

Examples of Pre-Petition Treatment Court Models:

- **Sacramento Early Intervention Family Treatment Court (EIFTC)** - The EIFTC was developed as a collaborative project by Sacramento County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) divisions of Child Protective Services and Behavioral Health Services. The initial EIFTC target population consisted of families in which the mother had been screened for substance use during pregnancy and/or the newborn baby tested positive for substances at the time of delivery. The EIFTC includes fathers of substance-exposed infants as part of its target population. EIFTC was formed with the hope of improving engagement and outcomes for families experiencing substance use disorder that were eligible for informal supervision (a prevention program in lieu of court intervention for families with children up to age 12 and a petition that is able to be filed). If parents agree to engage, the child welfare agency drafts a formal petition for removal that is held in abeyance as long as the parent commits to the program. Families accepted to the program are referred to STARS, a private behavioral health partner agency that provides recovery case management for participants. STARS employs recovery specialists, most of whom have lived experience with substance use disorder. The recovery specialists support parents at all stages of the process, including administering testing, and they are in constant communication with CPS social workers. STARS also offers parenting support, including a group specifically for fathers, as well as Celebrating Families!, that welcomes all members of the extended family to participate together.

It is a well-established and very unique model in that there is no legal jurisdictions over the families (not court-involved) but rather overseen by a team of treatment and child welfare (along with many other community partners) with check-ins with a retired Judge who serves as an administrative hearing officer. Although EIFTC began in association with the Superior Court (Juvenile Dependency Division), because of funding constraints the project lost access to courtrooms and judicial oversight. Due to the strength of the collaboration, EIFTC was able to continue and in 2011 an inaugural EIFTC proceeding was conducted by a hearing officer in a conference room in a county building. The EIFTC program continues to function as a pre-plea or administrative court rather than a formal court calendar or docket leading to a new model of family court programming. Like all family treatment courts, the purpose of EIFTC is to protect the safety and welfare of children while providing the resources parents need to become sober, responsible caregivers. EIFTC program components include intensive case management, supervision by a hearing officer, random drug testing and substance use treatment. Results from the program evaluation demonstrates the program's success leading to decrease in trauma for children, an increase in cost savings, and a decrease in case load. Any family that is not successful in the EIFTC is automatically referred to their Dependency Family Treatment Court for more intensive services.

Follow this link to learn more about some of their goals, partners, and outcomes

- <https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/technical/rpg-i.aspx?id=80>
- **Wapello Family Treatment Court, IA** – They are working on developing materials and formal documents. *A note from Judge Owens:* In light of the emphasis of FFPSA to work with families on a voluntary basis when possible, the state public defender is working on providing counsel to parents who are in pre-file status. Iowa has several pilots around the state that will use a multi-disciplinary model (attorney/social worker/parent advocate) to represent parents who are working with the department voluntarily and have not yet had a

petition filed. The hope is this model will prove to be an effective way of working with families and we can work to take this state-wide. Wapello County currently has a pre-file model and their post- and pre-file families interact together and receive all the same services and supports including weekly court hearings with the same judicial officer.

- [Baltimore City Family Recovery Program Horizon Program, MD](#) – The Horizon program is an extension of their family treatment court, the policy and procedure manual and parent handbook are attached. The focus of the Horizon Program is to prevent removal of the child/children, age 0-10, of child protective services and family preservation cases who otherwise would have substance use as the primary reason for removal. If there is a subsequent child removal, the parent is eligible to be referred to an FRP program with court involvement

A parent is eligible to be referred into the Horizon Program if:

- A referral has been made by a child welfare case worker or supervisor
- A removal must not have occurred at the time of referral
- The parent/legal guardian must volunteer to be referred to the program (this is non-negotiable)
- The parent/legal guardian needs substance use disorder case management and supportive services
- The child in the family being referred is 10 years of age or under at the time of referral.

Through FRP's Horizon Program, once referred, parents will receive case management services that include:

- drug treatment assessments & referrals within 24 hours
- substance use peer support
- access to supportive housing
- onsite mental health assessment & referrals
- employment assistance
- transportation assistance
- referrals to parenting programs
- GED referrals
- random drug testing

The Horizon Program is a 6-12 month intensive program. During that period, parents will have the opportunity to gain valuable skills that will help in the care of their families. All efforts are documented and reports are distributed to the Baltimore City child welfare caseworker each month. Horizon participants may participate in monthly support meetings at the family recovery program office. These meetings will offer an opportunity for networking and give the necessary support in addition to providing valuable workshops. It's the hope that the Horizon participants leave with their own housing, employment and the necessary life-skills to not only raise and maintain their families, but to prosper in the role of parent.

- [Tarrant County Family Recovery Court, TX](#) - This Family Recovery Court has three different tracks. The Intensive service program is where the children are in foster care, parents have long term substance use history and require in person court every other week. The Recovery Support Program is where the children are in foster care, there is shorter term history of substance use by the parents and require an administrative hearing in front of the Family Drug Court Coordinator and statutory hearings in front of the judge. They recently

implemented a third track called the **Early Intervention Family Recovery Court** that works with their child welfare department's Family Based Safety Service division to prevent removal of children where substance use is a precipitating risk factor. It utilizes their family recovery court model with a dual administrative hearing officer comprised of the Program Administrators of Investigations and Family Based Safety Services, as well as the Juvenile Court Programs Manager.

- [Jefferson County Family Wellness Court early intervention/pre-file track "2nd Track Family Drug Court", AL](#) – Jefferson County recognized the need to have a pre-file track that intervened with families prior to court involvement.
- [Rockdale County Family Treatment Court, GA](#) has implemented a pre-file intervention with families involved in child welfare with a substance use disorder but who do not (yet) have a court petition. They are thinking about different ways to implement the intervention they call Circle of Support.