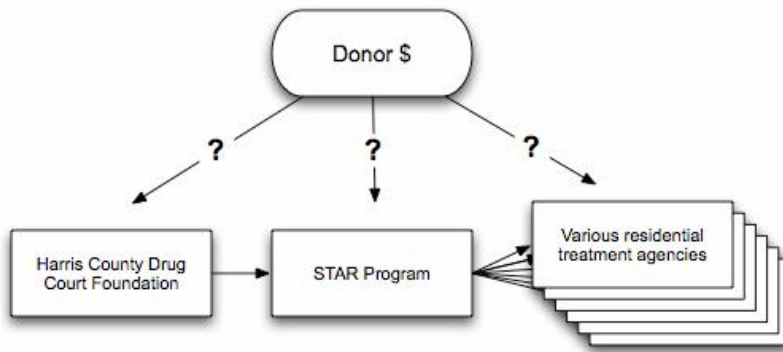
Whatever the other benefits of Drug Court over simple punishment may be in Harris County, treatment through the STAR program, even if it were entirely taxpayer funded, would be less of a burden on the taxpayers than merely punishing addicts through incarceration.

- Message: *We support Drug Court in Harris County, because it costs taxpayers less than simply locking up addicts without treatment.*

Value proposition

Foundation policies are strategically oriented to support good answers to the central question that any rational donor should have about supporting the Foundation:

Why give money to the Foundation, instead of giving it directly to the STAR Program, or the treatment organizations?



For the Foundation to make sense, it *must* offer clear answers to this question. Taken collectively, the answers form the *value proposition* for the Foundation:

- É Both the Foundation and the STAR Program do more than simply pass money through to the treatment agencies.

⁵ NPC Research, Inc., & Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial Council of California. (2002, October). California drug courts: A methodology for determining costs and avoided costs: Phase I: Building the methodology: Final report. Portland, OR: Authors.

- É The STAR Program adds value:
 - ó It ties the treatments to the Harris County Judicial system, imposing accountability on the clients (drug offenders) coming through the system, supporting their continued participation, and looking out for the interests of the public.
 - ó It imposes transparent standards on the treatment agencies, assuring the quality of the treatments, and reporting of client participation.
- É The Harris County Drug Court Foundation adds value for donors, beyond simply giving money to the STAR Program:
 - ó The Foundation takes a small portion of donated money, and uses it for advocacy and additional fundraising purposes, effectively *multiplying* donated gifts, in ways that the STAR Program itself, as a government agency, cannot do.
 - ó The Foundation's advocacy and educational work connects community groups (especially faith communities) to the value of their collective donations, in ways that the STAR Program itself cannot do.
 - ó The Foundation's *stewardship* policies and procedures return detailed information to donors, on how their money was used to support drug addiction treatment.

Value proposition-driven operational and stewardship policies

The *Mission and Vision Statements* lay out the goals of the Foundation, and describe what reaching them would look like. The *value proposition* describes reasons why donors would want to support the Foundation in its mission and vision. The Foundation recognizes its strategic imperative to implement operational and stewardship policies and practices that support the value proposition.

Operating policies

Minimum, but effective staff

Because the Foundation's stewardship principles require transparency about the percentage of donated funds that are passed through to addiction treatment, the Foundation will always aim to keep staff headcount and personnel costs to a minimum, in order that the operating expenses as a percentage of the Foundation's revenue, may be kept low. Growth in personnel expenses will be balanced by expected revenue growth, so that costs as a percentage of revenue do not increase.

- Driving principle: Foundation expenses will be kept to a limited percentage of revenue, so that the Foundation is viewed as an efficient way to transfer funds to the STAR Program for treatment of addiction.

Rich information stream for donors and target communities

The Foundation will make a point of continuous advocacy and accounting for its impacts on the drug court issue. Donors will get to see how their gifts work to make the lives of addicts better and more productive, make their community safer from crime, and save tax money that would have been wasted on simple incarceration.

When public policy decisions (legislative actions, elective candidate positions, and other public processes) that affect the STAR Program are debated, donors will be provided timely information

about how to make their views known, and how to inform their communities about opportunities for political support.

The Foundation will maintain an informative, interesting, and frequently refreshed web site that includes opportunities for readers to donate, and be involved in advocacy and support for the Foundation and STAR Program. Consideration will be given to using information about site reader interests to guide the presentation of content and follow-up electronic solicitations. Methodology for this sort of information tailoring will be proposed in the *Integrated Marketing and Communication Plan* (to be developed).

- Driving principle: Working with the Foundation is the most informative and satisfying way to support the STAR Program.

Stewardship policies

The Foundation will maintain proper accounting records, and require records from the Harris County STAR Program. The following matrices will be developed once the new Board of Directors has been put in place:

- É For the average dollar donated in each accounting period:
 - ó Cents spent on Foundation personnel.
 - ó Cents spent on Foundation non-personnel expenses, including fundraising and advocacy activities.
 - ó Cents spent on Harris County STAR Program administrative overhead (may be zero).
 - ó Cents spent on drug addiction treatment.
- É Dollars raised in each accounting period:
 - ó Unrestricted dollars from individual donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).
 - ó Unrestricted dollars from for-profit corporations (include number of donors, range, and median gift/corporate donor).
 - ó Unrestricted dollars from secular non-profit corporate and foundation donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).
 - ó Unrestricted dollars from faith community donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).
 - ó Restricted dollars from individual donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).
 - ó Restricted dollars from for-profit corporations (include number of donors, range, and median gift/corporate donor).
 - ó Restricted dollars from secular non-profit corporate and foundation donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).

- ó Restricted dollars from faith community donors (include number of donors, range, and median gift/donor).
- É List of all donors who have given permission to be disclosed.
- Driving principle: Supporting drug court through the Foundation must be a prudent, efficient way of making the world better, in good company with other smart donors.

Fundraising approaches

Tactical details of fundraising will depend on the specific individuals being asked to donate, and the specific individuals on the Board. Fundraising activities will be coordinated with specific public advocacy events, further defined in the *Integrated Marketing and Communication Plan* (to be developed by the newly elected Board of Directors).

Fundraising will be conducted on both an individual level, by and among Board members, and by appeals to groups, with whom the advocacy messages are expected to resonate. Board members will be expected to do the “heavy lifting” work of fundraising, while, at the same time, assuring excellent stewardship of donated funds through their governance and policy guidance.

Fundraising target groups

Specific presentations of the Foundation’s advocacy messages will be crafted to appeal to particular categories of potential donors. These categories will include the following:

- É *Friends, associates, and professional colleagues of Board members.* Aspects of the advocacy message that best resonate with the corresponding Board members will be emphasized, to support the Board members’ fundraising.
- É *Faith communities.* For members of faith communities, supporting the Foundation will be presented as a way of serving out their religious obligation to be compassionate, and a way to put religious faith into action. The message that Drug Court serves a moral imperative will be prominent.
- É *Corporations.* Potential corporate sponsors will be appealed to with a presentation based on relationships with Board members, or an opportunity to cultivate the appearance of being a “good corporate citizen,” based on the advocacy messages.
- É *Taxpayer interest and “good government” advocacy groups.* Public policy interest and political action groups will be appealed to on the basis of crime reduction and good fiscal policy.

Barriers to success

Key identified barriers to success will be the following:

- É Lack of awareness about the Harris County Drug Court program and Foundation among the donor public. This will be addressed by public advocacy.

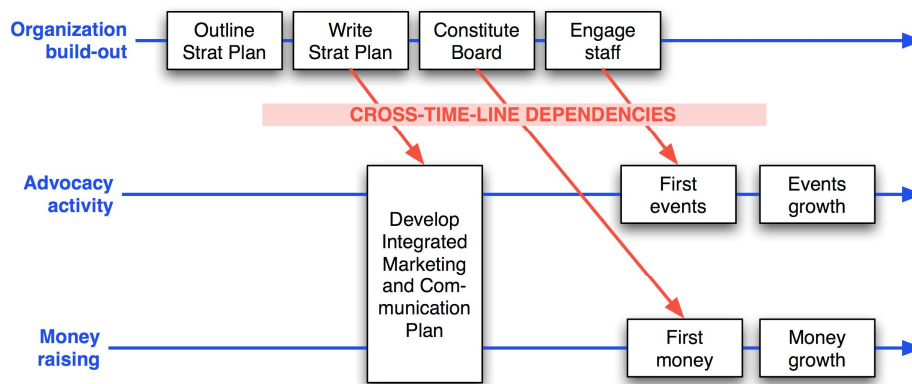
Strategic goals

The goals set out in the Mission and Vision Statements are qualitative. They refer to “what,” but not “when,” and not “how much.” This section sets out specific targets for achievement of the Vision.

Date milestones

The end goals of the Foundation are growing programs of advocacy events and money donation. Target dates refer to milestones along a set of timelines, including dependencies, diagrammed here.

Milestones along three time lines



Target dates are as follows:

- Adoption of this *Strategic Plan*: August 22, 2006
- Completion of *Integrated Marketing and Communication Plan*: Early 2007
- Seating of a *Board of Directors*: December, 2007
- Start date of *Executive Director* (and any other initial staff): January 1, 2007
- First *advocacy event*: Mid-November 2006
- First *money donation* to new Foundation: Mid-November 2006

Fundraising objectives

Fundraising targets are necessary, but should be interpreted with care, given that raising money for the Foundation involves pioneering in unknown territory. Once seated, the new Board will set the following goals and targets:

- Unrestricted dollars raised in first six months after seating the Board: **ÉDECISION AÉ**
- Total dollars raised in first six months after seating the Board: **ÉDECISION BÉ**
- Unrestricted dollars raised in first year after seating the Board: **ÉDECISION CÉ**
- Total dollars raised in first year after seating the Board: **ÉDECISION DÉ**