



STATEWIDE SYSTEM REFORM PROGRAM ALABAMA

LEAD AGENCY

Alabama Administrative Office of Courts

TOTAL NUMBER OF FDCs:

15

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS SERVED IN 2013

150

STATE DEMOGRAPHICS¹

Population: 4,833,722

Children under 18:
1,111,756

Persons below poverty level: 899,072

CHILD WELFARE NUMBERS²

Children who received a CPS response for an allegation of maltreatment: 28,385

Child Maltreatment victims: 9,573

Number of children entering Foster Care:
2,748

Number of children of substance abusers (60% estimate): 1,649

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The State of Alabama is composed of 67 counties, 55 of which are considered rural counties. Statewide, there are currently 15 operational Family Drug Court (FDC) programs, serving fewer than 150 parents. The number of parents currently served by FDCs is a small proportion of parents who are affected by substance use disorders and involved in the child welfare system. Historically, the lack of access to FDCs has resulted in eligible parents not receiving adequate services to support their successful recovery. The Alabama Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP) will address the problem of very limited access to existing family drug courts and other treatment services made available to parents involved in multiple systems.

Through its various initiatives, Alabama is already using a collaborative structure as a foundation for the work of system reform and to further expand the capacity of state agencies to address the needs of parents affected by substance use disorders. The Alabama Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) has been providing grant funding to support drug court enhancements and planning initiatives since 2007 through an annual line appropriation from the State Legislature. Since 1995, AOC and Department of Human Resources (DHR) have collaborated using the Court Improvement Program (CIP) to streamline court procedures and processes to improve outcomes for children adjudicated dependent. In addition, the Alabama Department of Mental Health (DMH) has offered treatment funding to providers collaborating with problem-solving courts.

¹ United States Census Bureau. (2013). State and County Quick Facts. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/01000.html>

² Children's Bureau. (2012). Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data. Retrieved from [http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/tables/demo_stats?years\[\]=2012&viz=table&states\[\]=1&state=1®ion=](http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/tables/demo_stats?years[]=2012&viz=table&states[]=1&state=1®ion=)

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The Alabama SSRP will build on the productive legacy of the many state-level stakeholders who have engaged in highly collaborative work across systems to ensure safety, well-being and permanency outcomes are achieved for dependency cases where parental substance use is involved

PROGRAM GOALS

The vision of the Alabama SSRP is that every family in the child welfare system affected by parental substance use will have timely access to comprehensive and coordinated screening, assessment and service delivery.

The goal of the Alabama SSRP is to expand the capacity of state agencies to intervene with parents whose substance use and/or co-occurring conditions involve them in the child welfare system.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The Alabama SSRP will strengthen the state's current collaborative structure to continue the work of expanding of FDCs and infusing their practices into the larger child welfare system.

The formation of a high-level Leadership Team composed of representatives from DHR, AOC, DMH, and other vested community-based providers will guide the initial planning and implementation process. The collaborative process at work in all three levels will not only demonstrate commitment by each group, but will model an integral process that will ultimately result in better outcomes for children and families.

During the initial planning process, the Alabama SSRP will:

1. Conduct a collaborative capacity and resource mapping assessment.
2. Create a staff position with primary responsibility for information management.
3. Establish and execute data sharing protocols and agreements.
4. Support statewide expansion goals by formalizing a funding and systems change plan.

SSRP DESCRIPTION



The Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP) helps states infuse effective and collaborative local-level practices into a systemic, statewide initiative. SSRP is designed to increase effective service to all families in the child welfare system affected by parental substance use disorders. The project enhances and expands successful local-level programs and increases cooperation between state-level court, child welfare, and substance abuse treatment agencies. SSRP is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

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The Collaborative Capacity Instrument will be administered to gauge the status of the existing network of child welfare, substance abuse treatment, and court systems and will provide a baseline to stimulate discussion and prioritize topics. In order to ascertain the current capacity of the substance abuse and mental health treatment system, an inventory will be completed to map the location and extent of available resources.

The collaborative capacity and resource mapping assessment will include designation of trauma-informed, gender-specific, and family-centered services available to local child welfare agencies. The inventory will provide vital information to guide the allocation of existing/future resources in support of project implementation.

The Information Technology (IT) working group will be composed of IT professionals across systems, with additional support from a Management Information System (MIS) professional, whose primary responsibility will be to assess the existing infrastructure, make recommendations for enhancement and, if necessary, develop additional modules. Formalizing data sharing agreements among systems is essential for system reform and allows the core team to evaluate shared outcomes and establish accountability.

In order to best implement funding and sustainability strategies, the Leadership Team and the assigned staff will develop an inventory of funds available for children and family services. As a supplement to the inventory, a listing of outcomes meaningful to each funding stream will be developed. Institutional barriers to sustaining the initiative will also be identified and specific, concrete measures to overcome each obstacle will be detailed. The inventory will support the development of a multi-year funding plan detailing multiple funding sources.

The culmination of the planning phase will be marked by the creation of a systems-change plan that will guide the subsequent implementation phase and detail the necessary steps for achieving system-reform goals. Additional team members, agency staff members and state agencies may be tapped to participate in working groups tasked with discussion and resolution of specific issues identified in the self-assessment and/or systems change plan.

Key activities during the implementation include:

1. Provision of training opportunities to strengthen cross-system relationships.
2. Dissemination of program materials.
3. Execution of an information sharing system.
4. Formulation of interagency agreements.
5. Selection of six mentor courts to guide six additional jurisdictions in adoption of new reform strategies.

KEY PARTNERS & AGENCIES

Representatives from the DHR, AOC, and DMH will compose the Leadership Team and guide the initial planning and implementation process.

Other team members may be chosen from a list that includes treatment providers, community-based service providers, DHR legal, defense attorneys, guardian ad litem, judiciary, and program coordinators from key FDCs within the state.

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AOC, DMH and DHR have a longstanding partnership to appropriately and comprehensively serve the needs of adults and children impacted by substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders. Each entity has agreed to a shared mission and vision for the Alabama SSRP.

Through execution of the Memorandum of Understanding, the systems have also agreed to:

1. Designate and commit agency representatives with decision-making authority to the planning and implementation process of the initiative.
2. Enter into a formal data sharing agreement to accommodate to information exchange across systems at both case and aggregate levels.
3. Participate in program monitoring and improvement.
4. Ensure the ongoing, cross-system information sharing of stakeholders at all levels
5. Support sustainability planning.
6. Demonstrate active support for the systems-change process throughout the entire agency leadership team.

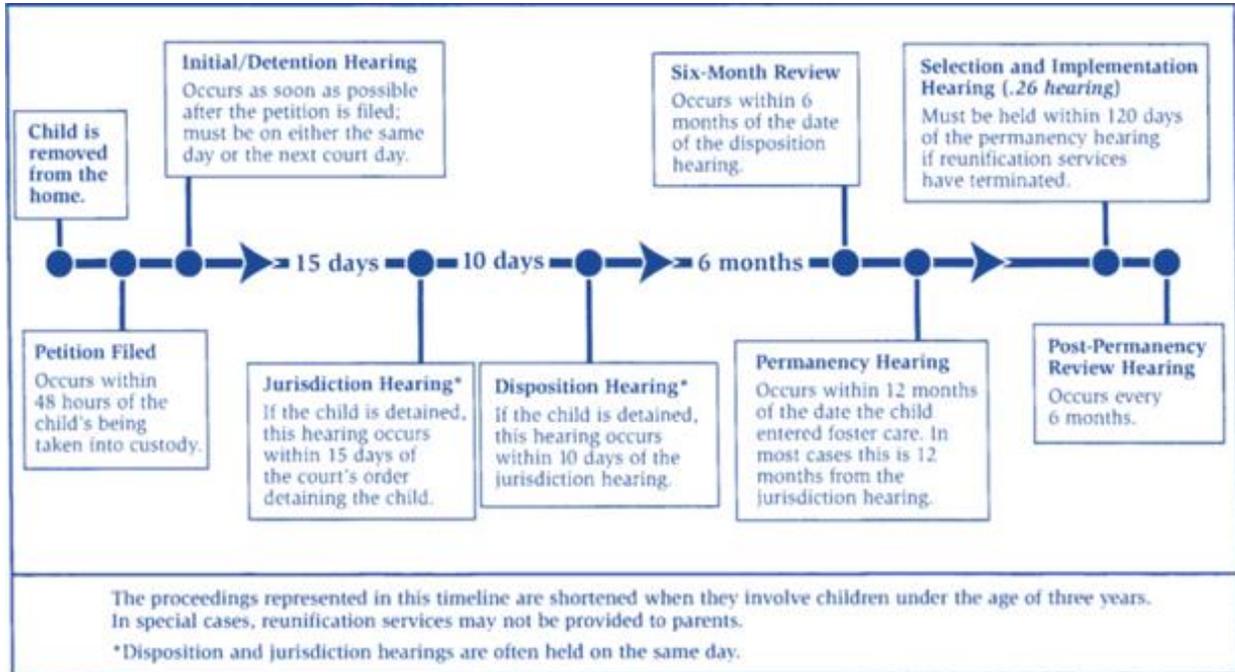
STATE COURT SYSTEM

Alabama was one of the first states in the nation to have a unified state courts system with uniform procedures and centralized administrative services. The Unified Judicial System of Alabama has been in existence since 1977. The AOC carries out its responsibilities through a network of specialized divisions. The AOC is charged with providing centralized, state-level administrative support necessary for the operation of the State's court system, which includes 1) the development of improved procedures and systems to enhance the operational capacity of the courts, 2) the collection and dissemination of information necessary for the development of policy, and the efficient operation of the courts.

The Family Court Division includes court services (i.e. problem-solving courts and court referral), Court Improvement Program Grants, Access and Visitation Program, Juvenile probation services, Judicial Volunteer Program, family court coordination and centralized child support.

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DEPENDENCY CASE – FLOW CHART



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CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Kelly Saucer

Alabama Administrative Office of Courts
300 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104

Email: kelly.saucer@alacourt.gov

Phone: (334) 954-5148

FAMILY DRUG COURT SPECIALIST

Kimberly Cole

Alabama Administrative Office of Courts
300 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104

Email: kimberly.cole@alacourt.gov

Phone: (334) 954-5000



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