**REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS ROUND 4**

**ENHANCING PERMANENCY IN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (EPIC PROGRAM)**

**LEAD AGENCY:** The Ohio State University  
**LOCATION:** Columbus, Ohio  
**TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING:** $3,000,000  
**GEOGRAPHIC AREA:** Fairfield and Pickaway Counties  

**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REGION:** Region 5  
**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT SERVED:** OH District OH-003  

---

**BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Ohio State University’s Enhancing Permanency in Children and Families (EPIC) program includes three evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies: (1) family treatment drug court (FTDC) and medication-assisted treatment (MAT); (2) peer recovery supporters; and (3) parenting and support for kinship providers. The interventions are intended to holistically provide supports to families involved in the child welfare system due to substance use to get parents into treatment and increase child permanency and well-being.

---

**TARGET POPULATION AND PROJECTED NUMBERS SERVED**

Families struggling with substance use and involved in Fairfield and Pickaway County Children Services.

Over five years, the proposed number served is 214 parents through peer recovery supporters, 117 parents through FTDC and 125 kinship caregivers through parenting and support for kinship providers. The program will serve a total of 250 unique adult caregivers.

---

**MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS**

**GOAL 1:** Increase timely access to services for parents involved in the child welfare system due to substance use.

**GOAL 2:** Enhance child safety and improve permanency in Fairfield and Pickaway Counties.

**GOAL 3:** Increase child, parent, and caregiver well-being.

---

**KEY MAJOR PROGRAM SERVICES**

- **Evidence-Based/Informed Practices:**
  - Nurturing Parent
  - Peer Recovery Coaching

- **Substance Use Disorder Treatment**
  - Residential Treatment
- Intensive Outpatient Treatment
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

### Adult Screening and Assessment
- UNCOPE

### Children’s Screening and Assessment
- Trauma Screenings

### Family Treatment Drug Court
- Traditional Family Treatment Court Track
- Pre-filing Family Treatment Court Track

### Cross-Systems/Interagency Collaboration – Clinical-Related Activities
- The Needs Portal will be used to create referrals for services, track dates of service provision, and record screening responses
- Cross-systems clinical training on substance abuse, child welfare and related clinical issues
- Co-location

### Cross-Systems/Interagency Collaboration – Program and Policy-Related Activities
- Partnerships and collaboration on projects

### PARTNER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

### Child Welfare
- Fairfield County Job & Family Services
- Pickaway County Job & Family Services

### Court
- Fairfield County Juvenile & Probate Divisions Common Pleas Courts
- Pickaway County Common Pleas Courts Probate & Juvenile Divisions

### Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Support Services
- OhioGuidestone
- Integrated Services of Behavioral Health
- Recovery Center
- Berger Health Partners (BHP)
- American Court and Drug Testing Services

### Evaluation
- Ohio State University, Dr. Bridget Freisthler & Dr. Kathryn Maguire-Jack
EVALUATION DESIGN

OUTCOME STUDY DESIGN: QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN (QED)

The local evaluation of Enhancing Permanency in Children and Families (EPIC) has an impact study and a process study. The grantee 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 EPIC services. Members of the program group will participate in family drug treatment court, have access to medication-assisted treatment, and be connected with a certified peer recovery supporter. They will receive these services for about six months. In cases where children have been removed and placed with kinship care providers, those caregivers will receive parenting classes and certain financial supports. All program group families will come from two Ohio counties, Fairfield and Pickaway.

The evaluation will have two comparison groups. One will receive Ohio Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma (START) services, including pairing participants with a peer recovery supporter who will provide intensive case management and referral to drug treatment providers. Children in Ohio START will receive trauma counseling as needed. The second comparison group will receive business-as-usual services, which will primarily consist of meetings with a caseworker and referrals to other services. These families may also receive services focused on substance abuse, such as inpatient or outpatient treatment or substance abuse counseling, and it is possible that some of them will be paired with a peer recovery supporter, because this service is now covered by Medicaid. In addition, families in both comparison groups may receive family drug treatment court or MAT, but unlike families in the program group, they will not be systematically referred, and will not receive additional supports for kinship caregivers. Both comparison groups will likely receive services for an average of about six months. Families for both comparison groups will be identified through administrative data and will come from two counties (for each comparison group) that are similar to Fairfield and Pickaway in their demographic characteristics.

The impact study will include 750 families, with 250 in the program group and about 500 in the two comparison groups (about 250 each). The grantee will examine impacts in the following domains: permanency, safety, and recovery. The grantee will also examine how outcomes in two other domains (child well-being and family functioning) change for families in the program group over the course of their time in the RPG program and compared to 100 families who receive the Ohio START intervention.

Data sources include administrative data (for both the program and comparison groups) and information collected by data collectors using standardized instruments (for only the program group).
A research assistant will conduct data collection with the program group, using the standardized instruments. Data will be collected at two time points for each program group family: (1) when they begin services (baseline) and (2) about six months following baseline (at the end of services).

**Process study design**

In the process study, the grantee will examine (1) procedures used to coordinate services between child welfare, behavioral health, and the courts; (2) whether families receive appropriate services matched to their needs and whether they receive them promptly; and (3) the successes and challenges of service implementation and collaboration. The evaluation will also yield early formative feedback to improve implementation over the course of the grant. Data sources include documentation related to the collaboration, program documents, and administrative data.

**SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Involvement of Partners:** All key partners will be on the Steering Committee and will meet quarterly to discuss funding options, improve collaboration between the partners and other agencies, and identify additional partners to join the collaboration.

**Integrating Activities & Institutionalizing Strategies:** After the grant period has ended, child welfare workers will continue to provide the UNCOPE assessment and record the findings within the Needs Portal. The Needs Portal will continue to be used to ensure quick entry into services and follow-up to ensure families in the child welfare system are receiving the services to which they are referred.

**Sustainable Funding Streams:** Braiding the RPG funding with other sources (Medicaid and local dollars) will help to sustain services. The parent education component of the kinship support program is billable under the therapeutic behavioral services of Medicaid.

---

1 A small subset of Ohio START participants (about 100) will have primary data collected by a research assistant at baseline and a six-month follow-up data with funding from a separate grant.