



Office of Juvenile Justice  
and Delinquency Prevention

# TRIBAL HEALING TO WELLNESS COURTS

## PERFORMANCE REPORT

### January-June 2020

**ENHANCING SAFETY • ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY • EMPOWERING YOUTH**

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# INTRODUCTION

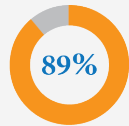
The Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts (THWC) program, administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), enhances the capacity of tribal courts to respond to substance use disorders of tribal youth under the age of 21. THWC is a specialized, problem-solving court, which uses the juvenile drug court framework to integrate traditional tribal healing techniques with western substance use treatment. The primary goals of the THWC program include the development of comprehensive, culturally appropriate intervention services for at-risk tribal youth.<sup>1</sup> THWC grantees create, expand, and strengthen culturally specific approaches within their local juvenile justice system.

OJJDP requires grantees to report youth served, target behaviors, offending, and reoffending outcomes. THWC grantees also report planning activities conducted during their first year of receiving their award; planning activities include training activities and partnership development.

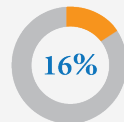
## Highlights

**330**  
NUMBER OF  
YOUTH SERVED

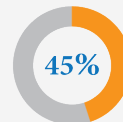
Youth Demonstrating  
Positive Behavior  
Change



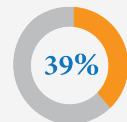
Youth  
Offending



Youth  
Reoffending



Awards Implementing  
an Evidence-based  
Program



## OVERVIEW OF AWARD INFORMATION

During the January–June 2020 activity period, OJJDP’s THWC program funded 36 awards with 77 percent of awards completing their reporting requirements (see figure 1). Twenty-eight THWC awards were operational (expending grant funds during the period). The total available funding during the period exceeded \$9 million (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Award Details



<sup>1</sup> See *Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts: Treatment Guidelines*  
[http://www.wellnesscourts.org/files/Treatment%20Guide%202nd%20ed\\_%202017.pdf](http://www.wellnesscourts.org/files/Treatment%20Guide%202nd%20ed_%202017.pdf).

## EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

OJJDP encourages grantees to use evidence-based programs shown, through rigorous evaluation and replication, to be effective at preventing or reducing juvenile delinquency or related risk factors. THWC grantees implement evidence-based programs and practices that utilize culturally based strategies to address individual youth needs.<sup>2</sup> During the January–June 2020 activity period, 39 percent of THWC awards used one or more evidence-based program or practice.

## YOUTH AND FAMILIES SERVED

THWC grantees are required to report on the number of youth and families served during each activity period. During the January–June 2020 activity period, THWC program grantees served a total of 542 youth and families. Sixty-one percent of individual grantees served were youth ( $n = 330$ ), while 39 percent of those served were family members ( $n = 212$ ).

**330**

Number of Youth Served

## PROGRAM YOUTH OFFENSES AND RECIDIVISM

Grantees report short-term<sup>3</sup> data for program youth who offend and recidivate to gauge the program’s success at reducing delinquency and improving outcomes for program participants. During the January–June 2020 activity period, 16 percent of the youth who were tracked offended in the short term (see figure 2), and 45 percent of tracked youth reoffended in the short term (see figure 2). This represents a 13 percent decrease in youths offending when compared to the previous reporting period.<sup>4</sup>

*Figure 2. Short-Term Offending and Reoffending Data*

**16%** of Program Youth Tracked **OFFENDED**

20/124

**45%** of Program Youth Tracked **REOFFENDED**

15/33

## TARGET BEHAVIORS

Youth participating in THWC programs are tracked for short-term behavior changes to measure the program’s impact on performance in several targeted areas, such as substance use, school attendance, social behaviors, and cultural skill building. During the January–June 2020 activity period, 100 percent of tracked youth demonstrated the most improvement in prosocial behavior, antisocial behavior, community involvement, social competence, job skills, GED, and high school completion (see figure 3). Overall, 89 percent of program youth exhibited a desired change in a targeted behavior.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wellnesscourts.org/files/Tribal%20Healing%20to%20Wellness%20Courts%20The%20Key%20Components.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Short term includes youth tracked for the behavior of interest who received services during the activity period or youth who exited during the activity period.

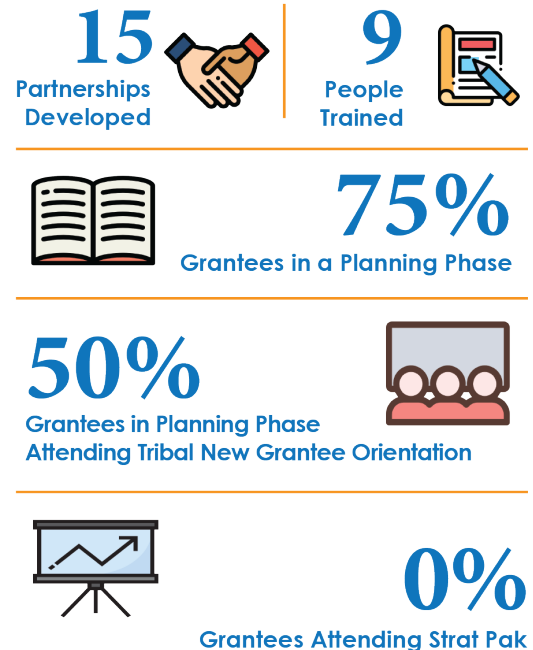
<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts January–June 2019*.

Figure 3. Outcome Percentages for the Specified Target Behaviors



## PLANNING YEAR ACTIVITIES

OJJDP requires THWC grantees to engage in program planning activities during the start of their award. The planning phase supports grantees through a strategic planning process designed to identify program challenges and strategies when developing their mission, organizational structure, and action plan. This process allows them to create necessary partnerships for program implementation and sustainability. During the January–June 2020, 14 percent of grantees engaged in planning activities. Collectively, grantees in this planning phase developed 15 new partnerships and trained 9 people. During this phase, grantees attend Strat Pak strategic planning sessions.<sup>6</sup> At Strat Pak, grantees develop a comprehensive plan, which includes a mission and vision statement, logic model, the establishment of an advisory board, and sustainability planning. During the activity period, of the four grantees invited, zero percent attended Strat Pak. Additionally, 50 percent of grantees in the planning phase attended OJJDP’s Tribal New Grantee Orientation.



<sup>5</sup> Other target behaviors include grade point average, gang resistances, GED, family functioning, antisocial behavior, and substance use.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/tribal/file/818046/download>

## CONCLUSION

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OJJDP's THWC grant program seeks to strengthen the capacity of tribal courts by applying the Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court model to develop comprehensive frameworks for addressing substance use and other delinquent issues among at-risk and court-involved tribal youth. The THWC uses the drug court model and incorporates concepts of wellness to address the specific substance use needs of individual tribal youth.

OJJDP recognizes that tribes present varying challenges and strengths, which impact their ability to respond to the needs of tribal youth. Tribes use OJJDP funds to expand culturally appropriate approaches to provide prevention and intervention services for at-risk and court-involved tribal youth. The primary goals of the THWC program are to enhance the capacity of tribal courts to respond to the substance use issues of at-risk and court-involved tribal youth.

During the January–June 2020 activity period, 28 operational THWC awards served a total of 542 youth and families. Sixty-one percent of those served ( $n = 330$ ) were youth and 39 percent of those served ( $n = 212$ ) were family members. Fourteen percent of awards conducted planning activities, which resulted in 15 new partnerships and training for 9 individuals. Overall, 89 percent of program youth exhibited a desired change in the targeted behavior during the short term, with youth demonstrating the greatest improvement in cultural skill building/cultural pride, prosocial behavior, antisocial behavior, social competence, community involvement, high school completion, GED, and job skills. Additionally, 84 percent of youth did not offend in the short term, while 55 percent of youth did not reoffend in the short term. The performance measurement data suggests that the THWC program achieved its main objectives of using a tribal court model to improve youth outcomes.