



Expanding the Reach of Family Drug Courts



OJJDP

Statewide System Reform Program



The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and Center for Children and Family Futures (CCFF) announced the selection of five States who received funding under the Family Drug Court (FDC) Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP).

The five SSRP awardees are:

- Alabama Administrative Office of Courts
- New York State Unified Court system
- Colorado Judicial Department
- Judicial Branch of Iowa
- Supreme Court of Ohio

With over 360 FDCs nationwide serving approximately 19,000 families, FDCs are a growing response to the problem of families affected by parental substance abuse and child abuse and neglect. FDCs at the individual project level have shown they are effective in achieving child welfare and treatment outcomes superior to those achieved by the core collaborative partners—child welfare, treatment and the courts—operating without key FDC components. These outcomes include higher rates of parental participation in substance abuse treatment;

longer stays in substance abuse treatment; higher rates of family reunification; shorter lengths of stay in foster care for children; and less recurrence of maltreatment. This research base strongly supports the move towards institutionalizing the principles and methods of FDCs more broadly across state systems.

The purpose of this state system reform effort is to:

- Expand FDCs' scale (i.e., penetration rate of the larger child welfare and substance abuse treatment systems) and scope (i.e., range of comprehensive services for families)
- Infuse effective FDC practices to serve more families in the child welfare system affected by parental substance use disorders

CCFF will provide In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) to the awardees to produce a first-year plan and begin implementation in the second year. The goal of the two-year IDTA is the formation of a multi-year (5 year) strategic plan to implement state-, county- or jurisdiction-wide reform of courts' handling of cases involving children and parents in the family court docket who are affected by substance use and co-occurring disorders.

For more information please visit: www.cffutures.org or email: fdc@cffutures.org

STATEWIDE SYSTEM REFORM PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of Statewide System Reform (SSRP) is to:

1. implement and institutionalize effective Family Drug Court (FDC) practices in the larger state-level child welfare, substance use disorder treatment, and court systems.
2. Ensure families affected by substance use disorders and involved with child welfare have access to a comprehensive array of services.
3. Strengthen cross-system collaboration at the state and local level.

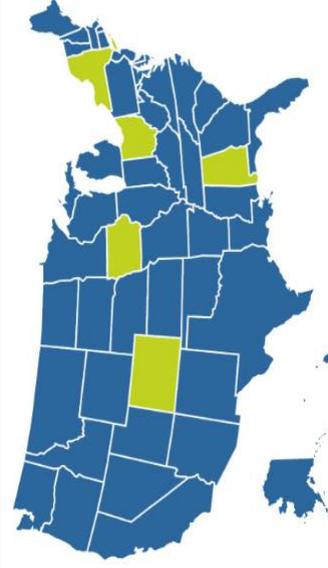
SYSTEMS CHANGE

A permanent shift in doing business that relies on strengthening **relationships** across systems and within the community to secure needed **resources** to achieve better **results** and outcomes for all children and families affected by substance use disorders.



2014 AWARDEES: AL, CO, IA, OH and NY

2016 AWARDEE: Guam (GU)



KEY SUCCESSSES

➤ **2014 Awardees worked to develop organizational structures to manage their planning processes** – Each state’s governance structure includes an Oversight or Executive Committee, Core Planning Team or Steering Committee, and workgroups charged with specific tasks to advance system reform efforts.

➤ **2014 Awardees are piloting the system reform strategies** – Selected pilots sites in all states have implemented universal screening in their jurisdictions and are testing strategies including the timing of administration and methods for data collection and follow-up

➤ **2014 Awardees have established workgroups focusing on data systems** – Efforts on data systems range from securing a data vendor, data mapping across systems, and identifying existing data sources and gaps in data collection

EARLY LESSONS

1 LEADERSHIP

Effective systems change requires the right leadership at all levels to spark progress. The SSRP lessons include CCFE identifying the following competencies among project directors and managers that have led to more successful advancements of the initiative:

- Leads with a shared vision and motivates partners in the process
- Possesses knowledge and expertise in the areas of substance use disorder treatment, child welfare, and court systems
- Builds and strengthens existing partnerships
- Bolsters local sites through guidance, structure, and support
- Identifies and solves unnecessary policy barriers
- Prioritizes system reform activities and/or aligns efforts with competing initiatives
- Understands the cultural context of partner agencies and possesses effective communication skills; politically savvy
- Considers macro and micro-level approaches
- Ensures a model for sustainable change

2 SYSTEMS CHANGES AS A PARADIGM SHIFT

While Awardees recognize systems change is a multi-year process; there may be a tendency for a partner agency or local site to expect immediate outcomes. Therefore, SSRP leadership must be consistent and intentional in their messaging to regard systems change as a culture shift, emphasizing that ample time is required for individuals within systems to become aware and clearly understand the purpose, modify existing attitudes and beliefs, adopt and apply new practices, and challenge the status quo.

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3 STATES’ CAPACITY AND STRUCTURE TO SERVE LOCAL PILOT SITES

The level of effort needed to integrate the identified practices for all child welfare cases affected by substance use disorders requires resources **and** a structure in place to support and guide each community’s efforts. An approach that has been particularly effective in bolstering local jurisdictions is the assignment of a state-level liaison to each site. The liaison offers guidance and support through monthly calls or in-person meetings, and attempts to address and resolve barriers as they emerge.

4 SSRP AS MULTI-PARTNER INITIATIVE

Substantial collaboration, establishment of trust, and mutual investment across agencies is an essential element to effectively achieve the objectives of statewide system reform. Several awardees built on experience from previous collaborative efforts and were able to quickly establish effective governance structures and garner cross-system support. Contributing factors in garnering greater engagement include Awardees’ ability to: 1) listen without judgement; 2) respond to questions and address concerns; and, 3) a willingness to understand the other systems’ perspective. Giving partners the time and space to work through emerging issues and providing the opportunity for partner agencies to take the lead or have an active role strengthens collaborative buy-in and cultivates mutual respect.

5 DATA SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION-SHARING CAPACITY

State and local level leadership must prioritize information and data sharing to assist families involved with child welfare and affected by substance use disorders achieve positive outcomes. Data collection at the local level is imperative to capture the infusion strategies tested, document cross-site activities, identify if particular factors were critical to success or hindered reform efforts, and understand the key challenges and policy barriers. While systems are in place to collect local-level data through online portals or databases, Awardees will need to develop cross-system linkages to identify service gaps, manage resources, monitor family and treatment outcomes, and validate if processes work as intended.