

JEFFERSON FAMILY RECOVERY COURT

Program Description

The Jefferson Family Recovery Court(JFRC) is a court supervised substance treatment and family support program for parents seeking to reunite with their minor children or maintain them in their care. JFRC uses a family centered collaborative approach to families involved in the dependency, neglect and abuse that have been impacted by parental substance abuse.

JFRC operates parallel to the traditional dependency court process. While participating in JFRC, parents continue to engage in dependency court proceedings. Subsequent dependency court dates such as removal hearings and review hearings are calendared as usual, in addition to JFRC

JFRC is a voluntary program that includes: regular court appearances, treatment for substance use disorders, parenting classes, and other services designed to obtain and maintain safe and stable home environment. The expected length of participation is 12 months, with two review dates following completion of the program.

Mission

The overall mission of JFRC is to reduce child welfare issues by treating parents' underlying substance use disorders through a coordinated and collaborative approach that involves a multitude of agencies and professionals such as the court system, child protective services (CPS), substance use treatment providers, vocational and housing specialists, CASA workers, parent attorneys and guardian ad litem involved in the case.

Why JFRC

JFRC is a response to the high percentage of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases that involve substance use by a parent. Over 90% of children in state custody have parents with drug/alcohol addiction. JFRC are designed to keep families together and address the poor outcomes of family reunification programs that leave many children in foster care instead of being raised in stable, permanent homes. JFRC purpose is furthered by the wrap around services provided to the entire family. The parents receive help to become sober, emotionally and financially self-sufficient and provide a safe home environment. They are equipped with tools to become responsible parents. As the children's needs are simultaneously addressed, the likelihood of reunification is increased when family and children's services are provided at a high level in substance use treatment.

How is JFRC different from adult Drug Courts

JFRC serves the entire family unit. The majority of participants in adult criminal drug court programs tend to be men while the majority of Family Drug Court participants are women. However, with the increase in opioid addiction, it is not uncommon for both parents to have substance abuse issues and well as other co occurring issues such as domestic violence, mental health concerns and homelessness. In JFRC, both parents are eligible to participate.

Adult Drug Treatment Courts handle cases that involve criminal offenses and may employ criminal sanctions if necessary. JFRC handles non-criminal cases of abuse and neglect and will not use criminal sanctions but appeals to the prospect of family reunification as a motivating factor for participants. While parents are faced with the possibility of losing custody of their children, either temporarily or permanently. JFRC focuses on the needs of the entire family rather than solely on the individual facing criminal charges.

Intervention and assessment begins immediately upon receipt of the CPS complaint. If eligibility requirements are met, the case is referred into the program. If the parents accept treatment, it begins immediately.

In summary, JFRC deals with the complexities of family issues and focuses on the needs of the parents and children. That includes providing resources that include vocational training and obtaining and maintaining stable housing. The longer and more comprehensive treatment and services are designed to decrease recidivism and subsequent removal of children.

Eligibility

To be eligible for JFRC, parents must:

1. Have a demonstrated substance use disorder
2. Have an open petition in dependency court
3. Voluntarily participate

Once determined to be eligible and suitable for the program, the intake process is completed which includes signing the Participant Agreement and necessary Releases of Information. At the point the parent completes and individual clinical assessment to determine the most effective treatment modality for the individual and family. The Family Case Management Specialists and the assigned CPS worker develop the Treatment and Parenting Plan.

Case Coordination and Status Hearings

JFRC will consist of four phases and will convene weekly for pre-court case conferencing followed by status hearings. CPS and attorneys are key partners and they or their representative are encouraged to participate in JFRC pre-court conferencing.

Two JFRC teams include the following representatives and is designed to serve up to 50 participants and approximately 125 children. Additional courts would serve 25 families each and approximately 75 children.

The representatives are the Judge, Family Case Management Specialists, Treatment Providers, Vocational and Housing specialists, Family Mentors, Parent Attorney, Guardian Ad Litem, CPS and CASA.

Status hearings are structured as roundtable discussions between the participant and members of the JFRC team. They take place in open court with other JFRC participants observing the proceedings. At any time, a participant may request that the case is discussed privately, in which case, the court is cleared to allow for privacy.

JFRC Collaborators

National Council of Jewish Women – Louisville Chapter

Jefferson County Family Court – Administrative Office of the Courts

Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Steering Committee Members – Representatives from local agencies and private attorney

Program Completion and Graduation

In order to graduate from JFRC, parents must:

1. Complete recommended treatment requirements outlined in the Treatment and Parenting Plan
2. Consistently appear throughout all phases of JFRC program
3. Submit to initially weekly and then subsequent regular drug testing
4. Maintain continuous sobriety and recovery for a minimum of six months
5. Consistently attend support group meetings as outlined in their treatment plan
6. Complete all other requirements outlined in Treatment and Parenting Plan (i.e. such as employment and housing)

Success is a reunification of a family with a safe environment and having achieved and maintained sobriety, has stable housing and employment and ready to meet the needs of the family. Participation in the program will result in shorter stays in foster care or out of home relative placement, fewer relapses and new petitions and permanency.

JFRC is forming a partnership with Spalding University to develop measurement tools to assess the success of the program.

Program Dismissal

JFRC uses incentives and consequences to encourage or modify participant behaviors. The team is committed to making all interventions therapeutic and supportive of the participants' progress toward the goals outlined in the Treatment and Parenting Plan. The JFRC Judge may dismiss participants for the program if they demonstrate consistent noncompliance with the requirements outlined in their plan.

Proposed Budget

Staff salaries	100,000
Drug Screening	10,000
Supervised Visitation	5,000
Parenting classes and other services	5,000
Incentives	5,000
Training	8,000

*This is an estimated preliminary budget