

# TASC | Demonstrated Success

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## Recovery Coach Program Increases Family Reunification

The Recovery Coach Program (RCP) serves families in which children have been removed from the custody of one or both parents and placed into foster care because of substance abuse–related maltreatment. The program aims to address parents’ substance abuse problems, helping to achieve family reunification more often and more quickly. Operating in three Illinois Counties (beginning in Cook County in 2000, and expanding to Madison and St. Clair Counties in 2007), RCP is funded through a Title IV-E waiver\* granted to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) provides outreach, engagement, and case management services for the program. TASC Recovery Coaches work with parents in a community setting to facilitate access to addiction treatment services and other supports for their clients. Recovery Coaches provide proactive case management services that engage, retain, and re-engage (when necessary) parents in substance abuse treatment services, and promote, monitor, and report client progress. In Cook County, Recovery Coaches work with the Juvenile Court Assessment Program (JCAP), which provides substance abuse assessments and initial referrals to treatment for families identified as being substance-involved at the time of their temporary custody hearing or within 180 days, as well as with child welfare case workers and substance abuse treatment providers. In St. Clair and Madison Counties, the TASC Court Assessment Project (TCAP) conducts substance abuse assessments and makes treatment recommendations for parents referred by judges, attorneys, and case workers.

### The Study

RCP has undergone an evaluation of process and outcomes, and was subject to a cost analysis. The evaluation and analysis used data collected for program activity from April 2000 through May 2012, including 1,000 parents (representing 1,455 children) in the control group, who received the regular substance abuse treatment services available, and 2,325 parents (representing 3,119 children) in the experimental group, who received the regular treatment services plus RCP services.

### The Outcomes

*Compared with children in the control group, those whose parents were RCP participants were more likely to achieve parental reunification, and to do so in shorter periods of time.*

- The percentage of children for whom parental reunification was achieved was 21% greater (23% vs. 19%).
- Reunification occurred, on average, 130 days sooner (770 days vs. 900 days).

*Parents in the RCP group were more likely than those in the control group to access substance abuse treatment services, and to do so at a slightly faster pace.*

- The percentage of parents who accessed substance abuse treatment services was 69% greater (49% vs. 29%).
- Parents accessed treatment services more quickly (28% accessed treatment within 60 days after initial assessment and referral to treatment vs. 19%).

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\* Title IV-E is the category of federal regulations governing federal funding of foster care and adoption support. Funds primarily cover maintenance of eligible children in foster care. However, through IV-E waiver agreements, jurisdictions can use them for community and home-based services that safely support vulnerable children in their parents’ homes, and to achieve expedited permanency for children who cannot be safely reunified with birth parents. Some jurisdictions have reduced foster care populations while maintaining or improving safety and permanency outcomes. *Source: Casey Family Programs.*

*More children in the RCP group than in the control group achieved permanence, reducing the number of children in long-term foster care.*

- The percentage of children who achieved permanence, through reunification, adoption, or subsidized guardianship, was 16% greater (58% vs. 50%).

*Fewer children in the RCP group than in the control group had subsequent juvenile justice system involvement.*

- The percentage of children who had a subsequent juvenile arrest was 53% lower (9% vs. 19%).

## **The Cost Savings**

*The program facilitated a significant cost savings for the State, freeing up dollars for other child welfare services.*

- Between 2000 and 2010, the Recovery Coach program saved the State of Illinois at least \$6.1 million.
- The cost analysis does not take into account the additional savings associated with prevented juvenile crimes and reduced juvenile arrests.

**Source:** Ryan, J. P. and Huang, H. (2012). *Illinois AODA IV-E Waiver Demonstration Final Evaluation Report*. Urbana, Illinois: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois, School of Social Work.

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**Prepared by TASC, Inc.** TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is a not-for-profit organization that provides recovery management services for individuals with substance use and mental health disorders. Serving nearly 17,000 clients in Illinois each year, TASC's statewide infrastructure is designed to intervene when alcohol or other drug use has caused people to become involved with the criminal justice system, juvenile justice system, corrections, child welfare, and/or public aid. Pursuant to Illinois statute and administrative rule, TASC is the agency designated to assess offenders with substance abuse issues and make treatment recommendations and referrals for the Illinois criminal justice system. For more information, please visit [www.tasc.org](http://www.tasc.org).

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