



# Case Study

## Cascade County Treatment Courts Address Alcohol Offenses With Compassion and Technology

### HIGHLIGHTS OF SUCCESS

- With nearly 105 participants at any given time, Cascade County’s drug treatment courts are the largest in Montana.
- 97.4% of SCRAM CAM clients are sober and compliant and 94% of Remote Breath tests are taken and passed on time.
- In the past four years, Cascade County’s treatment courts have received \$2.1 million in public and private grants.

### LOCATION

Cascade County, Montana

### CATEGORIES

DUI/DWI  
Probation

### MONITORING SOLUTIONS



SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring®



SCRAM Remote Breath®



SCRAM GPS®

### Program History

In the plains of north central Montana, the Missouri and Sun Rivers converge at the city of Great Falls, the county seat of Cascade County. It’s here in the heart of Big Sky Country that District Judge Gregory G. Pinski is addressing serious and unique needs within his community created by drug and alcohol abuse, such as DUIs, criminal recidivism, unemployment, and homelessness.

Through a variety of treatment courts—adult, veterans, and juvenile—Cascade County provides comprehensive, court-supervised treatment programs for offenders suffering from substance use disorders and mental health conditions. The goal of these drug courts is simple: offenders must adhere to treatment plans and requirements before graduating and earning a chance to rebuild their life.

### How is SCRAM Technology Used?

With nearly 105 participants at any given time, Cascade County’s drug treatment courts are the largest in Montana. The voluntary program consists of five phases that take 12–18 months to complete.

As participants progress through the phases, the requirements of the program change and include weekly meetings with a probation officer, weekly drug tests, continuous alcohol monitoring, treatment groups, mental health appointments, and judicial reviews—all aimed at providing accountability.

Electronic monitoring helps to deter clients from reoffending while in the program. Cascade County utilizes SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring® (SCRAM CAM®), SCRAM Remote Breath®, and SCRAM GPS® to ensure cooperation and true behavior change. With multiple monitoring options, the county is able to provide supervision appropriate for the severity of the offense and scale monitoring needs based on compliance or violations.

Nearly all clients with a felony DUI or those that indicate an alcohol abuse disorder are automatically placed on alcohol monitoring. “Montana is one of the highest states for DUIs and we often have felony DUI cases that we’re focused on,” Judge Pinski says. “Alcohol remains the most commonly abused drug and almost everyone who comes into our drug court and veterans court is placed on alcohol monitoring for at least 90 days.”



Judge Pinski also requires anyone who relapses while in the program to be placed back on monitoring. Monitoring helps to ensure community safety while the program's participants receive the treatment they need.

Location monitoring also plays an integral role in Cascade County's treatment plans for offenders. SCRAM GPS has become an essential tool, helping prosecutors manage offenders who are out so they can be more extensively screened for the program. Simply knowing they are being monitored helps deter some of their bad choices.

"Our ability to put people on GPS monitoring is such a motivating compliance tool for the participants in our program," Judge Pinski adds.

## Funding With Grants

Prior to 2013, Cascade County utilized electronic monitoring infrequently, primarily due to costs. Since then, Judge Pinski has undertaken the responsibility of obtaining substantial grant funding to both implement and expand the county's treatment courts. The programs have received \$2.1 million in public and private grants over a four-year period, allowing Cascade County to expand services, including alcohol and GPS monitoring, to more participants.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance has provided two \$300,000 implementation grants: one for the veteran's treatment court and one for the Native American program within the adult drug treatment court. Cascade County has also received two \$975,000 grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand the drug treatment and veteran's treatment courts. In addition, Cascade County also receives an annual allocation from the local United Way, ranging from \$20,000 to \$40,000.

This public and private investment is a recognition of the courts' value and strength and signifies the support the programs have from the larger community.

## Outcomes

SCRAM CAM, SCRAM Remote Breath, and SCRAM GPS are helping ensure



Cascade County Courthouse in Great Falls, MT

***"Monitoring is critical for the success of the participant's treatment, but it's also critical for public safety and making sure that we maintain the integrity of our program."***

***- Judge Gregory G. Pinski, Cascade County District Court***

participants achieve the goals set by the court: to be sober, to be crime free, to address mental health issues, to find a safe place to live, and to maintain employment.

With a high-risk, high-need population, electronic monitoring has provided more effective treatment services by holding offenders accountable for their choices and actions. "Monitoring is critical for the success of the participant's treatment, but it's also critical for public safety and making sure that we maintain the integrity of our program," Judge Pinski says.

Program data shows that 97.4% of SCRAM CAM clients are sober and compliant while 94% of Remote Breath tests are taken on time and passed. On average, GPS clients in Cascade County are monitored for 50 days but there is the option for monitoring them up to 180 days.

The versatility that different types of monitoring options provide is an asset to a program like Cascade County's. "We've had some people in our veteran's court that are on National Guard duty and they can't wear the CAM bracelet because of

their combat boots," Judge Pinski says. "So, we'll put them on Remote Breath. If we have somebody who's on Remote Breath and they miss blows, then take that option off the table and we put them on CAM. We are really able to be flexible."

The program is not easy, and reaching graduation is a hard-earned process. "I tell people when I sentence them into the program, if they want the easy way out, they should just go to prison and do their time," Judge Pinski says. "If they want to be held accountable and be responsible for their decisions, this is the program for them."