



# *Ohio START*

## Executive Summary

### April 2017

Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment, and Reducing Trauma) is an intervention program that will provide specialized victim services, such as intensive trauma counseling, to children who have suffered victimization due to parental drug use. The program will also provide drug treatment for parents of children referred to the program. Created through the office of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Ohio START requires the partnering of county Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs), behavioral health providers, and juvenile/family courts. A key element of this program will be certified peer recovery supporters who will be paired with a child welfare caseworker to provide intensive case management services. Casey Family Programs is joining with the Ohio Attorney General in investing in promising strategies for Ohio START in southern Ohio.

This grant creates an opportunity for a new best practice model designed to lead to better outcomes for children and families impacted by opiates and other drugs. The overall goal of this program is to stabilize families harmed by parental drug use so that both children and their parents can recover and move forward with abuse-free and addiction-free lives. Ohio START integrates community partners to ensure the seamless provision of wraparound. Sobriety, Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) began operation in Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, Ohio in March 1997. The initiation of START began in Kentucky in the spring of 2006 as a replication of the START model from Cleveland, Ohio. The START program in Kentucky resulted in about half as many children returning to foster care due to parental addiction. Parents involved in the Kentucky program were also found to have twice the sobriety rate. Kentucky START has been rated as Promising Research Evidence on the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.

Grant funding will be used to develop strategic partnerships between county PCSAs and local agencies to ensure the seamless and efficient delivery of wrap around services to families with co-occurring drug abuse and child maltreatment. The services and the process in which they are delivered will focus primarily on ensuring that the child is safe and receiving trauma-informed services and supports and provide the parent with trauma-informed recovery services to promote long-term stability and sobriety.

The program will primarily be funded through a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office which will be shared among the counties over two and a half years. These grant funds will be specifically spent to help county child welfare agencies identify children who have been victimized due to parental drug use and provide them with specialized treatment for any resulting behavioral or emotional trauma. The grant will also fund victim services for parents with underlying victimization that may be contributing to their addiction. Casey Family Programs, which partnered with the Ohio Attorney General's Office to develop the



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Ohio START program, is providing additional funds for the pilot program. Both grants will be administered by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO).

The 19 counties in southern Ohio covered by the grant include Adams, Athens, Brown, Clermont, Clinton, Fairfield, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

The county PCSAs implementing Ohio START will work directly with the victims, abused and neglected children, and their families. The children involved with this program are the victims that have at least one parent that has a substance use disorder (SUD) and has mistreated the child. The child and the family will be identified by the PCSAs through the screening and assessment process. The county PCSAs will be entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with their behavioral health providers and juvenile/family court to implement Ohio START. The behavioral health providers will be employing certified peer recovery supports who quite possibly have been victims of crime in their lives with history of trauma.

The effectiveness of Ohio START will be studied by partners with Ohio State University's College of Social Work and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University. For the first six months of the program, the short-term outcomes include: certified peer recovery supporters have been identified for the participating counties; stronger collaboration established between the PCSA, behavioral health provider, and the juvenile/family court and specified in a signed MOU; staff have received training on the screening and assessment tools that will be used during the referral process; cross-training on the Ohio START model has been provided to the teams; and protocols for referring, accessing treatment in a timely manner, intensive case management, team meetings, and case closure have been developed by each county team.

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