

GEORGIA OPIOID
CRISIS ABATEMENT
TRUST GRANT
APPLICATION –
TREATMENT SERVICES

Northeastern Judicial Circuit

Hall County
May 2024

Executive Summary

Treatment Services is the agency that oversees the accountability court programs in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit (Hall and Dawson Counties). Hall County Drug Court began in 2001 as the first accountability court program in our circuit with H.E.L.P. (MHC), DUI, Family Treatment, REACT, Parental Accountability and Veterans Courts following throughout the years. As an agency, Treatment Services provides direct case management, clinical treatment, and judicial oversight to individuals whose involvement in the criminal justice system is in direct relation to substance use or mental/behavioral health disorders. Studies show that over 20 million American adults suffer from substance use disorders with another 43+ million suffering from mental health issues. Incarceration rates for individuals with SUD are markedly high with 65% of all US inmates meeting criteria for SUD. With \$80 billion dollars spent on incarceration in the United States annually, this trend is one that accountability courts fight to remedy.

As part of criminal justice reform efforts, accountability courts are proven to be the single most successful intervention for assisting individuals with substance use or mental health disorders move out of the criminal justice system and into lives of meaningful recovery and stability. Research tells us that one of the greatest indicators for sustained recovery and reduction in addiction setbacks is length of time in treatment. Accountability courts refer more people to treatment than any other intervention in America and are designed to follow individuals for an extended period to ensure stability. According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, the average national completion rate for treatment courts is nearly 60%, approximately two-thirds higher than probation and more than twice the rate of probationers with SUD. Not only do accountability courts provide resources to effective treatment and a significant reduction in recidivism rates, but they also provide a substantial cost-savings to the local taxpayers.

The Northeastern Judicial Circuit is home to the largest accountability court network in the State and serving over 800 individuals in 2023. Collectively our programs experienced a 13% increase in total individuals served from 2022 with an overall increase to enrollments of 102% since 2020. In 2023, our retention rate was 83% with a total of 129 individuals graduating from our intensive programs. Based on an economic impact study conducted by the Council of Accountability Court Judges and Carl Vinson Institute, each graduate of a felony accountability court program equates to a cost-savings of \$25,921 to the State of Georgia. When we combine this figure with the cost-savings of community service work performed by our participants, our circuit contributed over \$3.4M in positive economic impact in calendar year 2023. Treatment Services provides over 6,100 hours of treatment annually through individual and group therapeutic sessions with additional hours spent on direct case management, peer services, and supplemental resource linkage. All in all, our agency serves as one the largest treatment providers in our region and is the top referral source to partnering agencies such as our local Community Service Board, Avita Community Partners, healthcare system, ARSC, and local residential treatment centers.

Our circuit has a history of innovative approaches and collaboration with local stakeholders, and we continually strive to offer services and reduce barriers to treatment to as many of our citizens in need as possible. Unfortunately, despite our history of work in our circuit, Hall and Dawson counties continue to experience significant impacts related to opioid use over the past several

years. As noted in the Gap Analysis Continuum of Care report, Hall County not only experienced the largest average annual growth rate of 44.5% from 2018 to 2022, but we also experienced one of the largest total numbers of opioid-related deaths in Region 1 in 2022. Like other counties in our region, synthetic opioids such as Fentanyl have had significant impacts on our population and have resulted in our continued assessment and restructuring of programming to best address this epidemic. Grant funding will allow our agency to expand its services and continue to provide vital interventions which are so desperately needed in our region. We have identified five specific areas of need which qualify for funding through the Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust and are outlined in the narrative below.

Demonstrated Need #1 - MAT

In 2017, Treatment Services participated in a pilot project with the 10th Judicial Circuit and the Council of Accountability Court Judges to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services to participants diagnosed with Alcohol or Opioid Use Disorders. Since implementation, we have served over 50 participants in need of this vital service and continue to see a need for this service in partnership with MedLink and Lanier Treatment Center. These participants receive monthly Vivitrol injections to assist in the abatement of cravings and withdrawal symptoms associated with Alcohol and Opioid Use Disorders. The accountability courts under Treatment Services' umbrella collectively serve over 800 participants annually. Our statistics indicate that about 14% of our participants are diagnosed with an Opioid or Alcohol Use Disorder. The introduction of MAT services, specifically Vivitrol, has proven to be extremely beneficial to our participants who were unable to maintain abstinence through our outpatient setting alone. Individuals who participated in the pilot project received Vivitrol injections for approximately six months depending on their individual treatment plan. Those individuals who underwent Vivitrol treatment were able to maintain sustained periods of abstinence which led to improved participation in all areas of the program. The rate for relapse among these individuals was 0%, and we witnessed a significant increase in their ability to meet treatment goals, maintain employment, decrease program infractions, etc. Since 2017, Treatment Services has expanded partnerships with other providers in the community to offer additional MAT options for program participants such as Methadone and Suboxone.

Collaboration - MAT

We are proposing to continue medication assisted treatment services in partnership with MedLink and Lanier Treatment Center to better serve our participants struggling with Alcohol or Opioid Use Disorders. We estimate that approximately 16 participants will be served if grant funding is awarded. As with our participants who previously participated in our pilot MAT project, we anticipate a significant increase in positive program participation, employment retention, and treatment plan adherence. Participants will be better able to engage in treatment intervention and demonstrate an increased ability to utilize effective coping and relapse prevention skills. Additionally, we anticipate a significant reduction in relapse rates and program infractions.

Workplan and Deliverables - MAT

Treatment Services will partner with MedLink and Lanier Treatment Center to provide MAT services to active participants enrolled in our programs who meet clinical and medical criteria. MedLink will

provide the following services to our participants: Vivitrol medication, Doctor/Nursing assessments, Pregnancy Tests (if applicable for female participants), Urine drug screens (if applicable). These services will be made available monthly for participants diagnosed with an Alcohol or Opioid Use Disorder meeting criteria for MAT services. Enrolled participants will receive monthly Vivitrol injections for approximately six months. MedLink will provide appropriate medical supervision in conjunction with therapeutic and judicial oversight provided by Treatment Services. Participants enrolled in our programs are also able to utilize additional MAT services with our local Methadone Clinic, Lanier Treatment Center, if eligible. Lanier Treatment Center will provide daily Methadone dosage per individual need at their location and communicate directly with Treatment Services to coordinate services. Additionally, Lanier Treatment Center will provide Suboxone prescription to eligible participants as well as medical monitoring and oversight.

For this proposal, we are requesting funding to pay for Vivitrol treatment including initial nurse/doctor assessments for medical screening and education at the rate of \$110/visit; Hepatic function lab tests at the rate of \$30/test; Hep C lab test (initial visit, if applicable) at the rate of \$57/test; HIV lab test (initial visit, if applicable) at the rate of \$47/test; Pregnancy test (initial visit and as needed for female participants) at the rate of \$18/test; Nurse doctor fee (monthly) at the rate of \$110; Vivitrol medical dosage (monthly) at the rate of \$800/dose; Venipuncture fee (if applicable) at the rate of \$15/month; Urine drug test (if applicable) at the rate of \$25/test (monthly); and Injection fee at the rate of \$35/monthly. Total cost per visit for females is \$1,033 and total cost per visit for males is \$970. Additional funding will cover weekly Methadone dosing at the rate of \$98 per week, and monthly Suboxone dosing at the rate of \$280/month with \$50/month medication costs.

Budget Description - MAT:

MedLink will provide the following MAT services to our program participants:

- Initial nurse/doctor assessment \$110/each x 16 participants = \$1,760
- Hepatic function lab test \$30/each x 6 months x 16 participants = \$2,880
- Hep C lab test (initial visit) \$57/test x 16 participants = \$912
- HIV lab test (initial visit) \$47/test x 16 participants = \$752
- Pregnancy test \$18/test x 6 months x 8 participants = \$864
- Nurse/doctor fee per visit \$110 x 6 months x 16 participants = \$10,560
- Medication dosage \$800/dose x 6 months x 16 participants = \$76,800
- Venipuncture fee \$15 x 6 months x 16 participants = \$1,440
- Urine drug test \$25/test x 6 months x 16 participants = \$2,400
- Injection fee \$35 x 6 months x 16 participants = \$3,360

Lanier Treatment Center will provide the following MAT services to our program participants:

- Methadone dosage: \$98/week x 8 participants x 52 weeks = \$40,768
- Suboxone dosage: \$280 (Rx) + \$50/medication x 4 participants x 24 months = \$31,680

Total Request MAT: \$174,176

Demonstrated Need #2 - Treatment

Since 2020, our programs have experienced a significant growth of over 102% in program enrollments. Our agency served over 800 individuals in 2023 while providing over 6,100 hours of therapeutic interventions and countless hours of direct case management and judicial oversight services. To increase our program capacity further, we are restructuring services to eliminate additional barriers and create an environment of accessible treatment to all eligible individuals who choose to participate in our programming. To sustain our growth, we are requesting funding for two full-time personnel positions, a partnership with a Certified Clinical Supervisor to provide clinical support to staff, and contract services with local treatment agencies to provide supplemental treatment to our populations. Each of these initiatives will provide direct services to criminally justice involved individuals diagnosed with a substance use and/or mental/behavioral health disorder.

Our first demonstrated need directly relates to our largest program, Hall County Drug Court, which consistently serves over 200 individuals daily. Funding is requested to support 2 full-time case managers who will work directly with this population to provide needs assessments, referral linkage, and support for ancillary resources such as employment, housing, and education to program participants. Originally, these positions were funded through an ARPA grant which allowed our program to meet the ever-growing demand for services. ARPA funding will expire in December 2024 leaving our program in jeopardy of having to reduce services if additional funding sources cannot be secured. As the largest Drug Court in the State, Hall County Drug Court has been a leader in its field and serves as a mentor court for other programs across the state. These positions are imperative to the future sustainability and growth of our program and are a vital need.

Our second funding request is related to our need for additional supplemental treatment to address the individual needs of our population. While Treatment Services facilitates over 70 therapeutic groups per week, we do not have sufficient staff to provide a full-comprehensive menu of therapeutic interventions for our participants. We are requesting funding to partner with a local treatment provider to facilitate 4 additional groups per week which would provide the needed relief to our current in-house counseling staff. Our agency anticipates a census growth of 30% by 2025 and this additional collaboration will allow us to offer a full therapeutic schedule with minimal barriers to treatment for eligible participants. Additionally, grant funding will allow us to expand our current partnership with our local Addiction Recovery Support Center, J's Place, to provide peer support services to program participants. We believe that the addition of peer support is a vital component of our treatment menu as the connection to others with lived experience and knowledge is invaluable. J's Place will expand its current services to provide 4 additional peer-led groups and 4 additional individual coaching sessions per week. Certified Peer Specialists will work directly with our participants to navigate the recovery process, offer compassionate support, and assist with direct linkage to needed community resources.

Our final demonstrated needs are funding to provide clinical supervision to our staff counselors through a partnership with the University of North Georgia's Counseling Department and implementation of a virtual support treatment platform for program participants. Dr. Katie Lamberson, LPC, ACS, will provide 6 hours of clinical supervision per week for all qualified staff which assists with workforce development, meeting licensure requirements, providing needed

support and collaboration, and clinical oversight for ethical deployment of therapeutic interventions. Additionally, Addiction Resource Systems Wingman will assist in the implementation and training of the ARS Wingman platform to 50 program participants as an additional therapeutic and support tool during the recovery process. This virtual platform will provide resources for relapse prevention, coping strategies, attendance records, and peer-support for users offering an additional layer of support available 24/7.

Collaboration- Treatment

Treatment Services is the agency umbrella overseeing the various accountability court programs in Hall and Dawson Counties as well as a drug testing laboratory and substance use assessment and referral program. As the first program, Hall County Drug Court was founded in 2001 with numerous other courts following throughout the years. Our programs are a direct results of multi-agency involvement including the Governor's Office, Georgia Department of Corrections, Department of Community Supervision, Council of Accountability Court Judges, Hall and Dawson County Sheriff's Offices, Northeastern Judicial Circuit Superior, State and Juvenile Courts, Department of Family and Children Services, Department of Child Support Services, local treatment providers, Hall and Dawson County Sherrif's Departments, and local treatment providers. It is the mission of our accountability court programs to provide alternatives to incarceration for those individuals whose criminal involvement is directly related to substance use and/or mental/behavioral health issues. Our programs strive to hold offenders accountable for their actions by bringing about a behavioral change that reduces criminal recidivism and provides the tools and resources necessary to address substance use and mental health issues. We strive to protect the public, to treat victims of offenders in a fair, just way, and to educate the public as to the benefits of accountability court programs for the communities that they serve.

Specific partnerships related to this funding request include local treatment provider, New Hope Counseling, our local Addiction Recovery Support Center, J's Place, the University of North Georgia's Counseling Department and Addiction Resource Systems Wingman. Our agency has partnered with both organizations for many years and continues to see positive outcomes from our collaboration. Participants directly benefit from additional therapeutic options specific to their needs via additional groups and the much-needed relationships with fellow peers in recovery. Additionally, our clinical staff directly benefit from direct clinical supervision which provides professional development, honing of clinical skills, assurance of ethical practices, and overall improvement of deliverable services to participants.

Workplan and Deliverables - Treatment

Treatment Services will employ two full-time case managers to oversee caseloads of individuals enrolled in the Hall County Drug Court program. Currently serving over 200 individuals daily, case managers are an integral component of successful treatment for this program and are a vital need to our continued growth. Each case manager will dedicate 40 hours per week to the service of individuals diagnosed with SUD and will be responsible for duties such as but not limited to the following: assessment of need, creation of individualized case management plans, linkage to community resources including medical, education, housing, and employment, monitoring of drug screening and other judicial interventions, data collection, management and reporting, and monitoring of program compliance.

Treatment Services will contract with the University of North Georgia to provide weekly clinical supervision to all applicable staff. Dr. Katie Lamberson will devote 6 hours per week of her time to conduct group and individual supervision sessions, monitor program fidelity, and work with staff to create professional development plans. Increased clinical supervision not only provides a direct benefit to employees who are required to obtain such supervision for licensure and credentialing but is also provides a direct benefit to participants by ensuring they are receiving ethical and effective therapeutic interventions. Additionally, this allows our agency to continually improve staff morale, provide additional support to staff, and improve our workforce development, which is a great need in this field.

Treatment Services will partner with local treatment providers such as New Hope Counseling to provide additional treatment groups to program participants. New Hope Counseling will facilitate 4 groups per week in the direction of Treatment Services and will offer groups at such times that provide the fewest barriers for participants. All groups will utilize evidence-based curriculums and will be monitored for fidelity.

Treatment Services will implement the ARS Wingman virtual platform to pilot with 50 participants to offer a comprehensive solution for tracking attendance and further ensuring accountability with the program. This system will provide paperless check-in modalities and real-time reporting of participant attendance, provide additional support and guidance through the recovery journey by offering a virtual platform for unlimited support to participants, and provide additional evidence-based curriculums and techniques made accessible to participants to assist with relapse prevention, coping strategies, and access to community-based resources at any time. This platform will complement existing tools provided to participants and may be especially attractive to our 88younger population who rely more heavily on virtual platforms for support and interaction.

Budget Description - Treatment:

Case Manager Salary: $\$51,812.80 \times 2 = \$103,625.60 \times 2 \text{ years} = \$207,251.20$

Case Manager Fringe Benefits: $\$24,788.40 \times 2 = \$49,576.80 \times 2 \text{ years} = \$54,896.80$

Dr. Katie Lamberson (UNG): $\$65/\text{hr.} \times 8 \text{ hr./week} \times 104 \text{ weeks} = \$54,080$

New Hope Counseling: $\$250/\text{group} \times 4/\text{week} \times 104 \text{ weeks} = \$104,000$

ARS Wingman Platform: License Fee $\$1,000/\text{month} \times 24 \text{ months} + \text{Training Fee } \$5,000 \text{ (one time)} = \$29,000$

Total Request Treatment: \$449,228

Demonstrated Need #3 - Housing

Treatment Services is the largest referral source to residential treatment facilities in our area. At time of referral to an accountability court program, Treatment Services staff conducts in-depth clinical assessments to evaluate level of need and appropriate ASAM level placement. At any given

time, nearly 30% of our population meets criteria for residential placement. Oftentimes, the initial entry fees associated with residential and inpatient treatment pose a significant financial barrier to those that are in the greatest need of enhanced treatment. Grant funding will allow our agency to partner with local residential treatment facilities and our local healthcare system to eliminate or reduce financial barriers to treatment for eligible participants by covering the entry fees for residential placement. By reducing this barrier at the onset, individuals will be able to devote attention and efforts obtaining stability in recovery as opposed to experiencing additional stress related to finances. As individuals become acclimated to residential or inpatient treatment, they will begin to practice necessary skills for sustained recovery, symptom management, and overall daily living skills which will, in turn, increase their ability to maintain stable employment and gain financial independence.

Collaboration - Housing

Treatment Services will partner with local residential treatment providers which are approved by the various credentialing and oversight agencies to cover initial entry fees which range from \$800-\$1,200. For over two decades, Treatment Services has been the largest referral source to residential and inpatient treatment facilities after conducting in-depth clinical assessments and determining proper ASAM placement. With over 30% of the accountability court population meeting criteria for residential placement, it is imperative that our agency continue to find creative ways to assist individuals with entry. We have long-standing relationships with numerous residential facilities in North Georgia and work with these agencies on a regular basis to ensure appropriate supervised treatment for those in need.

Workplan and Deliverables - Housing

Treatment Services will partner with local residential treatment facilities to cover the initial entry fees for placement. This ranges from \$800-\$1,200 but is required by all the approved sites we utilize. Grant funding will allow us to cover the entry fees for 50 participants who do not have the financial means to enter residential treatment on their own.

Budget Description Housing:

Residential Entry Fee (avg.): \$1,000 x 100 participants = \$100,000

Total Request Housing: \$100,000

Demonstrated Need #4 - Training

Treatment Services directly employs 56 full and part-time professionals working directly with individuals whose criminal justice involvement is directly related to substance use and/or mental/behavioral health diagnosis. In addition to our direct hires, our agency is comprised of the various accountability court teams which each consist of professionals from the judiciary, legal community, law enforcement, community supervision, and others. As an agency, we strive to provide ongoing training and education to all professionals associated with our programs to ensure compliance with Best Practices, increase knowledge of current trends, and overall professional

development. Our agency offers an average of 23 continuing education training events to staff and team members annually. These trainings provided allowed staff to become certified in evidence-based curriculums, learn new clinical skills associated with SUD treatment, and collaborate with other professionals in the field. This has a direct positive impact on the quality of treatment our participants received and continued our professional workforce development.

In direct relation to Opioid Use Disorders, we are requesting grant funding to certify 20 of our staff and/or team members specifically in Medication-Assisted Treatment practices. Our agency will partner with the Georgia Addiction Counselors Association to provide 42 education hours required to obtain the certification in Medication Assisted Treatment (CMAT). As the rate of Opioid Use Disorders diagnosis continues to increase in our programs over the last five years, we believe this training and specialized certification will be invaluable to our staff providing them with the most up-to-date knowledge and best practices in the field. Inevitably, this will greatly benefit participants by providing them with access to accurate information and additional support for necessary recovery interventions.

Collaboration - Training

Treatment Services will partner with the Georgia Addiction Counselors Association (GACA) to provide 42 education hours required to obtain the certification in Medication Assisted Treatment (CMAT). As the rate of Opioid Use Disorders diagnosis continues to increase in our programs over the last five years, we believe this training and specialized certification will be invaluable to our staff providing them with the most up-to-date knowledge and best practices in the field. Inevitably, this will greatly benefit participants by providing them with access to accurate information and additional support for necessary recovery interventions. Our agency has a long-standing partnership with GACA and works closely with the credentialing agency to provide professional development, education, and required supervision for clinical staff.

Workplan and Deliverables - Training

Georgia Addiction Counselors Association will provide 42 hours of required education to 20 staff and/or team members to qualify for the specialized certification in Medication-Assisted Treatment. Treatment Services will collaborate with GACA to provide training space for in-person instruction and provide this opportunity to all interested people who work directly with our population. Staff and/or team members will complete the required education courses and any necessary examinations and will be able to apply to qualify them for this special certification which can be renewed every two years.

Budget Description Training:

Certification in Medication-Assisted Treatment Training Costs: \$2,000/person x 20 = \$40,000

Total Request Training: \$40,000

Demonstrated Need #5 - Peer Services

Our final demonstrated need relates to increased peer services for program participants. Treatment Services has partnered with J's Place ARSC since its inception to offer peer-led services and coaching sessions to interested participants. Anyone who works in this field can agree that connection to others is a powerful force for sustained recovery. Our programs believe in the power of peers and have embraced this concept for decades. We are requesting funding to expand current peer-led services to reach more individuals as our programs continue to experience significant growth. Funding will cover the cost for 4 additional peer-led groups and 4 additional hours of peer coaching per week to program participants. Group content will focus on recovery skills, daily living skills, and relapse prevention skills. Coaching sessions will focus on linkage to necessary resources, eliminating barriers to treatment and shared experience of others in recovery.

Collaboration – Peer Services

Treatment Services will partner with our local Addiction Recovery Support Center, J's Place, to increase peer services. J's Place will provide certified peer specialists to conduct 4 additional groups and 4 additional hours of coaching to program participants on a weekly basis. Treatment Services will provide space and referral to individuals in need. The long-standing partnership between our agencies is mutually beneficial as Treatment Services is the largest referral source to J's Place and is the beneficiary of invaluable peer services and long-term connection for participants to the recovery community.

Workplan and Deliverables – Peer Services

Treatment Services will partner with our local Addiction Recovery Support Center, J's Place, to increase peer services. J's Place will provide certified peer specialists to conduct 4 additional groups and 4 additional hours of coaching to program participants on a weekly basis. Treatment Services will provide space and referrals to individuals in need. Groups such as Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and support-based topics will be offered weekly to program participants. This will provide additional options for individualized treatment plans as well as provide connection for current and past participants who wish to continue attending. Peer coaches will also meet with referred or interested participants to offer services such as sharing lived experience, assistance with navigating community resources, transportation to treatment, etc.

Budget Description – Peer Services:

Peer-led Services Groups: $\$200/\text{group} \times 4/\text{week} \times 104 \text{ weeks} = \$83,200$

Peer-led Services Coaching Sessions: $\$100/\text{session} \times 4/\text{week} \times 104 \text{ weeks} = \$41,600$

Total Request Treatment: \$124,800

Total Project Request: \$888,204