



# Drug offenders celebrate graduation instead of enduring prison sentence

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Graduation (Source: Tucson News Now)

TUCSON, AZ (Tucson News Now) -

It's not quite graduation season, but several proud graduates will celebrate with family and friends Wednesday night, April 5, in Pima County.

For the first time, two programs that provide an alternative to jail time for drug offenders will hold their graduations together.

Six graduates of Superior Court's Drug Court and Pima County Attorney's Office Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison will wrap up their programs on April 5 at the court's training center.

To enter Drug Court, an individual enters a plea agreement and starts the program within six months of his or her arrest. Treatment, court appearances, counseling and fees are all part of the minimum one-year program, according to a release from Superior Court. The program is supported by an annual grant by state lawmakers through the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts.

The Pima County Attorney's Office started Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison in 2011. DTAP partners with service providers in southern Arizona to offer non-violent repeat drug offenders with residential treatment and recovery support.

The three-year program is supported by a mix of state money and grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and a Behavioral Treatment Court Collaboratives program.

Graduates of both programs have attended court review hearings every two weeks, according to a release from the court.

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