

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

SmartJustice

DISTRICT COURT INITIATIVE



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Restore Hope is a software and services company that aims to reduce the rate of incarceration and the need for foster care through a community-driven approach and collaborative partnerships.

The History

In 2015, former Governor Asa Hutchinson took a landmark step to address Arkansas's rising incarceration rates by convening a statewide summit that brought together stakeholders from the justice system, behavioral health services, and community-based organizations. This collaborative summit led to the founding of Restore Hope, a nonprofit organization with a mission to reduce incarceration and foster care rates in Arkansas by improving coordination among state agencies, service providers, and local communities.

The Model

Restore Hope's approach is a Collective Impact Model, tailored to each community, to help individuals and families move from crisis to career. The model bridges the gap between state and community-led efforts, enabling communities to tackle complex challenges through a combination of top-down leadership and bottom-up engagement. Its overarching goals include achieving stability, measured by progress across thirteen well-defined areas of the social determinants of health.

By employing collective impact methodologies, the Restore Hope model fosters coordination among service providers to address crises efficiently and effectively. This approach empowers local alliances to respond in real time to the needs of individuals and families by leveraging existing community resources, streamlining service delivery, and eliminating redundancy.

Collective Impact

Collective impact is a collaborative approach to addressing complex social challenges by bringing together organizations, agencies, and community members from different sectors to work toward a shared vision for change. Rather than working in isolation, partners align their strategies, coordinate resources, and measure results together to achieve outcomes that no single group could accomplish alone.



HopeHub

HopeHub, Restore Hope’s secure, HIPAA-compliant case management system, brings this approach to life by linking community organizations into one coordinated, cross-sector support team.



HopeHub brings partners together to share information seamlessly, ensuring everyone stays informed and aligned. Regular evaluations help identify emerging needs and adapt services accordingly, while well-defined targets keep efforts focused and accountable. Services are delivered in a coordinated manner to make the best use of available resources, and up-to-the-minute data gives providers the insight they need to track progress and refine strategies. Working in unison, these elements create a strong, collaborative network that drives lasting impact.



1,007
new providers
trained in 2024



47,714
provider
interactions
on client profiles
in 2024



435
organizations
trained and active
in HopeHub

RESTORE HOPE'S COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS



The **100 Families Initiative** uses the Restore Hope Model to help individuals and families eligible for TANF move from crisis to career, utilizing continuous case management, community collaboration, and evidence-based outcome measurement.



Every Child Arkansas is a collaborative network of advocates, agencies, faith-based organizations, and community partners working together to ensure there are resources, families, and support for children and families engaged in foster care throughout Arkansas.



Housing Solutions works with partners to create affordable housing and expand transitional housing for harder-to-house Arkansans while supporting holistic needs like recovery, transportation, employment, and education.



Second Chance Education expands access to college-level courses in prison and after release, helping justice-involved individuals reduce recidivism and improve employment prospects through academic programs, credit transfer assistance, and post-release student support.



Smart Justice is a solutions-focused magazine, podcast, and website that highlights innovative community approaches to improving outcomes in areas like child welfare, incarceration, and juvenile justice, sharing lessons learned from both successes and challenges.

ATTORNEY GENERAL FUNDS DISTRICT COURT INITIATIVE



In the fall of 2023, Attorney General Tim Griffin recognized the proactive efforts of Arkansas's District Court judges and local stakeholders—working in partnership with Restore Hope—to address the growing impact of substance use on the judiciary. In support of these efforts, he allocated a portion of the state's opioid settlement funds to launch a pilot initiative within the district courts. This investment reflects a practical, prevention-focused strategy that reduces pressure on county jails, lowers incarceration costs for non-violent offenses, and strengthens public safety by pairing individualized case management with firm judicial oversight to address the underlying issues that often lead individuals into the criminal justice system.

"Some things work, some things don't. The problem arises when government continues doing things that don't work," he says. "If you're talking about bang for your buck in terms of money, you get the most for your dollar by investing in diversion before people get too far down the road. We see opportunities for some people who are in district court for misdemeanors – to get them the addiction help they need, the work skills, the life skills, so they can live productive lives. That saves taxpayer dollars and gives us more employees, because a lot of these people will gain critical work skills. It teaches a respect for the community and the rules we have to live under in a civil society."

"I think a lot of the principles that I've enumerated here are what you're trying to do with your district court community diversion program," he says. "Identifying people who are in district court for misdemeanors, to intervene ... wrap your arms around those people with reality, and equip them with training and counseling and education and the burden of responsibility. Give them the chance. Some of them will fail, but the ones who don't ... you have changed their long-term trajectory. They can go into society and be neighbors who ask to borrow tools instead of stealing them, and who cost taxpayers less because they not only quit taking, they start paying. It's beautiful."

-TIM GRIFFIN
ARKANSAS ATTORNEY GENERAL



MISSION STATEMENT

EMPOWERING CHANGE, REBUILDING LIVES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES:

The Smart Justice District Court Initiative works to reduce recidivism and strengthen communities by providing compassionate, effective alternatives to traditional justice. Through personalized support, targeted interventions, and strong partnerships, we address the root causes of criminal behavior and guide participants toward lasting success.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 01**

Provide Early Intervention and Promote Restorative Justice
- 02**

Empower Rehabilitation and Holistic Support
- 03**

Promote Collaboration and Coordinated Responses
- 04**

Advance Judicial Oversight and Accountability
- 05**

Enhance Community Safety and Reduce Recidivism



TARGET POPULATION

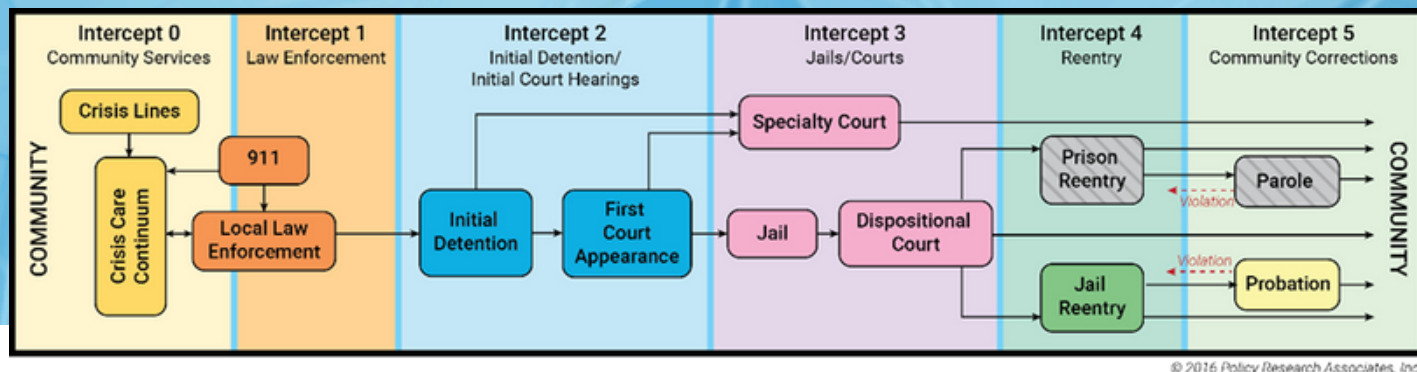
The initiative serves individuals in the justice system whose involvement is shaped by adverse social determinants of health. These challenges may include substance use, mental health concerns, unemployment, housing instability, or limited educational attainment. By combining accountability with coordinated responses and structured case management, the initiative helps individuals strengthen stability, build healthier lifestyle habits, and achieve sustainable success.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- **Age Requirement:** Individuals must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- **Service Need:** Individuals must be identified as having a need in at least one social determinant of health area.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Individuals must voluntarily agree to participate in court and case management services.





SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MODEL

The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), originally developed by Mark Munetz and Dr. Patricia Griffin, provides a structured framework for identifying key points where intervention can divert individuals away from the justice system and toward community-based services. This model consists of six key intercept points:

00 Community Services

Preventative community-based resources, such as crisis care, mental health and substance use treatment, and housing support, help individuals avoid justice system involvement.

01 Law Enforcement

Crisis intervention and specialized officer training ensure that law enforcement can appropriately respond to individuals experiencing mental health or substance use crises.

02 Initial Detention and Court Hearings

Early screening, assessment, and alternatives to traditional prosecution—such as diversion to treatment and support services—are prioritized at this stage.

03 Jails and Courts

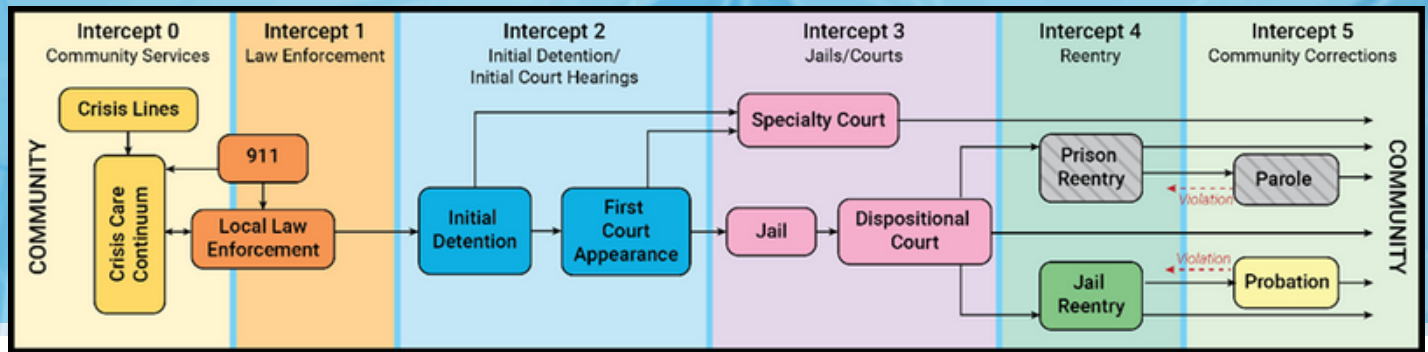
Focuses on integrating mental health and substance use services within correctional facilities and offering extended court intervention programs as alternatives to incarceration.

04 Reentry

Provides structured support for individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community, ensuring access to housing, employment, and continued treatment to reduce recidivism.

05 Community Corrections

Focuses on post-release supervision and support, emphasizing ongoing mental health and substance use treatment, stable housing, employment assistance, and specialized community supervision to reduce reoffending.



INTERCEPT 02

Initial Detention and Court Hearings

The initiative focuses on Intercept 2 – Initial Detention and Court Hearings, recognizing this stage as a key opportunity for intervention. For many, district court is the first significant contact with the courts, making it an important moment to identify underlying challenges before further entrenchment in the system.

This initiative takes an upstream approach within the Sequential Intercept Model by addressing barriers early and prioritizing access to support services. It offers a proactive strategy for responding to minor offenses that lowers court and incarceration costs, reduces reoffending, minimizes taxpayer expense, and eases jail overcrowding. By focusing on early intervention—rather than only on complex cases and reentry—it shifts the trajectory of how individuals engage with the courts and criminal justice system.

Through diversion, rehabilitation, and community-based support, individuals charged with minor offenses are connected to resources that build stability. Addressing the root causes of criminal behavior reduces reliance on short-term incarceration, strengthens community safety, and creates meaningful, lasting change.

EARLY INTERVENTION

The initiative focuses on early intervention to address the root causes of criminal behavior before leading to long-term incarceration or repeat offenses. The initiative offers individuals access to community-based support services.

Early intervention within the judicial system focuses on stabilizing the key areas of life that often lead to criminal justice involvement. Through this approach, participants receive targeted support in the following areas:

Financial Stability



Assisting with financial planning and access to economic resources

Dental Health



Providing preventive and restorative dental care

Employment



Providing job training, employment assistance, and career development opportunities

Food Security



Ensuring access to nutritious food and meal assistance programs

Legal



Helping individuals navigate the justice system and resolve legal matters

Childcare



Providing resources to support parents and guardians

Housing



Connecting individuals with safe, stable, and affordable housing options

Recovery



Offering substance use treatment and support for sustained sobriety.

Physical Health



Ensuring access to medical care for overall well-being

Transportation



Removing barriers to reliable transportation for access to essential services

Education



Supporting access to GED programs, vocational training, and higher education resources

Safety



Promoting personal and community safety through intervention and resources

Mental Health



Connecting individuals with counseling, therapy, and mental health resources

3-TIER APPROACH GUIDE

The Smart Justice District Court Initiative is a six-month program that provides a structured path focused on personal responsibility, accountability, and self-improvement. Participants move through three tiers that address both practical needs and behavioral challenges, guided by thirteen key social determinants of health that affect long-term stability. To complete the initiative, each participant must meet defined expectations and show steady progress across all care areas.



CRISIS



STABILITY



THRIVING



→ PAGE 10



TIER 1: CRISIS

Focus: Meeting Basic and Safety Needs, and Building Self-Esteem Through Responsibility

Emphasis: Address immediate basic needs, reduce crisis-driven behavior, and build accountability and structure

Recommendations to Complete Tier 1:

1. **Childcare:** Has affordable childcare that may be subsidized and may have limited hours, but it supports daily responsibilities.
2. **Safety:** Feels adequately safe during daily activities and is no longer in immediate danger.
3. **Housing:** Has a place to stay, renting a room or housing, and is working on becoming current with rent payments or addressing safety/livability issues.
4. **Education:** Actively enrolled in a GED program or other adult education class.
5. **Employment:** Working part-time, over 15 hours per week, and earning at least minimum wage.
6. **Financial Stability:** Has enough income to meet basic needs and is beginning to build better money management skills.
7. **Food:** Has regular access to food, such as staying with family who provides meals or using available food resources.
8. **Legal:** Fully complying with conditions of supervision and working towards being current on all outstanding court fines and fees.
9. **Transportation:** Has access to reliable transportation through public transit, and can afford it, or has a dependable support system for transportation.
10. **Physical Health:** Has health insurance and is beginning to seek needed medical care, even if still learning how to access services.
11. **Dental:** Has dental insurance and knows dental care is needed, beginning to plan for treatment.
12. **Mental Health:** Attending mental health appointments or showing improvement in managing mild daily challenges.
13. **Recovery:** Has not used alcohol or non-prescribed drugs and is actively involved in treatment or connected to recovery support.



TIER 2: STABILITY

Focus: Strengthen Connection and Community Needs, and Continue Addressing Safety and Stability Needs

Emphasis: Build prosocial connections and community engagement; Strengthen family relationships or develop healthy support networks; and Increase commitment to care plans

Recommendations to Complete Tier 2:

1. **Childcare:** Has reliable and affordable childcare, fully funded without outside help.
2. **Safety:** Feels safe and secure in daily life and surroundings.
3. **Housing:** Has stable housing, is current on rent or mortgage payments, and can afford future payments. Any livability issues are small or being addressed.
4. **Education:** Has earned a GED or high school diploma.
5. **Employment:** Employed full-time and maintaining steady income.
6. **Financial Stability:** Has enough income to meet needs and shows good money management skills.
7. **Food:** Has access to food through income or food assistance, such as SNAP/EBT, and does not worry about going hungry.
8. **Legal:** Fully compliant with all conditions of supervision and up to date on court fines and fees.
9. **Transportation:** Has reliable and affordable transportation or a valid driver's license and insured vehicle.
10. **Physical Health:** Has a primary care provider and no urgent or unmet health needs.
11. **Dental:** No current dental problems and can afford care through insurance or personal funds if needed.
12. **Mental Health:** Has few or no symptoms and is handling everyday stress well, with personal coping skills or support systems.
13. **Recovery:** Has remained drug and alcohol-free, except for prescribed medications and may or may not need continued treatment.



TIER 3: THRIVING

Focus: Self-Actualization and Long-Term Self-Esteem Needs

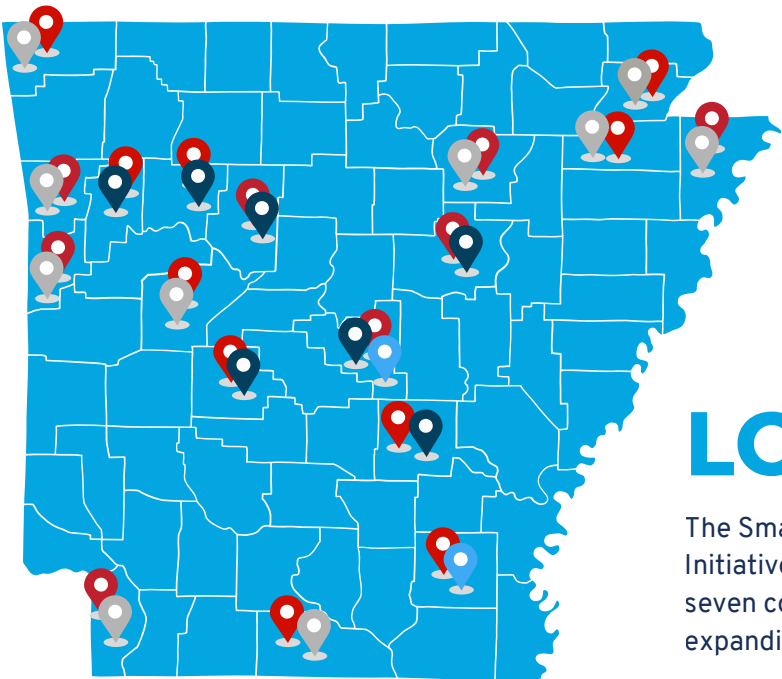
Emphasis: Foster independence, self-worth, and personal vision; Transition from external accountability to internal motivation; and Prepare for life post-initiative with tools for long-term success.

Recommendations to Complete Tier 3:

1. Childcare: Able to choose high-quality childcare that fits needs or children are old enough to safely care for themselves.
2. Safety: Feels very safe in daily activities and surroundings.
3. Housing: Has paid rent on time, has no major livability issues, and feels satisfied with current housing or is actively improving it.
4. Education: Has a GED or High School Diploma and is enrolled in or has completed a college degree, trade certification, or other higher education program.
5. Employment: Employed in their preferred field with satisfactory pay and benefits.
6. Financial Stability: Has more than enough income, manages spending and debt without help, and regularly saves for emergencies.
7. Food: Does not need food stamps and has enough income to consistently buy food without assistance.
8. Legal: Fully compliant with all conditions of supervision and current on all fines and fees. Where applicable, the case is prepared for dismissal.
9. Transportation: Has easy, affordable, and reliable transportation, a valid driver's license, and insured private vehicle.
10. Physical Health: Has insurance, a primary care provider, actively uses healthcare services, and has no current medical needs.
11. Dental: Has insurance, a regularly seen dentist, and no dental work is currently needed.
12. Mental Health: Symptoms are rare or absent, participant handles stress well, and attends sessions regularly if applicable.
13. Recovery: Has not used alcohol or non-prescribed drugs and is stable in recovery, whether or not treatment continues.

Final Completion Criteria

Before completing the initiative, participants must show stability or progress toward thriving in all thirteen social determinants of health care areas.



LOCATIONS

The Smart Justice District Court Initiative is currently established in seven counties and is in the process of expanding to several more.

 100 Families initiative	 Active SJ-DCI	 Pre-Launch SJ-DCI	 Targeted SJ-DCI
Benton Craighead Crawford Drew Franklin Garland Greene Independence Jefferson Johnson Miller Mississippi Pope Pulaski Sebastian Union White Yell	Franklin Garland Jefferson Johnson Pope Pulaski – North Little Rock White	Drew Pulaski - Little Rock Union	Benton Craighead Crawford Greene Independence Miller Mississippi Sebastian Yell

IN A YEAR: THE STORY OF A GROWING IMPACT

The following outcomes reflect data collected during the first year of implementation, June 2024 – June 2025, in the four counties where the Smart Justice District Court Initiative (SJ-DCI) was established: Garland, Johnson, Pope, and Pulaski.

In just one year, SJ-DCI has demonstrated measurable, real-world improvements—not only in the lives of individual participants but also in the overall safety and stability of communities across Arkansas. By combining accountability, judicial oversight, and individualized case management, the initiative has laid a strong foundation for long-term impact.

Between June 2024 and June 2025, SJ-DCI served **191 Arkansans**, with 172 actively participating, resulting in an impressive **retention rate of 93%**. Participants often come into the initiative facing multiple interconnected challenges: 34% have recently experienced homelessness, 60.3% report symptoms of depression, and 45.7% have histories of domestic violence, reflecting the significant trauma that participants have endured.

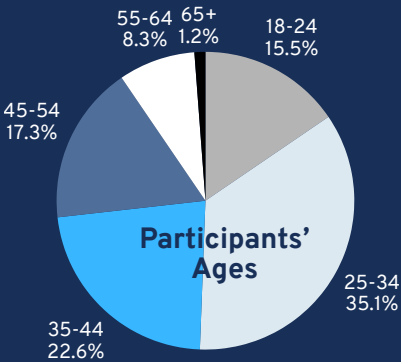
On average, participants reported beginning substance use at age 16 and experiencing their first criminal offense by age 18.5. Some reported struggles as early as age 7. These challenges are often generational: **71.7% of participants reported family histories of illegal drug use**, matching the 71.7% who disclosed personal drug use. Additionally, 82.1% fell into the high-risk category for opioid misuse, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Opioid Risk Tool—underscoring the urgent need for prevention and intervention strategies.

SJ-DCI directly addresses these complex issues by coordinating comprehensive services through district courts and local community resources. **The initiative prioritizes substance use treatment, mental health care, and the removal of systemic barriers—fostering lasting stability and meaningful change.**

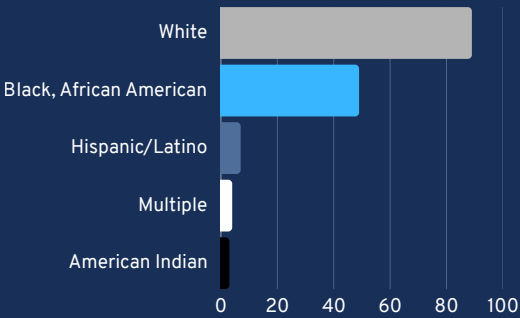
First-year outcomes reveal significant impacts. Participants experienced a 206% improvement in legal stability, resolving longstanding legal matters and increasing compliance with court obligations. Additionally, 93% reported improved financial stability, 74% improved transportation stability, 57% improved food stability, and 61% showed better behavioral health outcomes.

These results demonstrate the transformative power of SJ-DCI in its first year: improving lives, strengthening communities, and restoring hope for a brighter future.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Race/Ethnicity of Participants



THE AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST ARREST AMONG PARTICIPANTS IS 19.6 YEARS OLD.



30.4% OF PARTICIPANTS, HAVE NOT YET OBTAINED A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED.



32.6% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HAVING BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY.



14.7% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED EXPERIENCING ONE OR MORE UTILITY SHUTOFFS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.



45.7% OF PARTICIPANTS HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC ABUSE.



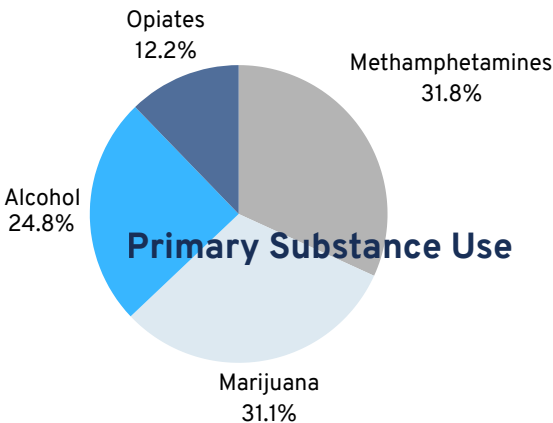
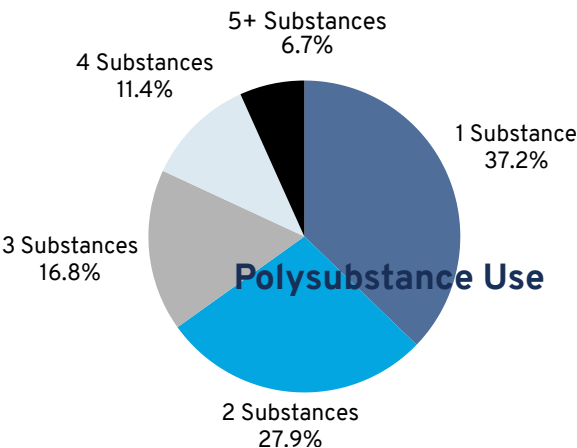
40.9% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED EXPERIENCING CRAVINGS OR COMPULSIONS RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE.



33.8% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WITHIN THE PAST YEAR.

SUBSTANCE USE

71.7% participants reported illegal substance use themselves, the same percentage as those who reported illegal substance use in their family history.



206%

increase in the number of participants who are stable and thriving in legal needs since initial intake

56

participants made the powerful transition from crisis to career



data from June 2024 - June 2025

LEGAL RESOLUTION

Data collected from January 2025-June 2025

OVER 100 PARTICIPANTS HAD THEIR DRIVER'S LICENSES REINSTATED IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS.

DRIVER'S LICENSE RESOLUTION SERVICES

Participants engaged in initiatives supported by Restore Hope automatically receive assistance with driver's license issues. In partnership with the Department of Finance and Administration, the Legal Resolution Team reviews each participant's license status. If a license is suspended, the team contacts the appropriate courts for further details and documents the steps for reinstatement.

OVER 70 CASES WERE REVIEWED FOR CRIMINAL ARREST AND CONVICTION SEALING IN THE PAST 30 DAYS.

CRIMINAL RECORD SEALING SERVICES

Participants engaged in initiatives supported by Restore Hope can receive help sealing past criminal records. Working with Legal Services and the Arkansas Public Defender Commission, the Legal Resolution Team reviews eligibility, gathers required information, and prepares the necessary petitions. Guidance is provided throughout the process.

OVER 50 PARTICIPANT CASES WERE REVIEWED AND GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH COURT AND BOARD-ORDERED OBLIGATIONS IN THE PAST 30 DAYS.

COURT AND BOARD-ORDERED OBLIGATIONS RESEARCH SERVICES

Participants engaged in initiatives supported by Restore Hope can receive help resolving outstanding court or board-ordered obligations. The Legal Resolution Team researches fines, fees, required courses, and community service requirements. They contact the appropriate courts or boards to gather current information and provide clear guidance on how to achieve compliance.

OPIOID INFORMATION

Opioid Abuse Risk Assessment Summary

Using the Opioid Risk Tool provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, total scores were collected from SJ-DCI participants to assess their risk for future opioid use. The results show that **the majority of participants are at high risk**: 82.1% scored 8 or higher, indicating high risk. Additionally, 14.1% fell into the moderate risk category with scores between 4 and 7, while only 3.8% scored 3 or below, indicating low risk. These findings underscore the urgent need for focused prevention and intervention strategies to mitigate opioid abuse risk in this population.

OUT OF ALL PARTICIPANTS:

69.6% reported having been prescribed opioid medication.

28.3% reported that opioid use negatively affected their relationships with family and friends.

34.2% reported experiencing negative or adverse effects from opioid use.

20.7% reported having participated in substance use treatment programs as a result of opioid use.

23.9% reported that opioid use negatively affected their ability to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

16

The median age participants reported using substances is 16, with some reporting regular use as early as age 7.

Early use increases risks to brain development, health, and justice involvement, highlighting the need for prevention, education, and early intervention.

87.5% OF PARTICIPANTS INDICATED HAVING A CONNECTION TO OPIOID USE,

CARE AREAS

The following pages feature real stories and data of the Smart Justice District Court Initiative's impact across all thirteen measured social determinants of health from June 2024 to June 2025.

ARTURO'S STORY: OVERCOMING ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

Arturo (27) entered the initiative facing significant financial hardship. Although employed full-time, he was behind on his mortgage and unable to afford adequate healthcare for his family—putting both his financial future and family stability at risk.

Through focused financial and case management support, Arturo was able to stabilize his mortgage, obtain affordable health insurance, and take concrete steps toward long-term financial security. He also completed a parenting course, fulfilled all program expectations, and engaged in peer recovery support.

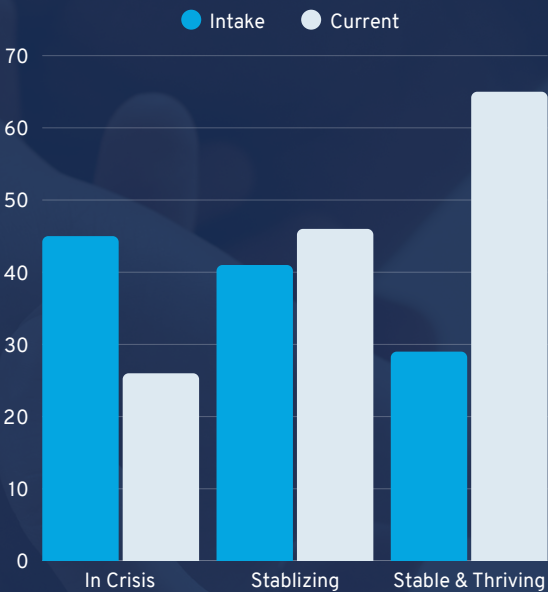
Today, Arturo is sober, financially stable, and actively rebuilding a better life for his family.



FINANCIAL STABILITY

Financial outcomes show substantial progress, with a 93% increase in participants who can manage debt, budget, and save without assistance—a strong indicator of long-term financial stability. The average household income increased by 23%, rising from \$1,166 to \$1,440, while the number of participants in financial crisis dropped by more than half.

These gains reflect the initiative’s ability to help individuals move beyond basic survival, build financial independence, and reduce long-term reliance on public assistance.



A 93% INCREASE IN PARTICIPANTS WHO CAN MANAGE DEBT, BUDGET, AND SAVE INDEPENDENTLY, ALONG WITH A 23% INCREASE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME.

JANIE’S STORY: REBUILDING A LIFE FROM THE GROUND UP

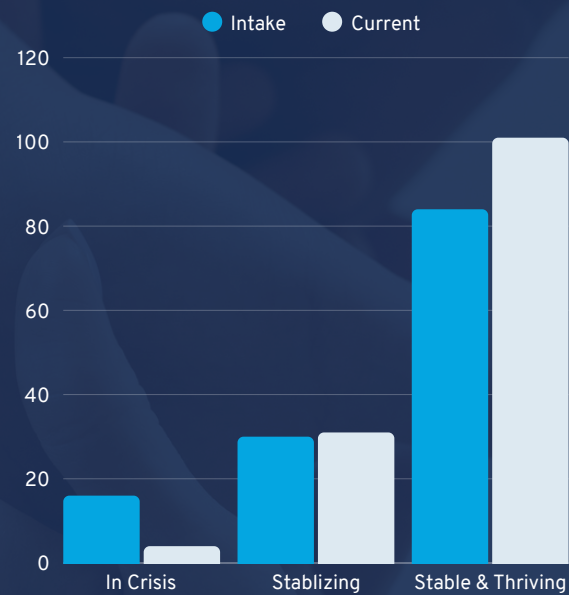
Janie (39) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative while experiencing homelessness. She was living in a dilapidated camper and struggling with the long-term effects of substance use. Without stable housing, a job, or transportation, and facing more than \$1,200 in outstanding fees, she felt stuck and uncertain about how to move forward.

With the initiative’s support, Janie completed both in-patient and out-patient treatment and began the work of rebuilding her life. She secured full-time employment with benefits, moved into her own apartment, and took steps to reinstate her driver’s license.

Today, Janie has unsupervised visits with her children, and full reunification is within reach. Her journey is a powerful example of resilience and the life-changing impact of housing stability and support.

HOUSING

Housing outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative show clear progress toward structure and stability. There has been a 20% increase in participants who have stable or thriving housing, with many moving from unstable or unsafe living situations—such as facing eviction, living outdoors or in shelters, or dealing with major safety and maintenance issues—to permanent housing they can afford and maintain. This improvement reflects the initiative’s success in helping participants secure safe, reliable housing—an essential foundation for lasting stability and well-being.



**A 20% INCREASE IN
PARTICIPANTS MOVING
INTO SAFE, AFFORDABLE,
AND STABLE HOUSING.**



STEVEN'S STORY: BUILDING A FUTURE WITH PURPOSE

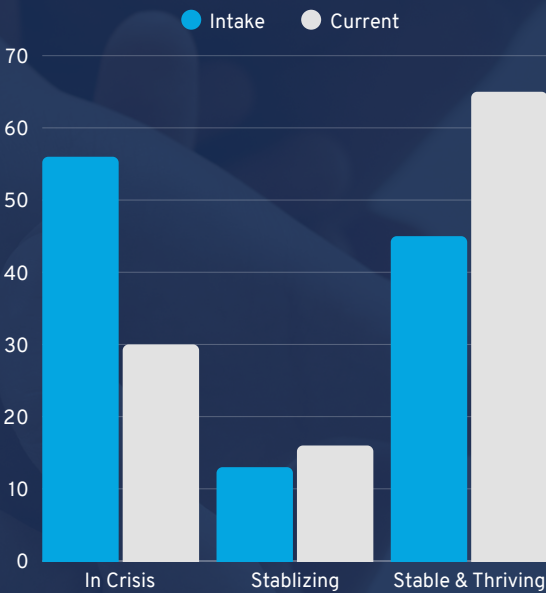
Steven (40) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative facing significant barriers—unemployment, limited education, and a suspended driver’s license. These challenges left him feeling stuck and uncertain about his future.

With the support of the initiative, Steven reinstated his driver’s license and secured full-time employment with the Arkansas Department of Transportation. He also began working toward his GED, successfully passing every section except math and is actively preparing to finish his education.

Today, Steven has stable employment, job benefits, and a renewed focus on his education. His story is one of determination and growth—proof that with hard work and the right support, lasting change is possible.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment outcomes are one of the initiative’s most promising successes. There was a 44% increase in those working full-time or in jobs with stable pay and benefits from intake to their most recent assessment, and over 91% of participants retained employment. These gains not only demonstrate progress in securing jobs but also in helping individuals move into more meaningful, self-sustaining careers—laying a stronger foundation for long-term stability, reduced recidivism, and improved quality of life.



**A 44% INCREASE IN
FULL-TIME OR STABLE
EMPLOYMENT AND 91%
EMPLOYMENT RETENTION.**

CHEYENNE'S STORY: CHOOSING STABILITY AND MOVING FORWARD

When Cheyenne (33) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, she was experiencing mounting financial stress and lacked access to reliable transportation and public benefits. Without stable income or food assistance, she struggled to meet basic needs.

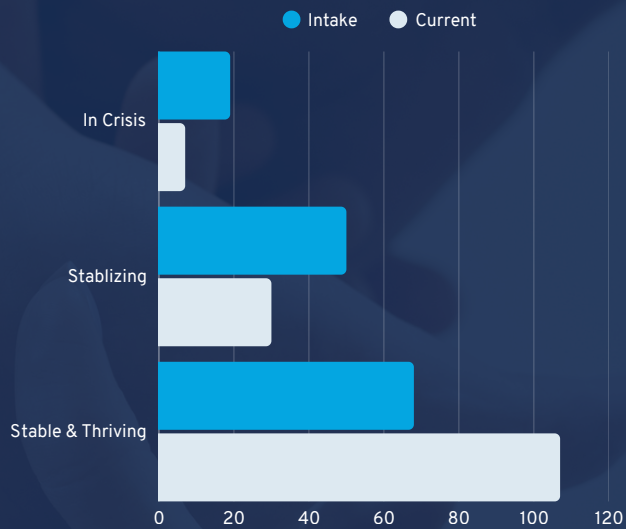
With support from the initiative, Cheyenne increased her work hours and began earning specialty overtime to boost her income. She successfully reinstated her SNAP benefits, helping ensure consistent access to food and easing financial pressure, and giving peace of mind to her husband and kids.

Today, Cheyenne is balancing work and personal goals with a growing sense of stability. Her story shows how access to essential resources—like food assistance—can create a strong foundation for lasting progress.



FOOD SECURITY

Food security outcomes show meaningful progress, with those in crisis - having no income or food assistance - dropping from 12.5% to just 3.47%. Additionally, there has been a 57% increase in participants who are stable or thriving, meaning they have sufficient means to buy food, reflecting the initiative's success in helping individuals secure consistent access to nutritious food and build greater stability.



A 57% INCREASE IN
PARTICIPANTS WHO CAN
CONSISTENTLY AFFORD FOOD

DAVID'S STORY: PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH FOR A BETTER FUTURE

When David (41) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, he was grappling with overwhelming mental health challenges that made day-to-day life difficult to manage.

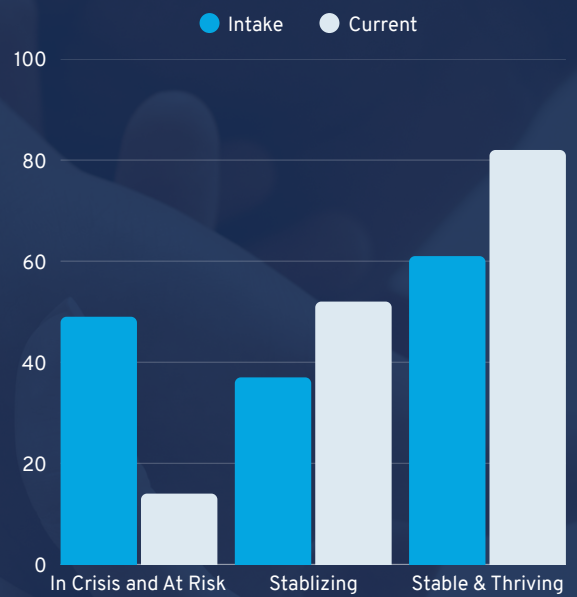
With support from the initiative, David entered short-term treatment, stabilized his medications, and built a care team that included his primary doctor and psychologist. He remained committed to counseling and made steady, meaningful progress.

Today, David is no longer defined by his past struggles. He's built a strong foundation for his mental well-being and developed a sustainable plan for continued growth. With the right support and his own determination, David is now moving forward with confidence and hope.



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative show real progress, with the number of participants struggling with ongoing symptoms and daily functioning dropping from 33.11% to 9.46%. *At the same time, those who are stable or thriving - experiencing few or no symptoms and coping well with everyday stress - increased from 41.22% to 56.4%, showing the impact of consistent access to mental health treatment.*



**THOSE EXPERIENCING
SIGNIFICANT SYMPTOMS
DECREASED FROM 33.11%
TO 9.46%; THOSE COPING
WELL ROSE 56.4%.**

LADAVIAN'S STORY: STABILITY STARTS WITH SUPPORT

For Ladavian (27), lack of reliable childcare was a major barrier to stability. While working to build a better future through the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, he struggled to pursue training or employment—but remained committed to making progress for his family.

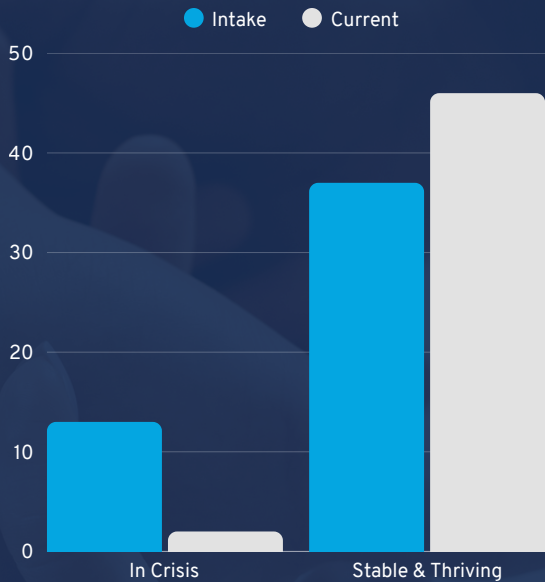
With support from the initiative, Ladavian secured affordable childcare through the Arkansas Childcare Voucher system. This critical resource allowed him to enroll in Goodwill's TEO program, where he gained hands-on job training and valuable work experience.

Today, Ladavian is building a strong foundation for his career and his future. With dependable childcare and workforce support, he's now able to focus on his goals and create lasting stability for his family.



CHILDCARE

Childcare support outcomes show significant progress, with those lacking childcare dropping from 8.78% to 1%. Additionally, there has been a 24% increase in participants with stable or thriving childcare arrangements, reflecting more families securing reliable, affordable, and quality childcare—an important factor in supporting overall stability and success.



**LACK OF CHILDCARE
DROPPED FROM 8.78% TO
1% AND A 24% INCREASE
IN STABLE OR THRIVING
ARRANGEMENTS.**

TINA’S STORY: FINDING STRENGTH THROUGH SUPPORT AND SERVICE

When Tina (54) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, she had recently completed residential treatment and was determined to maintain her recovery. With a long history of substance use and personal setbacks, she worried about becoming overwhelmed—but she remained committed to growth and healing.

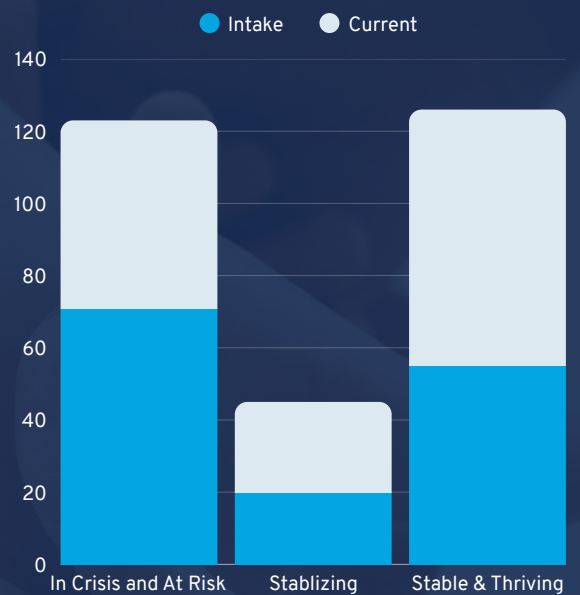
Tina quickly stepped into a leadership role as house mother at her transitional living facility, supporting other women and staying active in treatment and recovery groups. She also rebuilt family relationships and reengaged as a parent and grandparent.

With support from the initiative, Tina addressed lingering dental issues by securing an affordable care plan and receiving the treatment she had long postponed. Today, she carries herself with renewed confidence and purpose—grounded in recovery, wellness, and a strong support system.



DENTAL

Dental health outcomes show meaningful progress, with the number of participants who need dental work and have no insurance dropping from 41.89% to 25.68%. At the same time, the percentage of individuals who are stable or thriving, either already getting their dental needs addressed or not needing any work, rose from 37.16% to 47.97%, reflecting the initiative’s growing impact in supporting participants’ access to dental care.



**THOSE NEEDING
DENTAL CARE
WITHOUT INSURANCE
DROPPED FROM 41.89%
TO 25.68%.**

THOMAS'S STORY: MOVING FORWARD, ONE STEP AT A TIME

When Thomas (31) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, he was facing major transportation barriers—a suspended license, no vehicle, and the daily challenge of maintaining his sobriety without reliable access to work or care.

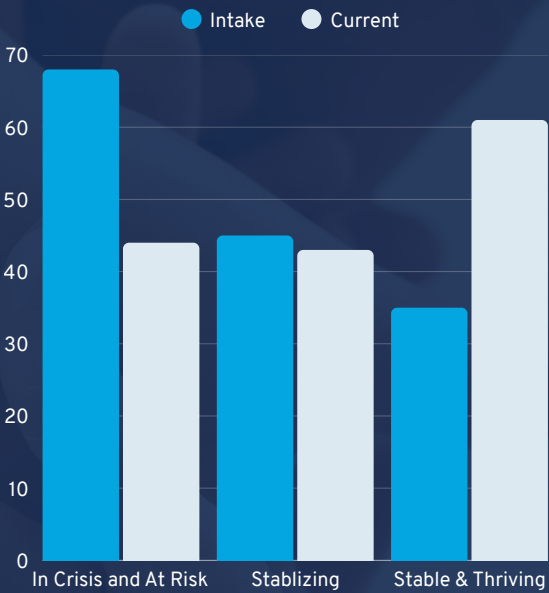
Determined to change, Thomas obtained a vehicle and secured a restricted license with an interlock device. He paid down outstanding fines in several counties, gained steady employment, and began budgeting and saving for the future. With additional support, he also secured health insurance to maintain ongoing care.

Today, Thomas is living a more stable, sober life—proof that with determination and the right support, it's possible to overcome obstacles and move forward.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative demonstrate strong improvement, with a 74% increase in participants who now have reliable, affordable, and insured transportation, including valid driver's licenses and access to private vehicles. The number of participants in crisis—lacking dependable transportation—dropped significantly, and 9% of participants regained a valid driver's license, directly supporting their ability to maintain employment, attend court, and stay connected to critical services. These gains show how addressing basic mobility needs can open doors to long-term stability and success.



**A 74% INCREASE IN
RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE,
INSURED TRANSPORTATION;
9% REGAINED A VALID
DRIVER'S LICENSE.**

RALPH'S STORY: BUILDING STABILITY AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

When Ralph (37) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, he was struggling to find steady work, behind on land payments, food insecure, uninsured, and unsure how to move forward.

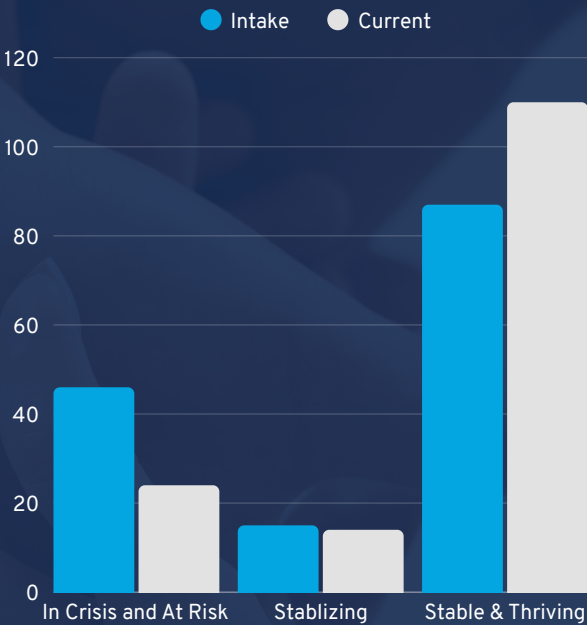
With support from the initiative, Ralph found steady employment, began budgeting, and, for the first time in years, gained access to health insurance—allowing him to finally address long-neglected physical health needs.

Today, Ralph is building a healthier, more stable future—one where starting his own handyman business feels possible.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical health outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative show steady improvement, with the number of participants lacking insurance and needing immediate care dropping from 31.08% to 16.22%. Meanwhile, those who are stable or thriving, meaning they have insurance and either don't need care or are already getting the care they need, increased from 58.79% to 74.32%, showing the initiative's success in connecting people to essential healthcare.



STABLE OR THRIVING HEALTH INCREASED FROM 58.79% TO 74.32%; THOSE WITHOUT INSURANCE NEEDING URGENT CARE DROPPED BY 50%.

CORENLUIS’S STORY: REBUILDING LIFE THROUGH SOBRIETY AND SUPPORT

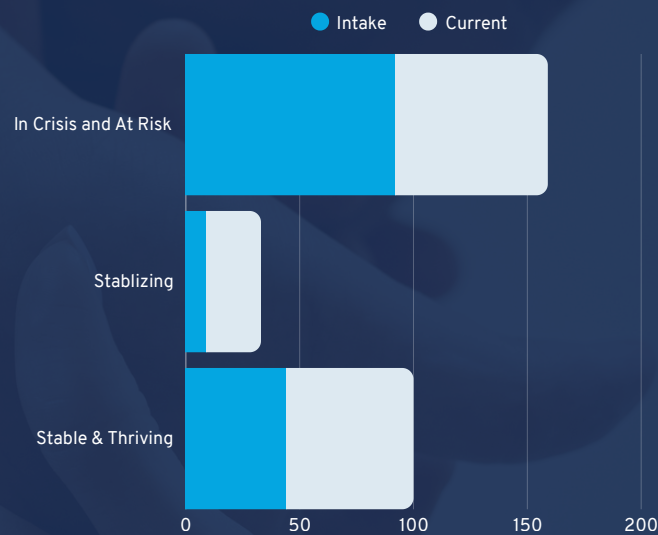
When Corenluis (50) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, he was struggling with substance use and unstable housing, uncertain whether real change was possible. But with support and a clear plan, he made the decision to pursue sobriety and took steady steps toward rebuilding his life.

Today, Corenluis has over 100 days sober, full-time employment with benefits, and stable housing—proof that with structure, support, and determination, lasting transformation is within reach.



RECOVERY

Recovery outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, a six-month Initiative, show strong early progress. Within just 90 days, over 20% of participants moved from active substance use without support to being substance-free and engaged in treatment, and there was an 18% increase in those maintaining sobriety for the full Initiative, demonstrating the initiative’s ability to quickly connect individuals to critical recovery services and set the foundation for lasting change.



RECOVERY OUTCOMES SHOWED
A 27% IN PARTICIPANTS MOVING
FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY.

REBECCA'S STORY: FINDING SAFETY AND A FRESH START

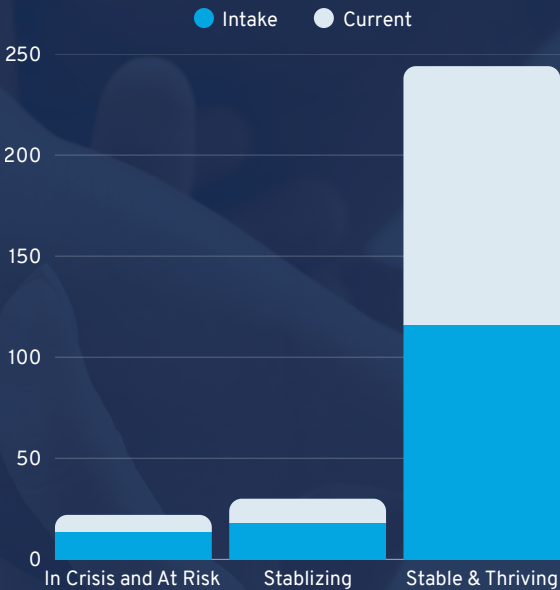
Rebecca (46) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative while trapped in a long-term, abusive relationship. Though she was sober, her partner's addiction and their shared life made it difficult to break free. With support from the initiative, she made the courageous decision to start over.

Rebecca secured housing, a vehicle, and a new job—gaining independence and stability. Her mental health has improved, and she now shows up to court with a genuine smile—safe, hopeful, and on a path of healing.



SAFETY

Safety outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative show participants are experiencing greater confidence and security in their daily lives. The number of individuals who felt unsafe or only somewhat safe dropped by 55%, while the number of participants who reported feeling very safe increased by 15%—from 82 to 94 individuals. These results reflect the initiative's positive impact on participants' sense of personal safety—an essential foundation for engagement, stability, and long-term success.



**55% DECREASE IN
PARTICIPANTS
FEELING UNSAFE; 15%
INCREASE IN THOSE
FEELING VERY SAFE.**

KANEISHA'S STORY: OVERCOMING BARRIERS AND BUILDING A NEW PATH

When Kaneisha (27) entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, a suspended license and past legal barriers made it difficult to find work or continue her education. Frustrated but determined, she took action to change her path.

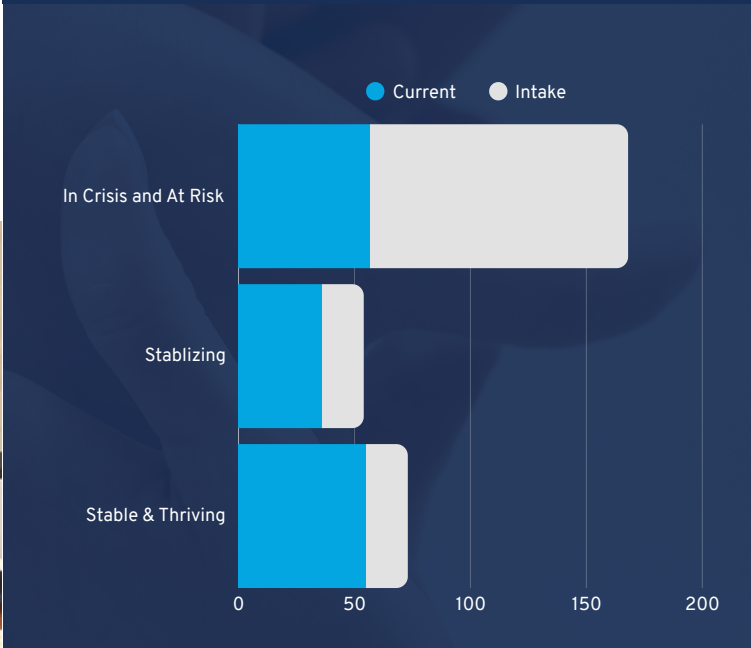
With support from the initiative, Kaneisha reinstated her license, enrolled in Goodwill's Excel Center, and began the process of sealing her record. Now on track to graduate, she's preparing to enter the workforce with confidence—a testament to the power of second chances and her own determination.



LEGAL

Legal outcomes from the Smart Justice District Court Initiative show strong improvement, with the number of participants facing active warrants, new charges, or serious noncompliance dropping from 44.59% to 22.30%. Meanwhile, those who are stable or thriving - meaning they are meeting all court requirements or have fully resolved their legal issues - increased from 12.17% to 37.17%, showing the initiative's growing impact in helping individuals take control of their legal obligations and move forward.

There was a 206% increase in participants who are fully meeting court requirements, up to date on fines and fees, or have resolved their legal matters entirely - a clear sign that the initiative is helping individuals take control of their legal obligations and move forward with stability.



ACTIVE LEGAL CRISIS DROPPED FROM 44.59% TO 22.30%; 206% INCREASE IN PARTICIPANTS MEETING ALL COURT OBLIGATIONS OR CLEARING THEIR RECORDS.

JEROMESHA’S STORY: TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

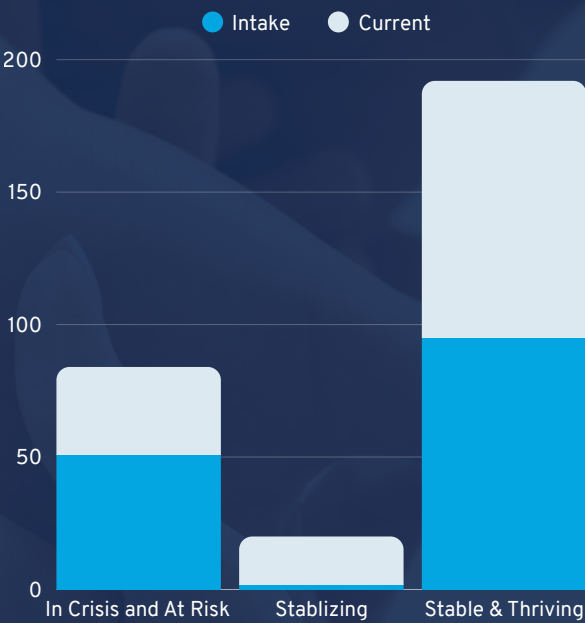
At 22, Jeromesha entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative after struggling to afford food for herself and her child. Overwhelmed by barriers in employment, housing, and mental health, she was determined to find a path forward through education.

With support from the initiative, Jeromesha enrolled at Southeast Arkansas College, secured part-time work, childcare, SNAP benefits, and mental health care—all while remaining focused on her goals. She completed the initiative and is now preparing to enter SEARK’s Nursing Program in Fall 2025, ready to build a brighter future for herself and her child.



EDUCATION

Education outcomes show significant progress. The percentage of participants without a diploma or GED and facing major barriers has dropped from 13.89% to just 4.17%. All individuals who have not yet earned a diploma or GED now have an active referral and are receiving ongoing support to pursue further education.



PARTICIPANTS WITHOUT A DIPLOMA OR GED DROPPED FROM 13.89% TO 4.17%; THOSE PURSUING OR HOLDING HIGHER EDUCATION INCREASED TO 63.89%.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

PROJECTED OUTCOMES: SERVING 500 PARTICIPANTS OVER THE NEXT YEAR

As the Smart Justice District Court Initiative expands into additional counties, a conservative estimate anticipates serving 500 participants in the next year based on current initiative trends and average participant volumes from existing counties.

The following predictive outcomes are derived from performance trends observed over the past year. These figures demonstrate the initiative's tangible benefits in economic growth, fiscal responsibility, public safety, and individual stability.

Fiscal Responsibility:

- The initiative is projected to save taxpayers approximately \$300,000 annually by diverting participants from jail sentences averaging 15 days at a cost of \$40 per day. These savings demonstrate responsible public spending by reducing incarceration and reinvesting in more effective, community-based solutions.

Workforce Development:

- The initiative is projected to increase full-time employment among participants by over 40%, adding approximately 245 individuals to the workforce. With a 92% job retention rate, this growth supports long-term economic independence and reduces reliance on public assistance programs.

Public Safety:

- The initiative is projected to reduce the number of participants facing legal crises—such as active warrants or new charges. At the same time, full legal compliance is expected to rise to over 430 participants, strengthening public safety and improving court system efficiency.

Health Improvements:

- The initiative is projected to decrease the number of participants experiencing mental health crises or high-risk conditions by nearly 30%, with 55 fewer individuals in crisis. Physical health crises are expected to decline by over 35%, affecting 80 fewer participants and supporting improved well-being and daily functioning.

Economic Growth:

- The initiative is projected to generate approximately \$875,000 annually in combined state and federal tax contributions through increased employment and rising incomes. This growth highlights the initiative's impact on financial self-sufficiency and broader economic vitality.



**\$300,000 SAVED IN
INCARCERATION
COSTS ANNUALLY**



**EMPLOYMENT RATE
EXPECTED TO RISE
BY OVER 40%, FROM
47% TO NEARLY 66%**



**50% REDUCTION IN
LEGAL CRISIS CASES**



**NEARLY 30% REDUCTION IN
MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS
CASES AND OVER 35% DROP
IN PHYSICAL HEALTH CRISES**



**\$875,000 IN NEW TAX
REVENUE GENERATED
ANNUALLY**



**-Bailey Ellis Farner, Esq.
Defense Attorney, Hot Springs**

"I am writing this letter in hopes of portraying my satisfaction and appreciation of the Smart Justice District Court Initiative (SJ-DCI) I believe that this Initiative provides an invaluable resource for our community.

While I am biased as a criminal defense attorney, I do not believe that incarceration is always the best, or most just, outcome. There are facts and circumstances that justify incarceration. However, incarceration in my eyes, is typically more geared towards punishment than rehabilitation. Opportunities for rehabilitation have improved tremendously over the years for incarcerated individuals, but there are still tremendous difficulties in receiving rehabilitative treatment under those circumstances.

That is where SJ-DCI comes in to provide hope and opportunity to our community. I have personally seen this Initiative save a man from being incarcerated for up to a year. My client had been doing exceptionally well for several years but made a mistake and had a criminal history. Without going into the substance of the charge, plea discussions, or his history; my client's only option was to plead to jail time or go to trial (Which would not have gone well). SJ-DCI allowed my client to continue attending school, maintain his employment, and stay clean. Had he have gone to jail, there is very little doubt that his schooling would have been placed on halt and his employment would not be waiting on him once he was released. Substances would have been the easiest way to deal with these problems. SJ-DCI essentially saved his life by providing him a second option."

**-Sherry Hesson
Adult Education Career Coach, Johnson County**

"As a court liaison for the adult education program partnering with the Smart Justice District Court Initiative in Johnson County, I've seen how it changes lives. Instead of focusing solely on punishment, the initiative provides participants with opportunities for education, job readiness, and personal growth. Many individuals regain confidence and purpose as they work toward their GED or gain employment skills. This progress often leads to more stable home lives and positive changes for their families. Overall, the initiative supports long-term success by breaking cycles and promoting rehabilitation over incarceration."





-Hon. Paula Juels-Jones
District Judge, North Little Rock

“So many times we’re dealing with young people who lack guidance, role models, or basic support at home.”

“It gives people a chance. For some, it’s hard to believe that someone is truly willing to help them because they’ve never experienced that before.”

“It’s about creating a foundation for the future.”

-Miranda Reardon
Chief District Court Clerk, Johnson County

“In my opinion, I feel as though the Smart Justice District Court Initiative has been a great success with families involved in the Court System. It helps the families to not feel discouraged when a hard time faces them but instead, helps them with positive choices in their life.

The Initiative has influenced my way of thinking to have a better understanding of some of the individuals walking through the courtroom. Everyone may face problems in their life and how quickly someone can run out of resources or options in their life. This Initiative helps bring light onto some individuals struggling so they can turn their lives around.

An example of this I have seen first-hand is to help someone get out of an abusive relationship. Many women suffering abuse, it takes them an average of 7 times before they leave. As this person is going through the abuse, the Coordinator of this Initiative is focusing on getting her and the child to safety. There is more resources with an Initiative in this community to seek help or treatment someone may need.”





-Clayton McCall
City Attorney, Clarksville

"I can offer two perspectives: one as the District Judge who initiated the Smart Justice District Court Initiative in Pope County and the other as a prosecutor in the Johnson County District Court. One major observation that stands out is the change in participants' demeanor as they engage in the initiative, which can be summed up in one word: hope. Typically, participants transition from feeling hopeless and downtrodden to being excited about their future and the progress they've made. This experience has reshaped my perspective on criminal recidivism, particularly the motivations for reducing it."

-Hon. Joe Graham
District Judge, Garland County

"At the commencement of the Smart Justice District Court Initiative, many participants enter without a reliable personal support network. During the course of the program, however, I have observed individuals actively constructing and reinforcing their support systems. This occurs through their engagement with community treatment providers—such as mental-health, substance-use specialists, and education and job training professionals—who attend our SJ-DCI staffing and review hearings. Simultaneously, participants have begun to restore connections with family members, an essential factor in sustaining long-term progress.

Moreover, SJ-DCI offers early, targeted interventions in areas where participants commonly struggle—such as addiction recovery or mental-health stabilization—by supplying tailored resources and practical tools. Those interventions are instrumental in helping participants regain equilibrium and move toward meaningful stability."





-Victor Whicher
Probation Officer, Pope County

"In a very short time, we have been blessed to experience many moments of success with our participants. One of the moments I go back to time and time again is one of our participants that within 6 months of working the initiative, they had a drivers license and home of their own for the first time ever simultaneously in their life. That person is almost 40 years old."

"Hugely positive impacts all around for families of those involved in Smart Justice District Court Initiative. Families are coming together and rallying around their loved ones as we work together to address issues, some that go back generations. We have already seen generational change take place, and I know that is something that we will continue to see as we move forward. I most look forward to seeing children growing up outside of those toxic cycles that participants are breaking free from. Along with seeing palpable physical and mental needs being met, we have also seen many people take steps of faith through Baptism during their time in this Initiative, which for myself being a follower of Christ, that is something I cherish seeing and pray will continue to happen."

"Just knowing that we have this new way forward for people really helps in how we approach each and every case. It has taught us what questions to ask so that we can better help assist people in their journeys, while giving us a greater understanding of the challenges facing people each and every day. For me personally, it has helped remind me that each and every person I come into contact with each and every day, is a person just like me, created in the image of God, and they not only deserve a chance, but they are worthy of being helped and valued along the way."

-Terry Askew
Deputy City Attorney, Hot Springs

"I am the Hot Springs Deputy City Attorney, and I prosecute cases for the City of Hot Springs.

I am a part of the Smart Justice District Court Initiative team at Garland County District Court. I have been a part of alcohol and/or drug court teams for nearly twenty (20) years.

Each team I have been a part of prior to SJ-DCI has been based on a high risk/high needs protocol for substance abuse, and each team has relied on the involvement of community service providers in order to provide clients the greatest chance of success.

SJ-DCI bridges the gap between those with substance abuse issues and those with other legal problems, which may or may not include substance abuse. It provides the chance for a fresh start for those who appear before the Court.

The Smart Justice District Court Initiative provides the opportunity for participants to get a GED, to get assistance with daily needs, to get treatment, and to find resources that will help them be successful.

I have been a member of SJ-DCI for about six (6) months. During that time, I have watched the participants in the initiative grow and gain confidence. I believe part of that is because of the encouragement provided by the SJ-DCI team and part of that is because the SJ-DCI coordinator has the knowledge base needed to direct participants to resources and providers that will assist the participants in meeting their needs.

Participants also show support for each other. During our most recent meeting, participants cheered and applauded each time someone moved up a tier or graduated, showing enthusiastic support for their fellow participants.

Although SJ-DCI is new to Garland County District Court, it has already made a difference in the lives of the participants. Participants have found housing, found jobs, obtained counseling, obtained medical treatment, started on the path to a GED, been approved for SNAP and Medicaid, and have been able to begin rebuilding their lives.

The Smart Justice District Court Initiative has assisted the participants in getting the fresh start that they deserve."





**-Hon. Deidre Luker
District Judge, Pope County**

"A general observation that I have made regarding the initiative is the change in the participants' demeanor and their drive and desire to pursue even greater things for themselves. I've noticed that as participants progress in the initiative and they start addressing things that have been holding them back personally (i.e., substance abuse issues, mental health issues, court issues), they start showing up to court with smiles, standing a little straighter, ready to tell me about how they are improving and seeing a difference in their lives. One participant in particular comes to mind: This individual is still in the initiative, and she is doing very well. I've noticed that as she's addressed her needs and issues that have previously held her back, that she's started dreaming and turning those dreams into goals by taking action, like studying for her GED at nearly 60 years old! It's simply incredible to watch the change in her!"

"the initiative has had an incredible impact on the families involved. While individuals typically come into the initiative with a limited goal of doing something to earn a fine reduction and/or a dismissal of pending charges in district court, for those that really take the initiative seriously, the benefits they ultimately obtain by addressing addiction, or mental health issues, or employment and housing issues, or by obtaining their drivers license have more far-reaching effects. I've been able to see individuals regain relationships with their children and grandchildren. I've seen people beam with pride because they've obtained a valid driver's license for the first time in YEARS (or ever) and obtain a vehicle to take themselves to work. I've seen individuals obtain safe and stable housing for themselves and their children after being homeless. Ultimately, I've seen individuals find purpose and believe in themselves again because they have people in this Initiative and in this court system that believe in them and are willing to give them a chance and support them in making a change."

-Hon. Sarah Capp
District Judge, Franklin & Johnson Counties

"I believe (SJ-DCI) has contributed to changing (participants') perception of the court system. It has likely reassured them that we acknowledge drug use as an addiction and recognize poverty as a significant barrier to achieving sobriety. Our goal is to bridge that gap and guide them toward a more positive path."

"Everyone has been surprised by how many defendants are struggling with drug use and the many obstacles that come with it. Celebrating the small wins has proven to be therapeutic for them, and by approaching rehabilitation with a mindset focused on second chances, we've seen an overall shift in perspective."

"There are countless moments when a defendant stands before me in open court, eyes filled tears, and I look them in the eye and tell them, 'We believe you're worthy of this chance.' In those moments, words fall short. The weight of hope, the power of being seen – it's overwhelming."



-Ray Cobbs
Probation Officer, North Little Rock

"We're building bridges and ensuring people know they're not just another case. It's about recognizing their potential and giving them a way forward"

"We slow down, ask questions, and ensure we're not just processing cases but truly supporting people"



-Christina Brown
Chief District Court Clerk, North Little Rock

"I worked with a probationer who entered the Smart Justice District Court Initiative with no job, no driver's license, no high school diploma, and no stable housing for herself and her children. Throughout her time in the initiative, she was able to overcome each of these barriers. She recently graduated from an adult high school program and resolved her court and traffic fines in North Little Rock. I've never witnessed someone build so much confidence in real time – and she did it through this Initiative."

-Denisse Delgado
Probation Officer, Johnson County

"I have witnessed firsthand what support and help from the SJ-DCI has revolutionized individuals. The people that we work with are in active crisis and feel alone. It is revolutionary to have a team of people supporting them within the court system. A lot of these people lack support in general and to walk into the courtroom and be praised by the Judge is a super uplifting moment for them. We are supporting our community members that are in need while simultaneously building a relationship between the court and the community.

We had a participant who was at a very low point in their life when they were referred to the Smart Justice District Court Initiative. Not only were they in a physical crisis but a mental crisis as well. Their unstable living situation had affected their mental state in a very negative way. They were stagnant with no way out. Since their referral, not only has their living situation stabilized, but they are a completely different person! Their newfound mental state is seen from miles away. I would like to think that it is due to the support and comfort that they have found within the Smart Justice District Court Initiative."

