REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS ROUND 4

PARTNERSHIP AND SERVICES TO INCREASE WELL-BEING AND IMPROVE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN INDIANPOLIS/MARION COUNTY, IN

LEAD AGENCY: Volunteers of America (VOAIN)
LOCATION: Indianapolis, IN
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING: $3,000,000

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Volunteers of America of Indiana (VOAIN) and its partners Marion County Superior Court-Juvenile Division and the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is implementing a comprehensive project to serve mothers who give birth to newborns who test positive for drugs in Marion County, Indiana. Indiana University Methodist Hospital reports that one in four babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit are there because of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), often resulting in an open case with DCS. The proposed project will address 1) an absence of formal coordination mechanisms between the courts, DCS, and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers, 2) the rising rate of children placed in state custody due to parental substance use, and 3) a severe shortage of treatment and aftercare services for postpartum women with substance use disorders (SUD).

TARGET POPULATION AND PROJECTED NUMBERS SERVED

VOAIN’s project will target postpartum women whose newborns test positive for drugs, have an open DCS case, and who receive a court order to participate in treatment. Specific child ages include infants and sibling children ages 5 and under.

The program will serve 252 families over the course of the grant.

MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS

GOAL 1: Improve coordination between the courts, DCS, VOAIN, and other service providers.
GOAL 2: Increase well-being, improve permanency outcomes, and enhance safety of children who are at risk of an out-of-home placement as a result of a parent’s substance use.
GOAL 3: Increase adult recovery from substance use.
GOAL 4: Support family functioning and stability.
GOAL 5: Increase staff knowledge and skills related to treatment and recovery support.
GOAL 6: Increase community of practice knowledge and skills.
KEY MAJOR PROGRAM SERVICES

- **Evidence-Based Programs and Services**
  - Nurturing Parenting Program
  - Motivational Interviewing
  - Relapse Prevention (Therapy)
  - Look up and Hope
  - Trauma Recovery Empowerment Model

- **Case Management and Case Conferencing**
  - Intensive/Coordinated Case Management

- **Wraparound and In-home Services**
  - In-home Family Coaches

- **Visitation Services**
  - Supportive Supervised Home visitation

- **Family Therapy/Counseling**
  - Family and Individual Traditional/Short-Term

- **Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Adults**
  - Residential/Inpatient Treatment – Specialized for Parents with Children
  - Intensive Outpatient
  - Aftercare

- **Family-Centered Substance Use Disorder Treatment**
  - Family-centered treatment with priority to recovery housing and treatment for families

- **Children’s Screening/Assessment**
  - Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
  - Behavioral Screening
  - Child Health Screening
  - The Lipsitz Neonatal Drug-Withdrawal Scoring System

- **Adult Screening/Assessment**
  - Addiction Severity Index lite (ASI)
  - Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD)
  - Adult Health Screening and Testing (IN State Dept. of Health)
- Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI)
- Parenting Stress Index (PSI)

**Housing Services**
- Connection with Housing Supports
- Connection with Transitional Housing

**Cross-Systems/Interagency Collaboration – Clinical-Related Activities**
- Development of formalized cross-systems policies and procedures designed to improve communication, identification, referrals and service delivery

**Cross-Systems/Interagency Collaboration – Program and Policy-Related Activities**
- Staff training on collaboration, admission criteria, referral protocols, information and data sharing, and other RPG program policies and procedures
- Regular regional partnership meetings to discuss program, policy and management issues.

**PARTNER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**
- Volunteers of America Indiana (lead agency)
- Indiana Department of Child Services
- Marion County Family Court
- Evaluator – NPC Research Firm

**EVALUATION DESIGN**

**OUTCOME STUDY DESIGN: QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN (QED)**

**EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT**

The local evaluation of the Volunteers of America Indiana (VOAIN) Fresh Start program will have an impact study and a process and collaboration study. VOAIN is also participating in the RPG cross-site evaluation studies of family and child outcomes, program implementation, and collaboration among RPG grantees and partners.

**Impact study design**

The grantee will use a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of its RPG services for postpartum women struggling with substance use. Members of the program group will participate in the RPG unit of VOAIN’s Fresh Start residential treatment program (referred to below as the RPG program). In addition to receiving a bed at the Fresh Start residential treatment facility, mothers in the RPG program will work with a family advocate who will represent them in court hearings and a family coach who will provide wraparound case management services. The program consists of three phases. During Phase 1, which lasts around 21 days, mothers will reside at the Fresh Start facility and focus on acute stabilization of withdrawal symptoms. During Phase 2, which lasts up to six months, mothers will continue to
reside at the Fresh Start facility and receive group and individual counseling focused on short- and long-term recovery. Finally, during Phase 3, mothers will transition to independent living and continue to receive home visits from their family coach until they have been in the RPG program for 18 months. Members of the comparison group will receive VOAIN’s regular Fresh Start residential treatment program (which does not include a family coach or home visits following residential treatment), one of VOAIN’s outpatient treatment programs, or another program in the community. The impact study will include around 504 families, with 252 in the program group and 252 in the comparison group. The grantee will examine impacts in the following domains: permanency, safety, child well-being, family functioning, and recovery.

Data sources include administrative data, a brief intake assessment, and information collected using standardized instruments. Frontline VOAIN staff will administer the brief intake assessment and all standardized instruments. For both the program and comparison group, mothers will complete the brief intake assessment while they are still in the hospital. For mothers in the program group, standardized instruments will be administered shortly after they enter residential treatment (baseline). Mothers in the program group will also complete follow-up assessments every 90 days while they are in the program and when they transition between phases of the program. A subset of standardized instruments may be administered for mothers in the comparison group who are in VOAIN’s regular Fresh Start program depending on staff capacity. Standardized instruments will not be administered for mothers in the comparison group who are in one of VOAIN’s outpatient treatment programs or another program in the community. The grantee will collect administrative data for all program and comparison group members.

**Process and collaboration study design**

In the process study, the grantee will examine the success of the project in (1) creating successful interagency collaboration between VOAIN, the Marion County Department of Child Services, the Marion County Juvenile Court system, and other local service providers; and (2) integrating substance abuse treatment, case management, peer support, parenting education, and child development services to help infants who are born addicted to drugs. Data sources include assessments, court case files, case management records, interviews, focus groups, program documentation, and surveys.

**SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES**

VOAIN will establish or update internal policies and procedures, update our database and train staff to embed the project in our internal service delivery system. Partnership agreements will be developed or updated to create a seamless system of treatment and care. Each document will outline the respective roles and responsibilities of Fresh Start and the partner(s) and include accountability mechanisms, data collection and evaluation agreements, and the process for communication and coordination. These systems will not only include SUD treatment and care providers, but also entities that provide assistance and support to stabilize or maintain housing, food and basic needs, education, employment, community support, primary and mental health care, court accompaniment, advocacy, and trauma-specific services.

Throughout the grant period, VOAIN’s Project Director and Lead Evaluator will monitor and document the process of planning and implementing the RPG. Staff will update policies, forms,
partnership agreements, job descriptions, manuals, and other materials that capture institutional memory. Lead staff have a succession plan to ensure smooth transitions due to attrition or emergency situations. In this manner, VOAIN will maintain program continuity when there is a change in the operational environment to ensure stability over time.