



Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

FAMILY DRUG COURT

PERFORMANCE REPORT

July–December 2021

WORKING FOR YOUTH JUSTICE AND SAFETY

VISION STATEMENT

OJJDP envisions a nation where our children are free from crime and violence. If they come into contact with the justice system, the contact should be rare, fair, and beneficial to them.

MISSION STATEMENT

OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to youth delinquency and victimization. The Office helps states, localities, and tribes develop effective and equitable juvenile justice systems that create safer communities and empower youth to lead productive lives.

This report was produced by Booz Allen Hamilton under contract number GS-00F-008DA, awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. It is important to note that accurate data rely on correct data tracking and entry by the grantees and those agencies reporting to grantees, as such the data and analysis findings provided reflect the information as reported. These analytical findings make no claims of causation or demonstrate evidence of program effectiveness, and, as with all performance data, readers must use caution when interpreting the results, as factors other than the program may have contributed to the performance outcomes reported.

Data during the July to December 2021 activity period was impacted by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Grantees and service providers experienced a disruption to services, which raised obstacles for service delivery and data collection. The following data reflect services adapted to and provided during the Covid-19 pandemic.

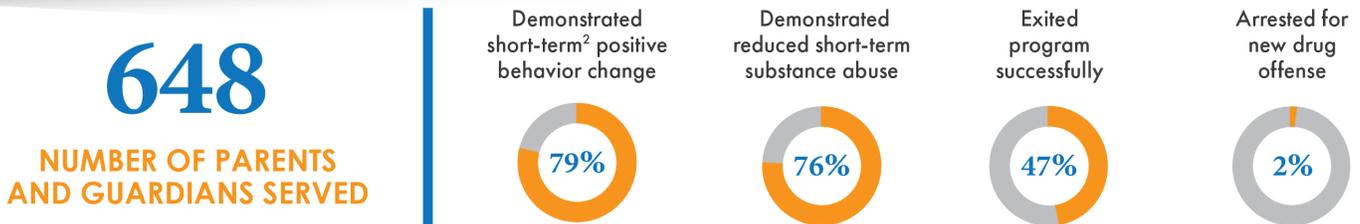
INTRODUCTION

The Family Drug Court (FDC) program, administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), supports specialized courts within the justice system that handle child abuse and neglect cases which are caused by the child’s parents or guardians with substance use disorders.

FDCs act as alternatives to traditional family courts by using a wrap-around, family-centered approach to address parents’ or guardians’ substance use disorders within the court and child welfare systems. FDCs provide comprehensive services to parents, guardians, and families to improve the well-being of children while responding to the complex needs of parents and guardians with substance use disorders. FDC programs aim to guarantee child safety and prevent recidivism by providing stable parental recovery and support services for each family member.

OJJDP requires grantees to report on performance measures to demonstrate whether their FDC program achieved its goals and to improve program and policy decisions. This report describes FDC program activities occurring between July and December 2021 and highlights OJJDP-funded grantee results¹.

Highlights



OVERVIEW OF AWARD INFORMATION

During the July–December 2021 activity period, OJJDP’s FDC program funded 27 awards, 96 percent of which completed their reporting requirements (Figure 1). 26 of the 27 awards were operational (i.e., provided services during the activity period) and reported performance data on their grant activities. The total available OJJDP funding for FDC programs exceeded \$18 million.³

Figure 1. Award Details



¹ Accurate data rely on accurate data entry by grantees. The data included in this document reflect the information entered by OJJDP Research and Evaluation grantees.
² Short term includes parents or guardians tracked for the behavior of interest who received services during the activity period and parents or guardians who exited the program during the activity period.
³ The funding amount represents the total amount awarded by OJJDP to those grantees that were operational during the activity period and does not account for the amount of funding spent during the activity period.
⁴ Total federal fund amount \$18,319,527

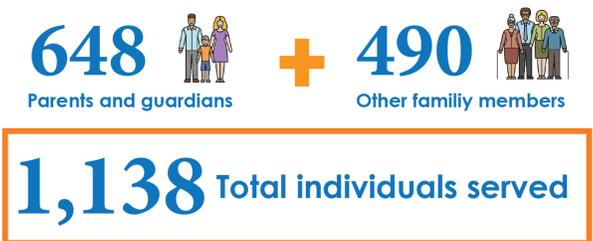
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

OJJDP encourages grantees to use evidence-based practices and programs. Evidence-based programs and practices include program models shown through rigorous evaluation and replication to be effective at preventing or reducing juvenile delinquency or related risk factors. Evidence-based practices, used in conjunction with FDC programs, encourage the use of screening and assessment tools, promote interagency collaboration, and utilize family-centered approaches.⁵ During the July–December 2021 activity period, 92 percent of awards used one or more evidence-based program(s) or practice(s).

INDIVIDUALS SERVED

During the July–December 2021 activity period, FDC grantees served a total of 1,138 individuals, including 648 parents or guardians and 490 other family members (Figure 2). Thirty-six percent of the parents or guardians served by FDC programs ($n = 235$) received services for the first time in the life of the award.

Figure 2. Individuals Served



SERVICES PROVIDED

FDCs work collaboratively with service providers to coordinate substance abuse treatment and other services for eligible parents or guardians to help them become responsible caregivers. In addition to youth, family members of enrolled parents or guardians may also receive services. During the July–December 2021 activity period, 550 parents or guardians and 39 additional family members received substance abuse treatment and counseling (Figure 3). Grantees provided mental health services to 434 parents or guardians and 92 additional family members. Grantees helped 106 parents or guardians and 24 additional family members successfully find housing. Grantees also provided parenting education, trauma, legal, employment, and transportation services to 353 parents or guardians and 122 additional family members.

Figure 3. Services Provided to Families



⁵ Children and Families Futures. 2013 rev 2015. *Guidance to States: Recommendations for Developing Family Drug Court Guidelines*. Prepared for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. <http://www.cffutures.org/files/publications/FDC-Guidelines.pdf>.

TARGET BEHAVIORS

To measure program impact, FDC programs report on parents’ or guardians’ behavior changes in several targeted areas. As shown in Figure 4, the largest short-term improvement among parents or guardians was among job skills, occupational skill training, prosocial behavior, and community involvement during the July–December 2021 activity period. Of those monitored for substance use, 76 percent reduced substance use in the short term. Overall, 79 percent of parents or guardians showed a behavioral improvement in the short term.

Figure 4. Short-Term Outcome Percentages for the Specified Target Behaviors



PARENTS OR GUARDIANS SUCCESSFULLY EXITING

Each FDC creates and defines the requirements for parents or guardians to successfully complete the program. Participants who fulfilled all program obligations and requirements “successfully exited,” while those who failed to complete the requirements, such as those who were expelled or left voluntarily, are considered to have “unsuccessfully exited” the program. Of the 183 parents or guardians who exited the program during the July–December 2021 activity period, grantees reported that 47 percent successfully exited (Figure 5). Of those parents or guardians that eventually left the program, the enrolled parents or guardians remained in the program for an average of 252 days, regardless of their reason for leaving.

Figure 5. Percent of Parents or Guardians Exiting Successfully



⁶ Others includes social competence, school attendance, grade point average (GPA), General Education Development (GED), high school completion, employment status, gang resistance, and cultural skill building.

DRUG-RELATED RECIDIVISM

To determine the drug-related recidivism rate, grantees report the number of parents or guardians arrested for a new drug offense during the activity period. Of parents or guardians monitored (during the activity period or up to 6 months after exiting), 2 percent were arrested for a new drug offense in the short term. Recidivism was higher among parents or guardians in the long term,⁷ with 10 percent of participants arrested for a new drug offense during the activity period (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6. Short-term Drug-related Recidivism



Figure 7. Long-term Drug-related Recidivism

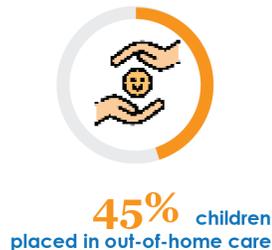


CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES

The goal of FDCs is to maintain or restore a parent’s custody of their child(ren). When successful, FDCs result in family reunification. However, if reunification is not in the child’s best interest, FDCs develop alternative placement plans for children. Of the 806 children supported by FDCs during the July-December 2021 activity period, grantees placed 363 in out-of-home care and reunited 115 children⁸ with their parents (figure 8). On average, children remained in out-of-home care for 236 days. FDCs terminated parental rights for 1 percent of parents or guardians enrolled in an FDC during the activity period ($n = 5$).

Figure 8. Child Welfare Outcomes

806
CHILDREN
SERVED



⁷ Long term includes parents or guardians tracked for the behavior of interest who exited the program 6–12 months before the start of the activity period.

⁸ Number of children reunited with their parents may or may not represent the number children who were removed from their parents and then reunited during this activity period.

CONCLUSION

FDCs offer specialized responses to cases of child abuse and neglect that involve parental substance abuse. Their purpose is to ensure childrens' safety and well-being while providing parents or guardians with treatment and other services needed to overcome substance use disorders and improve parenting skills. Compared to traditional family courts, FDC outcomes have shown significantly higher rates of parents' or guardians' participation in substance abuse treatment; higher rates of family reunification; and reduced reoccurrences of child abuse and neglect.⁹ The data reported by OJJDP's FDC grantees reinforce the research findings, showing a measurable impact on the lives of the families served.

OJJDP funding supported 27 awards in implementing, expanding, or enhancing FDC programs during the July–December 2021 activity period. Grantees enrolled 648 parents or guardians in an FDC program during the activity period, while providing another 490 family members with substance use, mental health, housing, and other services. Parents or guardians involved in an FDC program showed improvement in several areas, job skills, occupational skill training, prosocial behavior, and community involvement. Ninety-three percent of parents or guardians exhibited the desired change in family relationship and 76 percent of the parents or guardians reduced substance use during the activity period. Forty-seven percent of parents or guardians successfully exited the FDC program, completing all program requirements. Grantees were especially successful at reducing new drug arrests during this activity period: 98 percent of parents or guardians did not experience an arrest for a new drug offense in the short term. In addition to serving parents or guardians, grantees served 806 children whose parents or guardians were involved in an FDC. FDCs placed 45 percent of children in out-of-home care during the activity period; those children remained in out-of-home care for an average of 236 days. These results indicate the success of FDCs at maintaining the safety and well-being of children and families while supporting parents or guardians with their substance use disorders.

⁹ *Development Services Group, Inc. 2016. Family Drug Courts. Literature Review. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family_Drug_Courts.pdf.*