



Florida  
Office of the State Courts Administrator  
The Family Dependency Drug Court Enhancement Project

10/01/19 Grant Start → 09/30/22 Grant End

**Overview**

This project serves five family dependency drug courts in Florida: (1) Broward, Palm Beach, and Orange counties (three of the top seven most populous counties in Florida, each comprising more than 1 million people), all of which are entirely metropolitan areas; (2) Marion County, with a population of approximately 335,000 people, split evenly between metropolitan and rural areas; and (3) Citrus County, with a population of approximately 145,000 people, and which is completely rural. The poverty rate in these five counties ranges from 12.2 percent to 15.6 percent, higher than the national rate of 11.8 percent. From 2015 to 2017, Florida's rate of opioid-related deaths increased from 13 to 16.3 per 100,000, for a total of over 5,000 deaths in 2017. Palm Beach County had the highest rate in the state with 22 opioid-related deaths per 100,000, much higher than the national rate of 14.6. In Florida, 60 percent to 80 percent of children entering foster care do so because of parental substance use. From 2010 to 2015, the number of substance-exposed

(specifically opioids) newborns in Florida increased by 86 percent, from 1,336 to 2,487. The increase of parents with substance use disorders and child welfare involvement has resulted in Broward, Palm Beach, and Orange counties, reaching maximum capacity for families they are able to serve. The rural communities in Marion and Citrus counties lack the resources needed to implement the family dependency drug court model with fidelity.

**Grant Focus**

- Employ the use of alternatives to incarceration programs for nonviolent drug offenders.
- Link data sets to identify trends and focus resources.
- Support children and youth affected by the opioid epidemic.
- Build capacity in underserved regions impacted by the opioid epidemic.

## Program Approach

Family dependency drug courts provide a voluntary alternative track to traditional dependency courts by offering intensive individualized treatment opportunities, including:

- Co-occurring substance use and mental health treatment
- Expedited judicial reviews
- An encouraging and therapeutic judicial approach
- Frequent random substance use testing
- Evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions for families affected by parental substance use disorder

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the nonprofit Children and Family Futures recently released Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. Among the evidence-based programs and interventions that the standards recommend, a family dependency drug court subawardee site may use grant funds to enhance the following:

- Medication-assisted treatment (system only, not medication)
- Certified recovery peer specialists
- Gender- and culturally responsive-specific supports
- Substance use disorder prevention services for children of participants
- Parent-child relationship strengthening interventions

Each site must submit an action plan (with the requested evidence-based program, proof that it is evidence-based, actions, outcomes, and sustainability measures) and a budget for each grant year to a statewide collaborative workgroup. The workgroup, which comprises diverse professionals with expertise specific to the family dependency drug court model, ensures that the action plan and budget for the proposed evidence-based program or intervention align with the grant deliverables

and project description. Each site is required to collect specific data elements during the three-year grant period and to work with an independent evaluator who will study the effectiveness of the evidence-based programs and the implementation process.

The intention of this program is not only to increase capacity for family dependency drug court participation, but also to meet the components of the model that promote the best possible outcomes for families according to national best practices.

## Project Partners

- The Florida Office of the State Courts Administrator
- The Florida Department of Children and Families
- The Florida Behavioral Health Administration
- Broward County Family Dependency Drug Court
- Citrus County Family Dependency Drug Court
- Marion County Family Dependency Drug Court
- Orange County Family Dependency Drug Court
- Palm Beach County Family Dependency Drug Court
- The University of Central Florida

## Contact Information

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