



STATEWIDE SYSTEM REFORM PROGRAM

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LEAD AGENCY

Judicial Branch of Iowa

TOTAL NUMBER OF FDCs:

**12 Operational
2 in Planning**

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS SERVED TO DATE

Families: 575
Adults: 675
Children: 1,099

STATE DEMOGRAPHICS¹

Population: 3,090,416

Children under 18:
722,953

**Persons below poverty
level:** 12.2%

CHILD WELFARE NUMBERS²

**Children who received a
CPS response for an
allegation of
maltreatment:** 29,441

**Child Maltreatment
victims:** 10,751

**Number of children
entering foster care:** 4,230

**Number of children of
substance abusers (60%
estimate):** 2,538

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Effective assistance to families and children affected by substance use disorders frequently involves the efforts of child welfare, treatment, and court systems. For many years, Iowa communities have discovered cost-effective and productive ways like Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) that allow these entities to work in tandem to better serve affected children and their parents.

The State of Iowa is now expanding the effectiveness of its FTCs program by participation in the Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP), which will allow effective and collaborative local-level practices to be infused into a systemic, statewide initiative.

Successful implementation of collaborative service delivery seen in Iowa's FTCs has paved the way for a coordinated, statewide program. In 2007, the State Court Administration of Iowa, through the Court Improvement Project (now named Iowa Children's Justice), was awarded a Regional Partnership grant that led to the development of six FTCs. At the same time, Iowa was provided in-depth technical assistance offered through the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) to improve cross-systems partnerships and practices.

Difficult and groundbreaking work by the six pilot sites and the support of collaborative partners at the local and state level resulted in a two-year extension of funding and training in 2012 that allowed greater completion of their work and establishment of standards of practice for future treatment courts. The results of this seven-year effort have demonstrated that a collaborative model is an effective way to assist and support parents in receiving substance use assessments and treatment toward recovery and to improve the lives of families affected by substance use disorders.

¹ United States Census Bureau. (2013). State and County Quick Facts. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/19000.html>

² Children's Bureau. (2012). Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data. Retrieved from [http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/tables/demo_stats?year=2012&viz=table&states\[\]=16&state=®ion=](http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/tables/demo_stats?year=2012&viz=table&states[]=16&state=®ion=)

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The Iowa Supreme Court has publicly declared its interest in system reform and the legislature has asked the court to lead the effort.

Participation in the SSRP will not only propel local successes toward statewide application, but it will bring scale to the most effective practices for treating families to all Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases in juvenile courts.

PROGRAM GOALS

The foremost goal of the Statewide System Reform Project is to develop a plan to address the needs of families in child welfare systems due to parental substance use. This plan will include:

1. Extending the availability of family treatment court throughout the State of Iowa.
2. Spearheading the adaptation of Family Treatment Court practices into juvenile court Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases. The FTC collaborative practice model of operating differently together can be adapted and duplicated to aid families in both in rural and metropolitan areas.
3. Developing a plan to address the gap recognized during previous grant work, namely a lack of awareness and screening throughout the state concerning the impact of parental substance use on the prenatal and perinatal children. Effective screening and treatment for those children will also be addressed in the plan.

Objectives for the completed plan are to establish a funding and sustainability plan; identify key elements of FTC principles to infuse in the larger child welfare system; develop a 3-5-year plan to create system-wide awareness of the impact of substance use on parents; and develop a program to assess and prevent prenatal and perinatal substance exposure in children.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The Iowa Children's Justice (ICJ) State Council will provide oversight of the SSRP, assuring timely progress and confirming that all of the complex, multi-agency issues that might arise are fully addressed.

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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Members of the ICJ State Council are appointed by the Iowa Supreme Court and consist of state-level directors and designees from those organizations that are involved in the child welfare system and other organizations whose work intersects child welfare issues.

The Iowa Children’s Justice Director and Grant Coordinator and two child welfare specialists will also staff the planning project. They will facilitate meetings, gather research and data to support the work of project members, assure meeting minutes and reports are distributed, and provide consultation.

At Task Force meetings, each subcommittee will report on its progress, make recommendations for additional action, and set schedules for future meetings. On a quarterly basis, the Task Force chairs will report to the ICJ State Council, alerting them to any action it might need to take regarding legislative or policy changes or to assure accountability of the task force and subcommittees. Task Force meetings are also very important because they are visual demonstrations of cooperation and commitment by many levels of the state government to an important process that will ultimately result in better outcomes for children and families.

To provide additional support for the SSRP’s third goal, reducing the impact of parental substance use on the prenatal and perinatal children, a special leadership group will convene, consisting of medical professionals and state leaders in public health, human services, and the courts. This leadership group will be guided by Dr. Ira Chasnoff and will be tasked with creating a plan for a statewide system of care.

KEY PARTNERS & AGENCIES

State-level leaders have demonstrated a continuous commitment to partnerships and systemic change over many years. The Iowa Children’s Justice State Council will serve as the host of the project Task Force. The multi-agency Task Force will consist of the State Court Administrator; Administrator, Division of Adult, Child and Family Services; Administrator, Division of Behavioral Health, Director of Office of Drug Control Policy, and other partners in child welfare. Those partners include a juvenile prosecuting attorney, substance abuse provider, agency directors serving in family treatment courts, contracted private child welfare agencies, treatment providers, judges who serve in family treatment courts and in juvenile courts, Chief District Judge, guardian ad litem, and a parent advocate.

STATE COURT SYSTEM

Iowa is one of a handful of states with a unified court system that receives the majority of its funding directly from State of Iowa. Heading the state court system, the Iowa Supreme Court oversees a statewide operating budget. The State Court Administrator assists the court with various responsibilities including gathering statistical data for the Iowa Judicial Branch, arranging training and education programs for judges and staff, and overseeing all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the state’s court system.

Iowa refers to child abuse and neglect or dependency proceedings as Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) Proceedings.

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TIME FRAME FOR CINA HEARING

Assessment/ Intake

- Child protective services referral to DHS is made. An assessment is to be completed within 20 working days.
- After intake at DHS, the case may be referred to the County Attorney for CINA petition. If a CINA petition is filed, a hearing date is set.

Reasonable Efforts

- Efforts to assist the parent to keep the child at home safely must be offered. This will include services that the parent and case manager decide are necessary to assist the family.
- At each hearing, the judge will decide if Reasonable Efforts have been made to keep the child at home, to reunite the child with his/her family or to establish a permanent placement if the child cannot return home.

Shelter

- A shelter hearing is set within 48 hours of a child's placement in temporary shelter care.
- The Sheriff may deliver to (serve) the parents/parties the CINA petition and notice of hearing at this time.

Removal

- If a child is removed from their home, there must be a hearing within 10 days.
- The judge determines whether or not the child will return home. If the child will not return home, the parent will be advised that within 6 months, the state may ask for the termination of parental rights. If the child is 4 years old or older, the parent may have up to 12 months.

Adjudication

- The adjudication hearing will be held within 60 days from the filing of the CINA petition.
- A finding that the facts in the petition are true.

Disposition

- The dispositional hearing will be held within 45 days from the date of adjudication or on the same date as the adjudication if all agree.
- The Case Permanency Plan is presented for judicial approval at the dispositional hearing.

Review

- A review will be held within 6 months of the dispositional hearing.
- Review hearings must be held every 6 months or more frequently as ordered by the judge.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

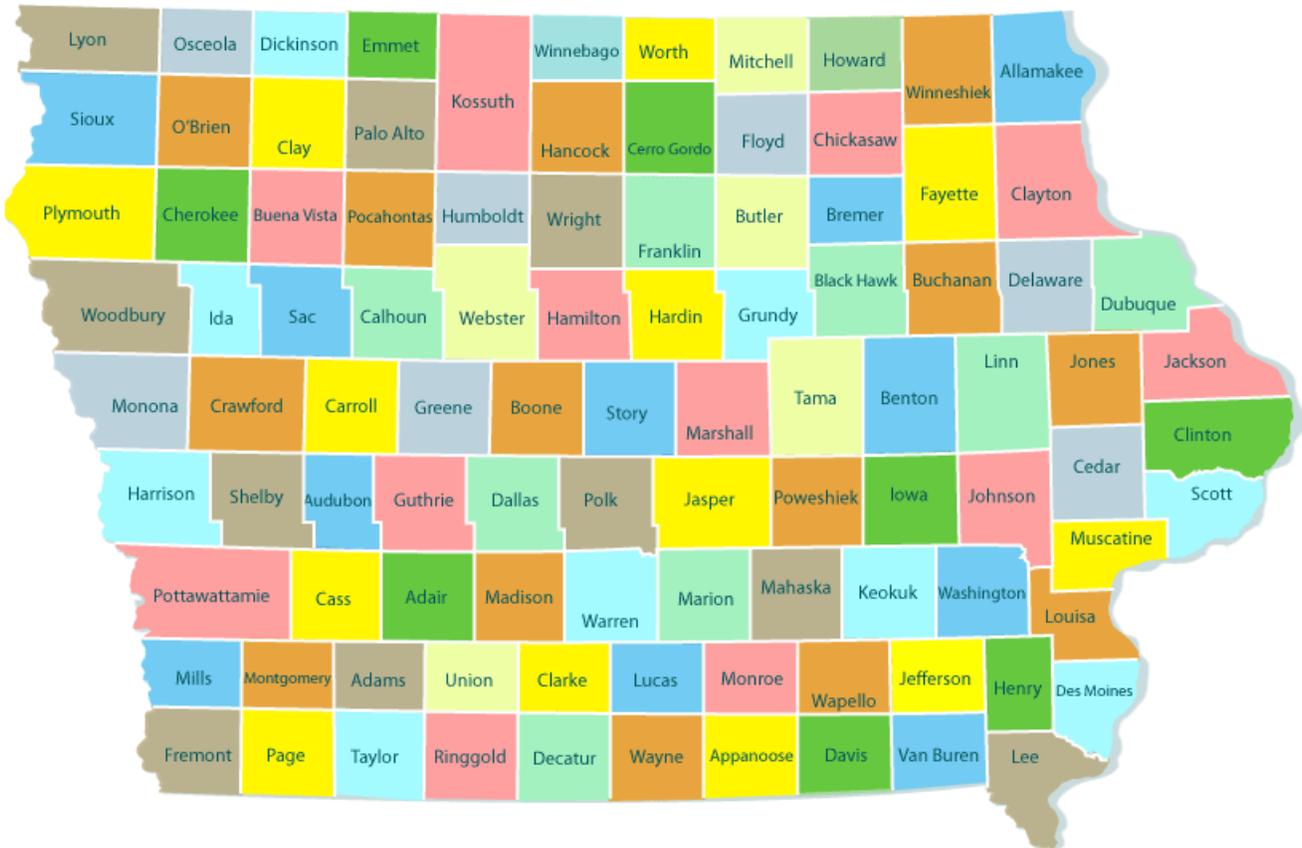
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