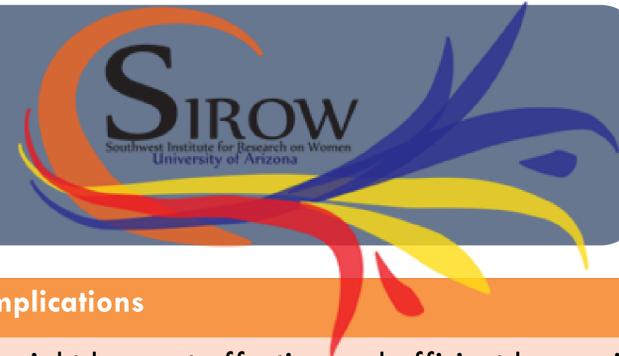# Key Findings of the National Cross-Site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures

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Overview

As jurisdictions throughout the country continue to seek solutions to juvenile justice issues, several have merged two existing models to create an innovative approach: Juvenile Drug Courts: Strategies in Practice (JDC:SIP) and Reclaiming Futures (RF).

Two federal agencies in partnership with a private foundation funded an initiative to improve the effectiveness and efficacy of juvenile drug courts (JDCs) by integrating these two models. Five sites were included in the National Cross-Site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures (JDC/RF).

The purpose of the JDC/RF National Cross-Site Evaluation was to evaluate the combined effects of the JDC:SIP and the RF models to identify the factors, elements, and services that perform best with respect to system and client outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

Key Finding	Applications/Implications
Compared to intensive outpatient programs (IOPs) for substance use treatment, JDCs overall are more effective at reducing substance use among youth with relatively more substance use at program intake.	-JDC programs might be most effective and efficient by serving youth with high levels of substance problems. -JDC programs with limited capacity to serve the youth in need in their community should consider focusing on high substance-problem youth and referring youth with less substance problems to IOP programs. -Revise JDC program inclusion criteria to focus on high-substance use-problem youth.
JDC/RF programs are more effective at reducing criminal behavior, than non-RF JDCs and IOPs among youth with relatively more criminal activity at program intake.	-JDC programs working with clients with high levels of criminal behavior might increase their effectiveness and cost efficiency by integrating elements of the RF model into their programs. -Revise JDC/RF program inclusion criteria to focus on high-crime youth.
Program characteristics with desirable impact on client outcomes: 1) Having a defined target population and eligibility criteria; 2) Utilization of gender-appropriate treatment; 3) Utilization of policies and procedures responsive to cultural differences; 4) Utilization of a non-adversarial approach; 5) Coordination with the school system; 6) Utilization of sanctions to modify non-compliance; 7) Utilization of random and observed drug testing.	-Programs should select and utilize program components that effectively serve their target population. -Programs utilizing the identified program characteristics might be more effective and efficient if they target youth with a particular severity of substance use and criminal behavior. -Revise JDC and JDC/RF program inclusion criteria to focus on high-crime and high-clinical-problem youth.
Integrated systems of care and treatment tailored to the target population are particularly critical to effectively serving the substance abuse treatment needs of JDC/RF clients.	-To optimize the effectiveness of the JDC, programs should increase support for the treatment network/community in the JDC area, as well as select and utilize program components that effectively serve their target population.
JDC/RF programs that more fully implement these key activities were more successful at reducing substance use with heavy substance users: 1) Community engagement; 2) Collaborative partnerships; 3) Educational linkages; 4) Community transition.	-The nature and extent of the implementation of components of the integrated JDC/RF model impacts client outcomes. -Revise JDC/RF program inclusion criteria to focus on high-substance use-problem youth.
JDC/RF programs achieve more cost-savings with youth who have more clinical problems.	-JDC working with clients who have multiple clinical problems might increase their cost efficiency by integrating elements of the RF model into their programs.

An application from most findings and relevant for all programs is to use standardized, valid clinical tools to screen youth for program eligibility and assess their service needs.