



# WASHINGTON FAMILY TREATMENT COURT NEWSLETTER

The Administrative Office of the Courts received a grant from OJJDP (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) to support and enhance the existing Washington Family Treatment Courts' ability to serve families. The FTC Project Team was hired in the spring of 2021 and includes [Julie Lowery](#), Project Manager; [Dr. Meghan Fitzgerald](#), Training Coordinator; [Dr. Mikala Meize-Bowers](#), Sr. Research Associate; and [Gia Valentine](#), Assistant. *The team aspires to send a quarterly newsletter to provide updates on grant activities, information about trainings, data, and technical assistance, and highlights from local sites. Please contact us if you have anything in particular you'd like us to include in the newsletters!*

## WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**
- **TRAINING INFORMATION**
- **CHANGE MANAGEMENT**
- **TECHICAL ASSISTANCE**
- **WA FTC STEERING COMMITTEE**
- **DATA COLLECTION**
- **HAVE YOU HEARD?**
- **HEALING TO WELLNESS**

## FAMILY TREATMENT COURT EVENTS

**Coordinator Conversations - 1st Monday of the month (generally) at 11am**  
**Judicial Officer Conversations - Quarterly, next one is May 10th at 12pm**  
**Steering Committee Meetings - Monthly (currently 3rd Friday at 11am)**

### APRIL

Tues, April 12, 10am - 11am CFF- Peer to Peer  
Fri, April 15, 11am - 12pm FTC Steering Committee Meeting

### MAY

**May is National Drug Court Month- Take a look at this [NADCP Toolkit!](#)**

Mon, May 2, 11am - 12pm Coordinator Conversation  
Tues, May 10, 12pm - 1pm Judicial Officer Conversation  
Fri, May 20, 11am - 12pm FTC Steering Committee Meeting

### JUNE

**June is National Reunification Month!**

Wed, June 1, 11am - 12pm Rural Court Access Round-Table  
Fri, June 3, 1pm - 2pm Attorney Conversation  
Mon, June 6, 11am - 12pm Coordinator Conversation  
Fri, June 17, 11am - 12pm FTC Steering Committee Meeting  
Mon, June 27, 11am - 12pm Coordinator Conversation

## Trainings

Dr. Meghan Fitzgerald, FTC Training Coordinator, will create and facilitate live trainings during the course of the three year grant. She is also developing online self-paced trainings on all 8 FTC Best Practice Standards.

### [FTC online modules:](#)

- Best Practice Standard 1: Organization and Structure
- Best Practice Standard 2: Role of the Judge

### Upcoming Trainings:

- NWATTC Webinar: Harm Reduction in Rural Alaska- April 27th @12pm  
[Register Here!](#)
- The American Indian/Alaska Native ATTC is hosting a [6 session training](#) every other week starting April 8. The series is focused on strength based cultural practices and springtime teachings.

### Self-Paced:

- Check out this short podcast titled [“What We Don’t know About Indian Child Welfare, But Should”](#) which features Judge William Thorn. This podcast training is not only relevant to ICWA cases, but gives insight to all dependency cases. Only 13 minutes long!

## Technical Assistance

The FTC Project Team has responded to 68 requests for technical assistance since June 2021!

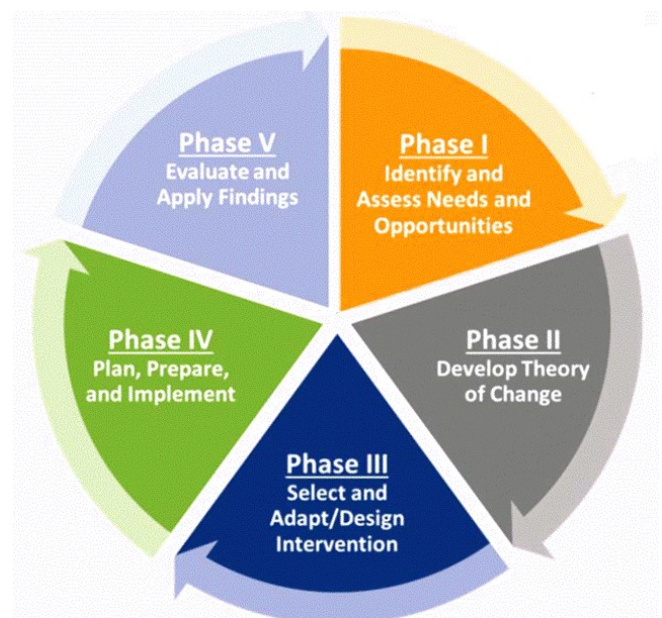
We are available to provide technical assistance upon request. If you have questions about policies, practice, equity, data collection/analysis, sample materials, trainings, etc, contact [Gia Valentine](#) and she will direct your question to the correct person.

## Change Management

CQI or Continuous Quality Improvement is a process of implementing small changes to improve the outcomes of your court over time. For CQI to work, you must have a plan to find out if improvement is happening (data collection) and have a clear process to make changes that help to achieve your goals (change management).

The State FTC team (Julie, Mikala, Gia, and Meghan) looked at the state level performance measures data and noticed that families from Black, Indigenous, Biracial, and Hispanic racial identities are under-represented in family treatment courts, despite higher representation in dependency cases over all. After brainstorming the potential root causes of this difference in demographics, and following the other steps of change management, we have started to implement some small but impactful changes which we will track to determine if they were successful. One of these was to give an example of a racial equity change that courts could implement easily and quickly. You can read though that example on our [change management web page.](#)

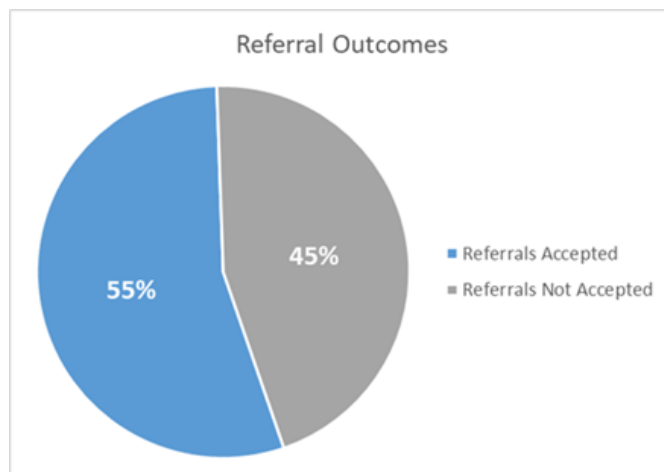
Please [contact us](#) if you have an idea you’d like to develop further or if you have successfully implemented a change. We would love to hear your thoughts!



# Data Collection

## Just Data January

- Just Data January was a roaring success! In case you missed any of the resources from the state team, you can find them on our website here: [Family Treatment Court Data Resources](#).
- Some key highlights are the [template flyer](#) you can use to share the great things your program does with your community, and the [change management](#) resources designed to guide teams through program improvements.
- Email [Gia Valentine](#) to schedule a change management workshop with the state FTC team to facilitate this process and help prioritize the things you'd like to improve upon.
- Based on the data submitted by the county-based Family Treatment Courts in Washington, almost 150 parents were referred to FTCs between July 2021-December 2021. Only about half were accepted. It's not clear why so many referrals were not accepted; if your program had referrals that weren't accepted, consider reviewing why. Are there ways to increase the acceptances? Is there something the team can do to welcome potential participants, specifically Black, Native and Latino families?



## Washington FTC Steering Committee

*Guided by a family focused and anti-racist informed lens, the FTC steering committee supports Family Treatment Courts with resources, knowledge, and best practice models to ensure that all families in Washington can receive and be empowered by equitable access, equitable care, and equitable outcomes.*

The Washington State FTC Steering Committee and housing subcommittee meet monthly. The housing workgroup identified three areas of effort: legislative advocacy for housing resources to be available for DCYF caseworkers when it would prevent the need for or shorten time in out of home placement; reviving an MOU between DCYF and 21 public and nonprofit "housers;" and creating a training for court staff on the responsibility and limitations of DCYF to assist families with housing. The steering committee is in the process of identifying additional focus areas for their work in support of Family Treatment Courts. If you have a system problem or issue you would like to bring to the steering committee, please fill out this [form](#).

# Have You Heard?

If you & your team have anything exciting or noteworthy you'd like to share in our next newsletter, please let us know!

## **King County Art Partnership:**

King County FTC team members wanted to find ways for parents to have fun in recovery and connect with themselves and others. This search led them to start a partnership with ["Path with Art."](#) FTC participants in recovery can access quarterly classes and attend specifically designed workshops. Path with Art hosted a Family Art Event in December for FTC families and a Dance & Movement workshop last quarter. Path with Art provides professional artists to teach and design the classes along with free art materials for the class. Everyone involved must be in recovery so it provides a safe place to process and get support while expressing yourself through art! Parents also receive sober support credit for attending.

## **Snohomish FRC Intern & Support Coordinator:**

Snohomish FRC is in the process of hiring a Recovery Support Coordinator to focus on housing, education, employment, community connections/resources, and alumni support. In addition, an FRC graduate from 2018 will be interning with the program for the next couple of months. They are going to be focusing on recruitment during their time with the team!

## **Mason County Shed:**

Mason County has been hard at work developing resources for their families. One of their big projects was to put together a resource shed full of donations like small appliances, bedding, books, and games that can be shared with families as they progress through the program. Like much of what Mason County's FRC does, they make a big impact in small spaces. Look at that organization! →

## **Tulalip Family Wellness Court Graduation:**

The Tulalip Family Wellness Court had their first participant graduation on March 30th!

## **Court Observations:**

It can be extremely valuable to learn about other programs, especially if there is a Tribal Healing to Wellness Court near you. Dr. Mikala Meize-Bowers is currently creating a reference page that team members can use to schedule observations with other WA FTC's, so be on the look out for that coming soon! If someone is interested in scheduling an observation sooner rather than later, but don't know where to start, you can contact [Julie Lowery](#) for assistance.

## **Rural Court Access Round-Table:**

Save the date! On June 1st the FTC team is planning to host a round-table, open to all FTC team members, where we will discuss the benefits and obstacles of providing virtual services, and court dockets, especially in rural counties. We will provide more information soon!



# Healing to Wellness Courts

- Dr. Meghan Fitzgerald

Family-focused, substance and alcohol use disorder (SUD/AUD) therapeutic courts go by a wide variety of names: family drug court, family reunification court, recovery court, family treatment court (the name used most often at the national level which is why we use this for our grant). Today, I want to give you a little insight to a court that represents those same values, but has unique development and administration: Tribal Family [Healing to Wellness](#) Courts.

In 2003, a guide was developed to specifically address the challenges tribal courts face developing adult Healing to Wellness Courts (adult drug courts) in Native American and Alaska Native communities. "The Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts: The Key Components," is similar to the key components developed for drug courts in 1997, but used the guidance of a Tribal Advisory Committee to adapt those practices to the Healing to Wellness model (Tribal Law & Policy Institute, 2003). This updated version (2014) is an excellent resource for all therapeutic courts working to heal substance and alcohol use disorders.

In this Training Coordinator's humble opinion, one of the great strengths of the healing to wellness model, compared to the key components of Adult Drug Courts, is the focus on healing of family and community. In fact, the 2014 Adult Drug Court Key Components only mentions the word "family" four times (NADCP, 2014), while the Healing to Wellness Key Components uses "family" 66 times! This focus on family from the start likely helped Family Healing to Wellness Courts develop more seamlessly than the adult drug court model and allows for more integration.

Sometimes looking at policies with a slightly different perspective can be just the boost your court needs. Consider using the [Tribal Court Clearinghouse](#) and the [Healing to Wellness Courts](#) website as resources when you brainstorm updates of your policies and procedures, or share with your oversight or local governance committee.

If your court is still working on developing a Mission and Vision statement, here is an excellent example from the [Tulalip Healing to Wellness Court Website](#):

- **"Mission statement:** The mission of the Tulalip Family Wellness Court is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of children in dependency by assisting parents to address their substance abuse and other service needs through a comprehensive, integrated, and culturally-competent judicially-managed collaboration.
- **Tulalip Tribes Value #6: We strengthen our people so that they may walk a good walk.**  
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- **Vision statement:** The vision of the Tulalip Family Wellness court is to reunite parents with their children by providing support for these families to assist in breaking the cycle of substance abuse, while ensuring that families grow healthy together. Promoting wellness & cultural connection is an ongoing journey; providing future generations a chance to live healthy, balanced, sober lives to strengthen our Tulalip community."

## REFERENCES

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS (NADCP). (2014). DEFINING DRUG COURTS: THE KEY COMPONENTS. [HTTPS://WWW.OJP.GOV/PDFFILES1/BJA/205621.PDF](https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/bja/205621.pdf)

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