

Case Study: Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Court

Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Court SCRAM CAM Program Targets Repeat Offenders

DUI
Probation
Jail Alternative

Lower Brule, SD – The Lower Brule Sioux Reservation is located along a stretch of the Missouri River in central South Dakota, and the tribe is one of nine in the state. The Lower Brule Sioux are members of the Sicangu bands of the Lakota Tribe and are governed by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council. The median household income is less than \$19,000, about half the median for the rest of South Dakota.

In 2012, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe had over 1,000 criminal cases, with at least 98% being alcohol/drug related. Many of these cases are adjudicated by the Lower Brule Tribal Court. To better address the prevalence of alcohol-related crime, the court began using SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM CAM) in 2012.

How is SCRAM CAM Being Used?

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe has a total of 40 SCRAM CAM bracelets, five of which are assigned to juvenile probation.

The court uses SCRAM CAM primarily to manage repeat offenders and those who reoffend while on probation. Some defendants ask to be placed on SCRAM CAM. The court's prosecutor, probation officer, and public defender can also refer people to be placed on a bracelet.

Participants are placed on SCRAM CAM for an average of 159 days. In keeping with best-practices, this period helps support extended sobriety, which is more likely to lead to long-term behavior change. When possible, the court couples the timing of an offender's SCRAM CAM use with the outpatient treatment offered in Lower Brule. All adult defendants are required to complete a substance abuse evaluation and follow all treatment recommendations. The court is dedicated to serving the best interests of community members and uses a probation supervision model that focuses on helping the individual.

Highlights of Success

- Use of SCRAM CAM saved the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Court nearly \$1.3 million in incarceration costs in 2013 alone.
- Since 2012, SCRAM CAM has ensured over 21,400 Sober Days for repeat alcohol-involved offenders.
- The court pairs SCRAM CAM use with required treatment to support long-term behavior change.

SOBER DAYS: 97.9%

What are
Sober Days?

Outcomes

SCRAM CAM is helping the Lower Brule Tribal Court save money, provide effective alternatives to incarceration, and keep repeat alcohol-offenders sober. Judge Lorrie Miner has served as a judge in Indian Country since 2000 and presides over the Lower Brule Tribal Court. She notes, "In a single year, more than half of my SCRAM clients were on the system in lieu of jail, for 15,222 days of suspended jail time. The cost savings to BIA Corrections was nearly \$1.3 million dollars. In one year. SCRAM works!"

One defendant described SCRAM as "having Judge Miner strapped to your ankle all day." Another thanked Judge Miner for keeping her on SCRAM CAM as it truly kept her from drinking over the holidays. The bracelet made her stop, pause, and decide not to drink.

