



Jackson County Family Court Grant Program Information

Ordinance Number: 6042

Program Name: Mental Health Services for Court Involved Youth

Funding Agency: Juvenile Justice Preservation Fund

Funding Arrangements and Use of Funds: \$77,340 to initiate and sustain mental health and trauma treatment by way of individual therapy for youth referred to the Family Court.

Funding Period for Grant: Budget Year 2025

New or Existing Program/Continued Funding Opportunity: Continued Funding

Program Description :

Field Services provides individual and family counseling to youth diverted from prosecution as well as those adjudicated and on supervision. While we utilize community partners such as AdHoc Group Against Crime, MOCSA, Truman Behavioral Health, and Cornerstones of Care, these organizations cannot fully meet the range of needs among our families. Contracting with individual therapists ensures timely access to care, addresses acute needs, and bridges families to sustainable community services beyond court involvement.

Over the last several years, we have built a network of six contract therapists, selected for both clinical expertise and diversity of background. This team includes men and women, with strong African American representation, allowing us to provide culturally responsive care across a spectrum of treatment needs. In addition, we contract with Midtown Psychological Services, Inc. for psychological evaluations that inform treatment and placement decisions. Continued funding is critical to sustain and expand these contract services so that all youth and families receive individualized, effective, and culturally attuned mental health support.

Theoretical or Practical Basis:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health issues in children involve “serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, causing distress and problems getting through the day.” The most common diagnoses among children are Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, and depression—with rates of depression and anxiety increasing steadily over time. Mental health services are therefore critical to addressing the needs of system-involved youth and families.

Research confirms the scope of the issue. A national study of more than 70,000 youth across 283 juvenile justice programs found that up to 70% of youth involved with the justice system experience mental health challenges that rise to the level of a clinical diagnosis. Locally, community mental health resources in Jackson County remain insufficient to meet these needs. The Missouri Division of Behavioral Health reports a sharp rise in mental illness among residents: in 2016, 862,000 Missourians were living with a mental illness; by 2019 the number had increased to 925,000; in 2020 it rose to 1,056,000; and by 2021, the most recent year available, more than 1.24 million Missourians were affected. Rates are even higher among young adults, the very population we serve.

Even when services exist, families encounter significant barriers to accessing them. Overburdened providers often cannot take new referrals, and many families face obstacles such as lack of transportation, limited internet access, financial challenges with insurance co-pays, or the stigma associated with seeking treatment. These barriers frequently result in delayed or interrupted care.

To meet this critical need, Family Court seeks funding to directly contract with providers. This approach streamlines access, eliminates many common barriers, and ensures that youth and families referred to the court receive timely, consistent, and effective treatment.



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Expected Impact: We will provide an individual or family counselor to every youth on formal supervision and youth involved in the Emerging Adult Justice program that needs therapy. We anticipate that this will lead to increased adjustment and attainment of goals as youth move through the system. This will support our efforts to protect the community by maintaining low recidivism and increasing the number of youth re-engaging in prosocial, educational and vocational activities.
Evaluation Plan and/or Demonstrated Efficacy: Initiative and service will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Jackson County Court’s Research and Development Department.
For more information, contact Theresa Byrd, Deputy Court Administrator at 435-4850
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