

W/B HIDTA Treatment and Prevention Spotlight

Fairfax County Sheriff's Office,
Virginia



The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) offers a range of innovative services addressing substance use disorders for people incarcerated at the Adult Detention Center (ADC). Funding from the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA has advanced these services into the nationally recognized, evidence-based models described here.

Striving to Achieve Recovery (STAR) program is a peer-supported recovery program within the ADC that started in 2018 for people with substance used disorders, including Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). The STAR program is a voluntary program with a focus on providing a therapeutic community with a peer-led recovery focus. Participants are housed together in their own unit and attend a variety of services, including recovery classes, 12-step meetings, and interpersonal skill-building classes. The program is 18 weeks with three phases:

- Phase One: Foundational Recovery & Trauma Focus
- Phase Two: Community Engagement & Altruism
- Phase Three: Reentry Planning & Future Stability

Individuals can stay in the program beyond 18 weeks and can become mentors to those newer in the program. Certified Peer Recovery Specialist training is also offered. Every month during the final phase of the program family nights are hosted, which focus on family reunification, whether that be with parents, spouses, children, etc. Family members are able to see participants in a successful light and work towards healing their relationships.

Outcomes shared in February 2025 indicated that 69% of participants successfully complete the program, and 70% of participants have no known recidivism.

Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)-HIDTA funding also helped launch jail-based treatment for people with OUD, starting in 2020. Recognition of OUD as a chronic illness that jails are required to treat, and the adoption of multiple evidence-based practices has been the foundation for this effort. Through sworn officer and medical team training, universal screening practices at booking, managing withdrawal processes, ongoing treatment available throughout incarceration (if clinically indicated), and solid reentry practices, this program now serves up to 16-20% of the population on a given day. Since inception, the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office has provided MOUD to 5,989 individuals.

Reentry Services are key to successful return to the community. Supporting individuals during the transition out of a period of incarceration and back to the community are times of risk for recidivism and overdoses. All individuals incarcerated at the ADC can receive reentry services such as government issued identification cards, enrollment in Medicaid when eligible, clothing, and other basic needs. HIDTA funds have allowed for an expanded focus on key reentry needs for individuals with opioid use disorder. Critical bridge doses of medication – and other supplies such as overdose reversal kits – are provided to reduce overdose risk if there is a return to use, to avoid withdrawal until their community medical appointment, and to assure successful and healthier integration into the community. Other services include peer support services, recovery housing scholarships, phones to stay connected, basic needs support, and more.

The FCSO's strong partnerships and champions, including the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Chris Atwood Foundation, and George Mason University, have been instrumental to the success and work both in the jail and the community. They are key contributors to the success of the services outlined here.

FCSO has hosted many visits with other jails interested in adopting similar services as well as multiple stakeholders and policymakers including a US Congressional Delegation and leaders from SAMHSA and ONDCP. The programs have been recognized with awards from the National Association of Counties, selection as a 2025 Bureau of Justice Assistance Jail Mentor Site, and presentations across the country.

These life-saving services reduce the stigma attached to addiction and have helped address fears related to supporting individuals with criminal backgrounds. Shelia Grant, FCSO Director of Correctional Health and Human Services, stated, "Providing these services in the jail can change an individual's life trajectory. It is amazing to witness individuals learning about who they are, caring about their health, and starting to look beyond their time in jail. Most people don't think of jail as a place to heal but it is in Fairfax. The work we do with individuals while they are incarcerated benefits all of us as it contributes to a safer and healthier community."



Sheriff Stacey Kincaid (left) is pictured with her staff (top), a CSB certified peer specialist (right), and the first group of inmates to participate in the Addiction Treatment and Recovery Program at the Adult Detention Center.