
The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Annual Report on Collaboration with the Department of Human Services to Develop Programs to Serve Families Impacted by Substance Use Disorders (SUD)

This report is submitted in accordance with Section 7.3c of the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/7.3c), which requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), to develop, test, evaluate, and report on pilot programs that integrate child welfare and substance use disorder services.

Interagency Collaboration Overview

Since 1995, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), formerly known as the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR), have collaborated to develop and implement integrated services for DCFS-involved families impacted by substance use disorders. This report highlights program activities and outcome trends that reflect the ongoing partnership between DCFS and DHS-DBHR.

Current collaboration between DCFS and DHS-DBHR is guided by shared policy goals, interagency agreements, and coordinated program initiatives. Services described in this report are funded through DCFS, in coordination with DHS-DBHR, and through federal initiatives designed to support prevention, treatment, and recovery for families involved with the child welfare system.

Programs

Intact Family Recovery (IFR) Program

The Intact Family Recovery (IFR) Program supports families following the birth of substance-exposed infants. Families are eligible for IFR when prenatal substance exposure has been identified and the family demonstrates a willingness to engage in recovery-oriented services. The program integrates child welfare services with substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports through coordinated service delivery.

IFR teams consist of child welfare professionals and substance use disorder specialists who work collaboratively with families to address safety, treatment, and recovery needs. DCFS provides funding for child welfare and Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) staff, while DHS-DBHR programs and Medicaid support treatment and recovery services.

IFR partnerships deliver a range of evidence-informed and family-centered services, including peer recovery coaching, substance use disorder treatment, parenting and family strengthening interventions, services for pregnant and postpartum individuals, medication-assisted treatment, in-home parenting supports, and child safety services.

The IFR program offers comprehensive support over an extended service period, allowing parents time to engage in treatment, strengthen parenting capacity, and access necessary health and social services. Throughout the outreach, treatment, and recovery phases, families receive ongoing support through home visits and coordinated case management.

Fiscal Year 2025 Outcomes

During Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), DCFS, in collaboration with DHS-DBHR and contracted providers, continued to implement IFR services across Illinois. Overall, FY25 outcomes indicate strong performance across key domains related to child safety, health, and family stability among participating families. Many families served through IFR remained intact during the service period, and a high proportion of participating mothers did not experience a subsequent substance-exposed birth. Children involved in IFR received consistent health and developmental supports, including age-appropriate immunizations and referrals for early childhood developmental assessments when indicated.

Maternal engagement in recovery services remained strong throughout the reporting period. Many participants completed substance use disorder treatment or demonstrated sustained progress toward recovery goals, including negative toxicology screens. Mothers were encouraged to maintain regular medical care and were provided family planning education and referrals as part of a comprehensive, prevention-focused approach.

IFR Expansion Projects

The IFR program has expanded to additional regions across Illinois through the Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) program administered by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families within the Children's Bureau. The RPG program supports interagency collaboration and service integration to improve child well-being, enhance safety, and promote permanency for children who are in, or at risk of entering, out-of-home care due to parental substance use disorders.

Illinois initially received an RPG award to support IFR expansion in the Department's Cook Region. That grant concluded in September 2022. Building on this work, subsequent RPG awards supported IFR expansion in the Department's Central Region and in the Southern Region and Metro East.

Implementation of the current RPG continues to progress toward long-term service capacity goals. During the reporting period, multiple referrals were received for IFR services, with a portion determined to be eligible for participation. Some eligible families declined services, resulting in a smaller number of families actively enrolled during the period. IFR services under the current RPG are delivered through partnerships with multiple intact family service agencies. Planning and assessment activities are also underway to evaluate the potential expansion of IFR services into additional counties.

Program Impact

The IFR program supports families impacted by substance use disorders by providing coordinated, prevention-focused services designed to promote child safety, strengthen family stability, and reduce the need for out-of-home placement. Through cross-system collaboration and targeted service delivery, IFR contributes to improved permanency outcomes and supports DCFS's broader efforts to keep children safely with their families whenever possible. Consistent with the goals of the Family First Prevention Services Act, IFR aligns with evidence-informed prevention approaches that address substance use disorders within the family system. Continued investment in prevention services and interagency collaboration strengthens Illinois' capacity to support recovery, protect children, and promote family stability.

Recovery Homes

DCFS partners with Maryville Academy to operate the St. Monica's and St. Josephine Bakhita Recovery Homes, which provide comprehensive residential recovery services for mothers with substance use disorders and their children. Both programs are licensed by DHS-DBHR and are designed to support recovery while prioritizing child safety, stability, and well-being.

DCFS provides funding, referral coordination, and program oversight through a contractual partnership with Maryville Academy. Services are trauma-informed, family-centered, and recovery-oriented, addressing substance use disorders, co-occurring mental health needs, parenting capacity, and family stability.

The recovery homes serve adult women and their children. Core services include substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, parenting education, life-skills development, job readiness, and vocational training. Each recovery home includes connection to the Maryville Family Behavioral Health Clinic, allowing families to access integrated clinical and recovery services within a single setting.

Recovery Homes Outcomes Summary

During FY25, recovery home programs demonstrated strong outcomes related to maternal recovery, child safety, and family stability. Many participating mothers maintained custody of their children throughout the service period and did not experience subsequent reports of abuse or neglect while enrolled. Participants showed progress toward recovery goals, including engagement in treatment, sustained periods of abstinence, and participation in sober support networks. Children residing with their parents in recovery homes received age-appropriate developmental, educational, and health supports, including early intervention assessments and school enrollment when applicable. The integrated service model reduced barriers to care and supported continuity of services for families. Overall, FY25 outcomes reflect the role of recovery homes as a critical component of DCFS's continuum of care, supporting family preservation, maternal recovery, and improved child well-being for families impacted by substance use disorders.

Summary of Programs' Impact

During FY25, DCFS continued to advance prevention-focused, integrated services for families impacted by substance use disorders through the Intact Family Recovery (IFR) Program and Recovery Homes. IFR strengthened family stability by coordinating child welfare services with substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports, promoting child safety while reducing the risk of unnecessary out-of-home placement. Recovery Homes provided comprehensive, residential services that supported maternal recovery, maintained family unity, and ensured children received consistent developmental, educational, and health supports. Together, these programs demonstrate the value of cross-system collaboration in promoting recovery, preserving families, and improving outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system.

Detailed program data supporting this report are maintained by the Department and are available upon request.