

INFOCUS



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Drug Courts

Substance use continues to impact public health and safety nationwide. According to the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health,¹ approximately 41 million people age 12 or older needed substance use treatment in the past year. The survey also revealed that 1.6 million adolescents age 12 to 17 had a substance use disorder and 644,000 of these youth had a co-occurring major depressive episode in the past year.

Grants from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) help communities establish or expand juvenile drug treatment courts, family treatment courts, and Tribal juvenile healing to wellness courts. The courts use a multidisciplinary team—composed of judges, prosecutors, community corrections officers, social workers, and treatment professionals—to help participants overcome the effects of substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders. Training and technical assistance from OJJDP’s providers improve program effectiveness.

Programs

Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Program

Grant recipients provide youth with individualized case management services, including treatment, intensive supervision, and referral to community resources. The courts work to increase family engagement and equip youth with the skills they need to lead productive, drug-free lives.

Family Treatment Court Program

This program serves parents and guardians who require treatment for a substance use disorder and who are involved with the child welfare system as a result of child abuse or neglect. Program goals are to ensure that children have safe, nurturing, and permanent homes; that parents and guardians achieve stable recovery; and that family members receive support and services to improve family functioning.

Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts

Through this program, OJJDP helps Tribal communities respond to the substance use challenges of court-involved youth. The courts use culturally informed approaches to promote accountability, healing, and Tribal identity in participants.

For More Information

Learn more about OJJDP’s drug treatment court programs at ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/drug-courts.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2021. *Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality.

Funding

Between fiscal years 2019 and 2021, OJJDP awarded \$72.5 million to support services for people with substance use challenges and co-occurring mental health disorders.

- ▶ Fiscal Year 2021—\$26.1 million
- ▶ Fiscal Year 2020—\$26.6 million
- ▶ Fiscal Year 2019—\$19.8 million

From the Field

The Jefferson County (Colorado) Family Integrated Treatment Court helps clients establish sobriety and improve their parenting skills. Families typically spend 15–18 months in the program, although reunification between parents and children can occur at any point.

OJJDP funding allows the court to maintain a public health nurse on staff. The nurse coordinates healthcare for the families and ensures every child receives a developmental assessment. The funding also helps the court train and hire peer recovery specialists—parents and guardians who have demonstrated a sustained period of recovery—to support new clients.

Program evaluations found that children of participants who successfully complete the program spend less time in out-of-home care, are more likely to reunify with their parents, and are less likely to reenter the child welfare system. The Jefferson County Family Court is sharing its successes and lessons learned to help **guide and improve practices** in other drug courts.



Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention
ojjdp.ojp.gov