

Priority: Basic Needs

Lead Agency: Community Justice

Program Offer Type: Existing Operating

Program Contact: Janice Ashe

Related Programs: 25098, 25099, 50036

Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

Family Court Services (FCS) helps keep children safe, parents healthy and family systems stabilized for approximately 1,200 high-risk families a year as they go through dependency proceedings and/or separation and divorce. FCS provides essential support to Family Court judges in child abuse, neglect, separation and divorce proceedings by providing prompt drug abuse intervention, parenting education, mediation and other services as indicated upon assessment and evaluation of each family's individual circumstances. Nationally it takes an average 226 days for a parent to start substance abuse treatment. In Oregon the average is 111 days. In Multnomah County the average is 17 days, thanks largely to Family Court Services.

Program Description

FCS promotes effective coordination of child welfare, treatment for addiction and/or family violence, criminal justice and court services to high-risk families and to those involved with the Domestic Relations Court.

The Family Involvement Team (FIT) component of FCS assists parents who are facing child neglect charges because of drug abuse problems. FIT provides them with rapid access to treatment services. This expedited access to treatment vastly improves treatment outcomes. FIT also identifies parents on probation or parole that have abuse and neglect proceedings pending and works with DCJ's Adult Family Supervision Unit (FSU). This strengthens the abilities of the court and the State Department of Human Services (DHS) to protect vulnerable children.

In addition FCS assists families that are experiencing the major life crisis of separation or divorce by providing parent education, mediation and evaluations to the court with the goal of decreasing conflict, addressing stress and enabling the family to better navigate the complexities of the judicial system.

Federal legislation, the American Safe Families Act, requires courts to decide whether or not to terminate parental custodial rights within 12 months of a child being removed from a home for abuse or neglect. The majority of parents involved in such cases suffer from substance abuse issues. Therefore parental access to, compliance with and completion of treatment is a critical factor in the court's considerations.

Program Justification

FCS protects children from abuse and neglect by providing intervention and service coordination to families involved in the court system. Most dependency families have multiple, complex problems that regularly put their health and safety, housing and economic independence at risk. Of the nearly 1000 families who enter the dependency court each year, more than 30% of the parents are involved in the criminal justice system, at least 25% are affected by violence and 80% have substance abuse problems. FCS facilitates and coordinates behavioral health and social service interventions. This helps to keep children-at-risk healthy by improving the ability of their parents to be nurturing, self-sufficient caregivers. In addition, FCS provides essential support services to families going through the trauma of divorce and separation. Through mediation and parent education FCS increases the chance that children will be physically and emotionally safe and healthy and will be able to live in a stable, economically independent home.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	Previous Year Actual (FY05-06)	Current Year Purchased (FY06-07)	Current Year Estimate (FY06-07)	Next Year Offer (FY07-08)
Output	Number of families served by mediation.	846	1,200	1,150	1,200
Outcome	Percent of client satisfaction with FCS.	92.0%	80.0%	90.0%	85.0%
Outcome	Percent of clients in treatment w/in 17 days of shelter hearing.	63.0%	77.0%	65.0%	77.0%

Performance Measure - Description

Multnomah County experienced an increase in domestic relations filings and a renewed vigor in the commitment of the Family Court to mediation as an alternative to litigation, which increased mediation clients. FCS has also developed a new and more rigorous satisfaction survey tool and is being conservative in projections of client satisfaction until more data is available.

Legal/Contractual Obligation

Programming provided by Family Court Services is mandated by Federal Legislation - American Safe Families Act; Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 3.220, 21.112. 3.425, 417.355, 419B.387 and 419B.806.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
	2007	2007	2008	2008
Program Expenses				
Personnel	\$285,863	\$748,714	\$297,250	\$766,670
Contracts	\$10,000	\$47,710	\$10,000	\$47,710
Materials & Supplies	\$2,440	\$23,795	\$2,440	\$29,228
Internal Services	\$0	\$123,956	\$0	\$108,502
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	\$298,303	\$944,175	\$309,690	\$952,110
Administration	\$73,307	\$19,777	\$84,434	\$20,633
Program Support	\$217,494	\$0	\$232,802	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	\$290,801	\$19,777	\$317,236	\$20,633
Total GF/non-GF:	\$589,104	\$963,952	\$626,926	\$972,743
Program Total:	\$1,553,056		\$1,599,669	
Program FTE	4.00	8.60	4.00	8.60
Program Revenues				
Indirect for dep't Admin	\$40,942	\$0	\$24,370	\$0
Fees, Permits & Charges	\$0	\$944,175	\$0	\$952,110
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$40,942	\$944,175	\$24,370	\$952,110

Explanation of Revenues

The FIT and the Family Supervision Unit are supported by County General Fund revenue \$309,690. Family Court Services revenue totaling \$952,110 comes from a surcharge on filing fees for divorce and custody cases, fees for parent education and evaluation services and a portion of the marriage license fee dedicated to conciliation services.

Significant Program Changes

Last year this program was: #50009, DCJ Family Court Services