

Alachua County Advisory Boards Annual Work Plan FY 2020-2021 and Accomplishments Report FY 2019-20

Date	October, 2020
Board/Committee Name	Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Grant Planning Committee (CJMHSAG)
Chairperson	Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler
Staff Support	Amy Weber, Court Services
Board Liaison	Carl Smart, Interim Director, Court Services

Brief History of Committee

Established May 22, 2007, to further prior interests of the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to prepare a grant application for the Florida CJMHSAG as required by §394.656, Fla. Stat. (2007). In January 2008, Alachua County was awarded by Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) a three year CJMHSAG State grant totaling \$999,000 with matching funds from Alachua County. The grant funded a Forensic Diversion Team (FDT) that was implemented in July 2008. The original grant expired March 27, 2011.

Alachua County was awarded a CJMHSAG expansion grant totaling \$750,000 over three years effective March 28, 2011. Alachua County allocated \$166,500 annually in general fund support as a match for this grant. The expansion grant focused on blending the original FDT with the Forensic Specialist Team (FST) operated by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, serving additional people with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders through more cost-effective community based treatment. Additionally, new partnerships were formed with Vocational Rehabilitation and Florida Works to provide a greater array of services.

In January, 2014, Alachua County was awarded by DCF a three year grant for \$1.2 million. The successful grant preparation was overseen by the Planning Committee as part of its role identified in the Statute.

Matching funds are being provided by the County from the General Fund as well as \$148,530 in in-kind support from the Department of Court Services. The total funding available in grant and matching funds for the CJMHSAG Program is \$2,458,530.

In September 2016, a CJMHSAG Expansion and Implementation Grant was awarded by DCF to Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. as applicant and grantee agency, for the period April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2020. The purpose of the Grant was to support the development of an Alachua/Bradford Consortium to serve a greater geographic region

with forensic diversion and related supportive services. The amount of the Grant was \$1.5 million, which was matched by a total of cash and in-kind services of \$1,651,419 from three sources: Alachua County, Bradford County and Meridian. The matching funds specifically provided by Alachua County included \$1,110,000 in cash through the Mental Illness Work Group, also via the General Fund and \$240,000 for in-kind personnel services, including the Benefits Coordinator and Criminal Justice Liaison (50% time) from the Department of Court Services.

On April 1, 2020, the CJMHSAG Grant No. 5 commenced, with a grant award of \$1.5 million to Meridian Behavioral HealthCare, Inc. as the recipient agency. The grant award from DCF also carries with it the same level of cash match commitment from Alachua County at \$1.1 million. In addition, there is the same level of in-kind match from Alachua County at \$240,000, for two positions based at Court Services: 1 FTE Benefits Coordinator, and .2881 FTE Criminal Justice Liaison.

The CJMHSAG grant supports a County initiative designed to increase public safety, avert increased spending on criminal justice, and improve assessment and treatment options for adults who have a mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, and who are in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Across the five grant programs, the overall purpose has remained steadfast, with different features added for purposes of expansion and enhancement to improve quality, accessibility and coordination of services.

At the end of Grant No. 4 on March 30, 2020, the Forensic Diversion Team served 265 clients annually on average. During the first six months of Grant No. 5, 154 clients have been receiving services.

Highlights of the newest CJMHSAG Program being undertaken include

- Continued Mental Health First Aid training, based on an evidence-based community education curriculum being provided to law enforcement, first responders, court services, teachers, clergy, and community providers
- Expansion of the Co-Responder Model to now include the Alachua Sherriff's Office Co-Responder Team and the Gainesville Police Department Co-Responder Team
- Conduct early in-jail biopsychosocial assessments for inmates with extended stays or who need prerelease stabilization
- Provide transitional housing through the Meridian Lodge with dedicated beds per the needs of the Forensics' Program
- Continuing substance use outreach groups in the Alachua County jail
- Initiating mental health outreach groups in the Alachua County jail led by a master's level clinician

Mission Statement

The mission of the CJMHSAG Planning Committee is to promote a system of identification, assessment, and negotiation to effectively divert those with mental illness, co-occurring substance abuse, homelessness, and involvement in the criminal justice system from the jail to appropriate services and housing.

Vision Statement

A community that no longer needs jails and courts to serve as the primary provider of mental health and addictions treatment.

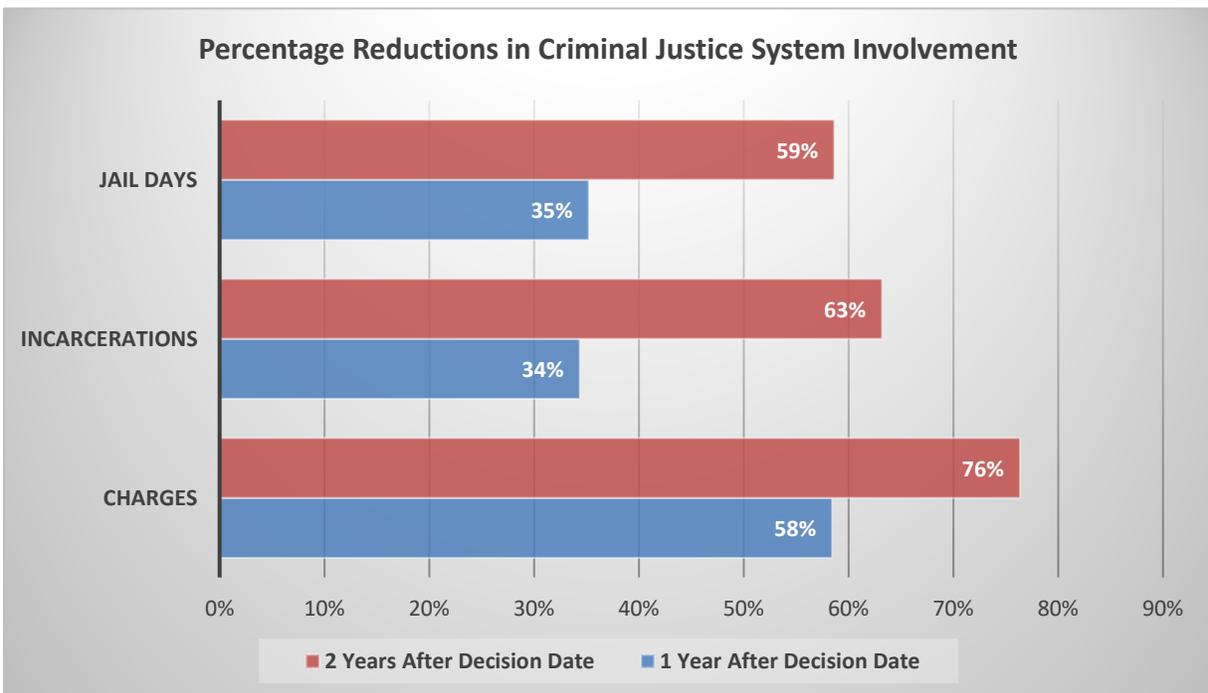
Major Accomplishments in FY2019-20

- Participants averaged over 83% of days in the community vs. days in jail since the program's inception
- 886 active program participants served during Grant 4. As of September 30, 2020, there are 145 actively enrolled participants under Grant 5.
- Provided additional jail and community based competency training resulting in the diversion of 25 individuals from the State Hospital (10/1/19 – 9/30/20)
- Conducted four quarterly CJMHSAG Planning Committee meetings, as required by Florida Statute 394.656
- Continued community outreach by providing training for the following: Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Trauma Informed Responses for Criminal Justice, Mental Health training for new-hire 911 dispatch operators, Forensic Specialist Training, Mental Health First Aid, Competency Restoration, and 916 Forensic Model
- Enhanced violence risk assessment efforts through administration of the HCR -20 V3, including tracking and measurement
- Continued efforts have been made to emphasize more services at Intercept 1 (Sequential Intercept Model) with specific prevention outreach continued at Grace, BOLD, SOAR, CIT, 911 Dispatch, GPD, DCF, DOC and ACSO
- Supported the continued implementation of the new Mental Health Team, a combined unit of GPD and Meridian which provides outreach and diversion services at the pre-booking stage to those in a mental health crisis in the City of Gainesville
- Peer Specialists continue to regularly assist in the mental health specialty courts. This has been a tremendous success in mentoring participants and families. An innovative new program "WRAP" (Wellness, Recovery, Action, Plan) has been used by the Peer Specialists with participants who are successfully transitioning out the program
- Initiated a broader community education piece directed toward building increased community awareness of the CJMHSAG initiative and its impact, participating through the Alachua Stepping Up Initiative and other forums
- Concentrated efforts have been made to promote a Trauma Informed community by giving SAMHSA Trauma Informed Responses training to our stakeholders. The team continues to provide specific evidenced based trauma informed care and therapy with participants in the program
- Continued CIT training and Mental Health First Aid training for law enforcement personnel and community providers

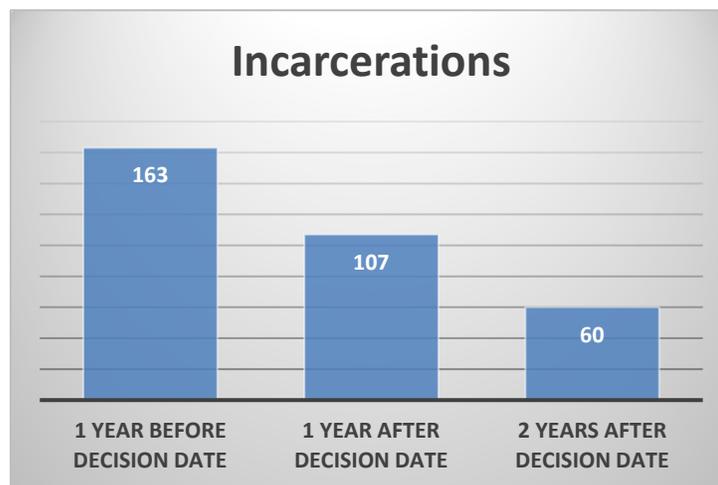
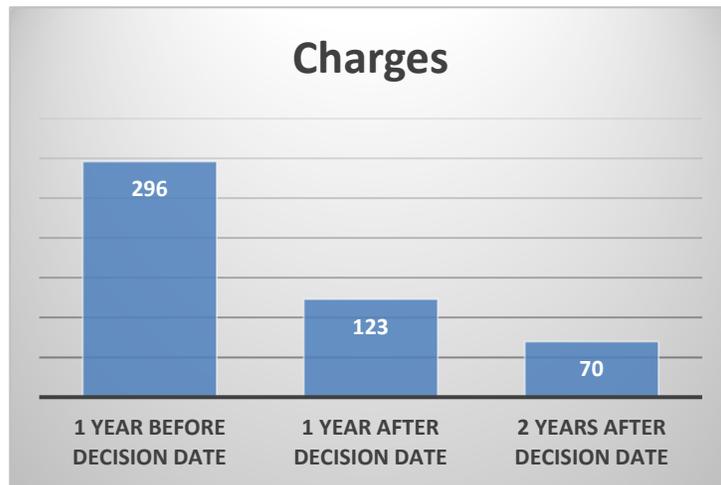
Goals & Objectives for FY2018-19

Goal 1 – Increase Public Safety

The goal is being met as demonstrated by the reduced criminal recidivism among the participants. This ultimately results in fewer arrests, charges, and jail days for admitted clients. **From October 2017 through September 2018**, there were 141 admitted clients which had some form of contact with the criminal justice system in Alachua County. Contact with the criminal justice system was significantly reduced in the 12 and 24-month periods following their admission into the program. The graph below summarizes the magnitude of the reductions in charges, incarcerations, and jail days:



The following graphs portray the number of charges, incarcerations, and jail days in the time periods one year before, one year after, and two years after admission. These measures all show a reduction in criminal recidivism, which is evidence of increased public safety.



Goal 2 – Increased Assessment and Treatment Options

The Forensic Team continues to provide information and outreach to stakeholders to encourage expedited jail release for appropriate candidates. This process remains effective but requires continued outreach and education, due to changes in personnel and system processes. Support remains among all the stakeholders for jail diversion initiatives. In FY19/20, 49 participants in forensic treatment were directly admitted into treatment from Forensic Felony and Mental Health Courts. Many other court ordered clients were also expedited directly as a result of attorney advocacy. Of the non-accepted cases, efforts are made to refer to more appropriate treatment such as inpatient.

Goal 3 – Avert Spending on Jail Incarceration

The following chart compares the costs of incarceration for clients prior and after their admission into the program. Clients spent a total of 10,082 days in jail in the one-year period prior to their admission, but only 6,530 days in jail in the one-year period after their admission. Clients spent 4,169 days in jail in the 2nd year following their admission. Therefore, for participants admitted into the program, there is a noticeable decline in the number of days jailed. At an estimated \$105.59 per day for “regular” jail (Alachua County blended rate for all inmates’ costs) and an estimated \$265 per day for psychiatric inmates (based on data from Miami-Dade County in 2020), the program is clearly bending the curve on future costs. Based on the reduction of jail days and the daily cost figures, the Program saved between \$440,205 (blended) and \$1,104,785 (psychiatric) on clients in their 2nd year of the program.



Goal 4 – Avert State Spending for FS916 (Forensic) or FL394 (Civil) Hospital Beds

At the end of September 2020, there were 128 participants who were actively participating in the Forensics Program. 74 were receiving case management services in the community. 55 of the participants were receiving treatment services, treatment groups and individual sessions in the community. A total of 101/166 or 61% of all participants screened and enrolled in services were diverted from entry into a State Mental Health Treatment Facility. This achievement surpassed the Program goal set with Florida DCF which was a benchmark of 45%. In addition, 49 of the total participants were considered Incompetent to Proceed or Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity pursuant to Ch. 916 and placed on conditional release orders in the community monitored by the Team's Forensic Specialists. A total of 19 participants also received competency restoration services in the jail or community. During FY 2019-20, the Team restored 11 ITP clients, specifically diverting their admission to State Hospital.

Goal 5 – Enhance Collaboration

The CJMHSAG Program's partners and collaborators continue to be expanded and now include:

- Veteran's Administration
- Department of Children and Families
- Alachua County FACT Team
- Office of the State Attorney
- Office of the Public Defender
- Court Services
- Alachua County Sheriff's Office
- Bradford County Sheriff's Office
- Gainesville Police Department
- University of Florida Police Department
- Alachua and Bradford Boards of County Commission
- National Alliance for Mental Illness-Gainesville Chapter
- Alachua County Crisis Center
- 8th Judicial Circuit Court
- Department of Corrections Probation and Parole
- 8th Judicial Circuit Court Administration
- Gainesville Opportunity Center
- Gainesville Peer Respite
- Gainesville Police Department Brave Overt Leaders of Distinction (BOLD) Program
- Reentry Coalition of Alachua County,
- Gainesville Fire Rescue Community Resource Paramedics
- Career Source of North Central Florida
- Santa Fe College
- Catholic Charities
- House of Hope

In the spirit of such partnerships and to maintain opportunity to share information developed by members of the Forensic Team, the following trainings have been provided to the community stakeholders during FY19-20. These trainings have the benefit of expanding to additional criminal justice and behavioral health systems' staffs' evidence-based practices which are considered within the respective fields as state-of-the-art training and education curriculums. The accumulated training by the Team represented hundreds of hours:

- Crisis intervention Team Training to 128 Law Enforcement Officers & 911 Dispatchers (106 year 3 of Grant 4. 37 FY 10/1/19 – 9/30/20)
- Mental Health First Aid Training for Public Safety and Standard Training to 189 Stakeholder Agency Representatives, Public Safety & Criminal Justice Professionals, etc. (58 year 3 of Grant 4 74 FY 10/1/19 – 9/30 20)
- Forensic Specialist Training Provided to 91 forensic specialists in North Central Florida and Statewide
- “How Trauma Informed Care Improves Criminal Justice Responses” Training Provided to 36 Community Stakeholders and Local Resource Officers

Program Success Stories

Success Story 1

Mr. P. is an Alachua County Mental Health Court client in his late forties who was referred and encouraged by his Public Defender to participate in Mental Health Court. Since his admission, he has made great strides in all aspects of his life. He is currently stable on his medication and is fully participating in Forensic outpatient treatment services, including support and peer groups. When Mr. P. entered Forensics, he was chronically homeless.

Mr. P. now has stable housing and he reports that he and his dog both enjoy their new apartment, especially the air conditioning. He reports that he also now takes more time with his appearance, he is more receptive to socializing with his peers, and he no longer feeling as if he “doesn’t get along with others”. Mr. P’s stated goals during intake assessment included: “(I) would like to have more motivation, and feel more positive while being able to control” his anger. He has expressed a desire to become a Certified Recovery Peer Specialist, and is currently being mentored by the Mental Health Court Peer Specialist in order to make his goal a reality. He stated, “I never thought I could find a job that I wanted, and now I know there’s a career path where I can use my knowledge and skills to make a difference. Mental Health Court and the Mental Health Court Team have changed my life.”

Success Story 2

Ms. A. is a female client in her early forties who was referred to the Alachua County Mental Health Court by her attorney on charges of Battery on an LEO. Ms. A. is by nature a quiet, reserved person and initially struggled with the requirements of the Forensic program because she felt that individual and group therapy were not going to help her; she reported no benefits of therapy in the past from previous providers.

With encouragement from the Team and support from her peers in group, Ms. A. began to open up in therapy and she shared her story. She told one group that she had a really good job that she lost due to her charges, and that now she was working in a fast food establishment for minimum wage. She stated, “I didn’t control my anger, and it really cost me.” As she continued to open up, the possibility of recovery kept her motivated. Even with the disruption caused by Covid-19, she continued to focus on her recovery, stayed on track, and completed her WRAP plan. Ms. A. said that putting her thoughts to paper helped her to realize that she was in control of her actions and reactions, and that recognizing what helped her stay mentally well gave her a feeling of accomplishment. Ms. A.’s plan was put to the test when her husband was severely injured in a motorcycle accident. She became his full-time caregiver, with all the stress that entailed, yet she still successfully completed Mental Health Court. She is now re-applying for jobs in her chosen professional field and has a new, positive outlook.