



# IMPACT REPORT

2021



Ohio START is housed at and led by  
the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO)

37 W Broad Street, Suite 1100 | Columbus, OH 43215

[ohiostart.org](http://ohiostart.org)

## WHAT IS OHIO START?

Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) is a children services-led intervention model for families experiencing both substance use disorder and child maltreatment. Ohio START is an affiliate of the national START model and it emphasizes a wraparound approach for at-risk parents.

It is led by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and was established in 2017 by Gov. DeWine when he was Attorney General.

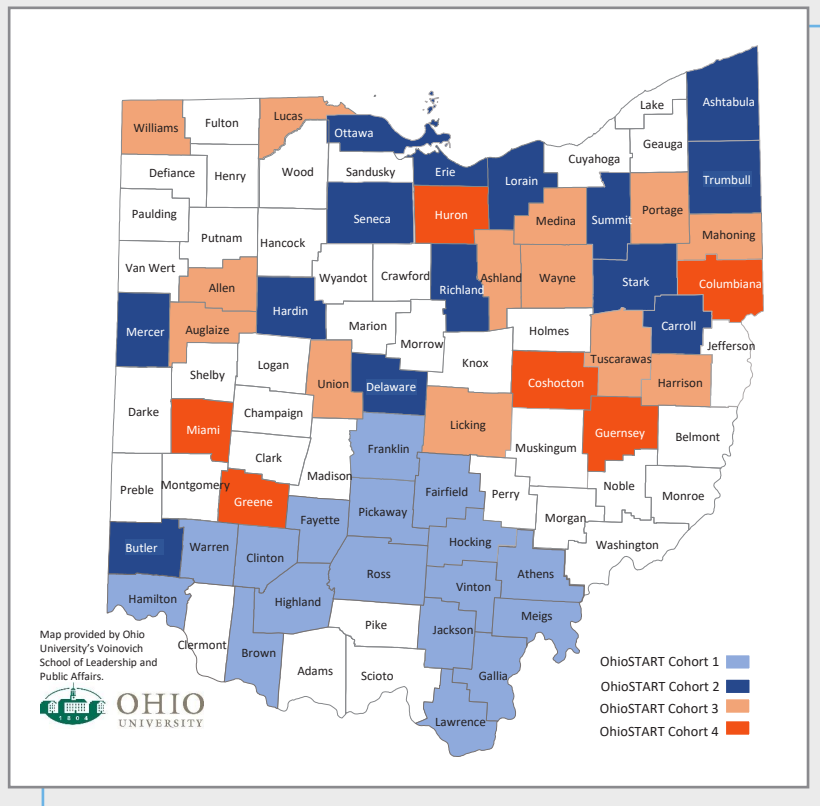
In 2021, Ohio START served **50 counties.**

## OHIO START MISSION

We approach substance use disorders with compassion, understanding and hope for recovery. We work as a team, supporting and holding each other accountable.

We believe in family, love and redemption.

## OhioSTART Cohorts



“What's special about Ohio START is that we have Family Peer Mentors that have lived experience in both recovery as well as having experience with the child welfare system as a client. It makes people believe that if you did it, I can do it, too.”

- Kim, Ohio START supervisor

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT OHIO START

Ohio START does not operate according to the standard children services model.

It brings together children services caseworkers, behavioral health providers, and Family Peer Mentors into teams that can wrap supports around the family.

Ohio START helps families with additional needs related to housing, employment, food, parenting skills and education. Caseworkers see families weekly in the beginning.



**WATCH AN OVERVIEW VIDEO ABOUT OHIO START:**

<https://youtu.be/p9gO4NMQIAo>



## 2021 Activities Summary

SERVICES TO  
FAMILIES

TRAINING

TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE

### CASES IN 2021

**NEW FAMILIES** SERVED: **283**

**OPEN CASES** DEC 1, 2021: **597**

**SUCCESSFUL  
CASE PLAN  
COMPLETION:** **118  
families**

“ I didn't have anything like this and I feel like things would have gone differently if I would have had that support and that empathy and someone working with me and helping my family understand. - Crystal, Family Peer Mentor



# Family Peer Mentors

Ohio START provides peer support to help families navigate children services and other systems while also providing hope and motivation to promote healing to keep children safe and families together.

Families are assigned a Family Peer Mentor who has lived experience with substance abuse and children services involvement.

Family Peer Mentors visit families once a week for the first three months, and every other week after that. This allows them to form strong bonds with families and to provide support.

## FAMILY SUPPORT IN 2021



HEAR FROM FAMILY  
PEER MENTORS:

[https://youtu.be/  
iB6nMfqpkOc](https://youtu.be/iB6nMfqpkOc)

**7,645**  
**FAMILY VISITS**  
BY FAMILY PEER MENTORS

**1 hour**  
AVG VISIT TIME

**A FAMILY RECEIVES  
AN AVG OF  
32 visits/yr**  
FROM THEIR FAMILY  
PEER MENTOR

## OHIO START BUILDS DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES.

Families are involved in the decision-making process about their case.



*There is nothing that is going to be done in your child welfare case that is going to be done without you knowing. Our goal is for you to be well aware of what is going on and what the repercussions may be. We are going to make sure you are really informed as we go through.*

- Laney, Ohio START caseworker



*I am hoping that Ohio START is the new wave of the future... the fact that it does put the family first, the fact that we do get their input.*

- Ashley, Ohio START caseworker



*I don't want to make a call on something that is going to change their lives forever just because of a couple of pieces of paper and I've seen them once...I love the relationships and getting to know them on a more personal level.*

- Crystal, Family Peer Mentor

# Family Peer Mentor Spotlight



**SARAH**

“ Being able to share with them my hurts, my hangups, the obstacles that I've overcome empowers them and allows them to see that recovery is possible.

*I know that this is my purpose. I'm alive, I'm here, I'm able to share what worked for me in the hopes that this helps the family. More importantly, I am getting back way more than I am giving to these families because this is what keeps me sober, it keeps me going, it's a part of recovery and service work and it's also just continuously spreading that hope that it's possible.*



**KIAH**

“ I knew from the first time I tried to get sober that that's what I wanted to do, I wanted to be that person on the front line. When I was getting my children back, I had a regular case and I didn't have anybody there to guide me...it would have been nice to have that Family Peer Mentor to help me and guide me.

*I have five years sober so I am able to guide them through their recovery, give them tools, talk to them, be a big support and they know they can relate to me. And they usually love that.*



**CRYSTAL**

“ A lot of our cases have burnt a lot of their bridges...so it's being that one person that meets them where they're at, having that understanding, giving them that hope, being that one person that hasn't given up on them yet.

# The Importance of Addressing Trauma

Ohio START screens all clients for trauma because there is a strong link between traumatic experiences and substance use. Adults in the Ohio START program are screened for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs include many types of abuse and neglect as well as parental mental illness, substance use, divorce, incarceration, and domestic violence. Children are screened using the Trauma Screening Checklist from the Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC).

Providing comprehensive strength-based, family-centered, and community-focused resources is a sound approach for children and families.

Ohio START shows that **recovery heals families.**

With intensive services and support, parents can overcome addiction and children can remain safely in the home or be reunified as part of their recovery.

All Ohio START participants are screened for trauma because of the link between trauma and substance abuse.

## 2021 Trauma Screenings by Ohio START:

ADULT AVG TRAUMA SCORE	CHILDREN 0-5 AVG TRAUMA SCORE	CHILDREN 6-18 AVG TRAUMA SCORE
3.9 (4x national avg)	4.2	5.9

## CLIENTS SERVED IN 2021

ADULTS	YOUTH 6-18	CHILDREN 0-5
790	316	621

## BENCHMARKING TRAUMA IN CHILD WELFARE: A BRIEF REPORT

In 2021, The Ohio State University released a study, *Benchmarking Trauma in Child Welfare: A Brief Report*, that examined trauma for those involved in the Ohio START model or the EPIC program (a pilot program involving similar supports along with family drug court).

The study found:

### ADULTS

**28%**  
**higher**

than ACEs reported in previous child welfare research

**56%**

had 4+ ACEs

**65%**

experience substance abuse in the home as children

### YOUTH 6-18

**27%**  
**higher**

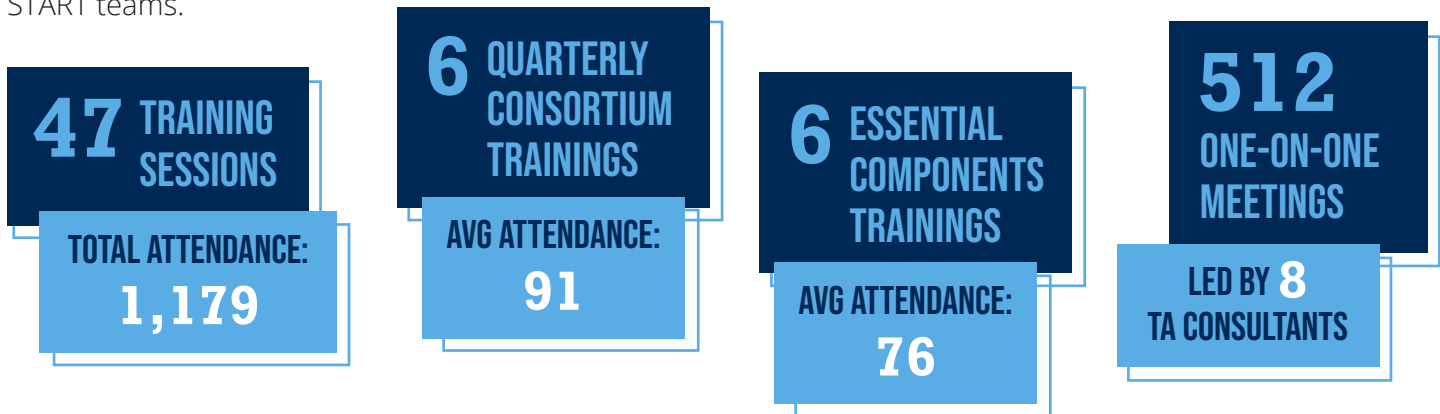
trauma scores than reported in previous child welfare research

**76%**

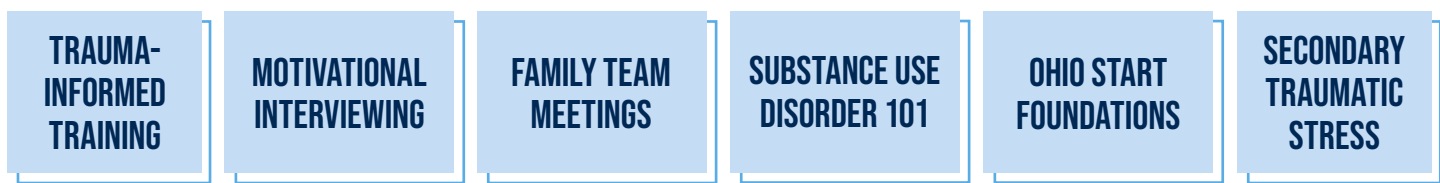
had 4+ traumatic experiences or behaviors (CTAC)

# Technical Assistance and Trainings

Ohio START has built an extensive technical assistance (TA) and training infrastructure, offering individualized support to each of the 50 counties implementing the model. This support is provided by regional TA consultants through monthly one-on-one meetings, and by a comprehensive training program that provides education on the START model and related topics that will advance the practice of the Ohio START teams.



## Types of Trainings



### START SUMMIT / AUGUST 2021 /

Ohio START held its 3rd annual summit in-person. Topics included the connection between trauma and addiction, relapse prevention and engaging fathers.



“ I wish I could have attended all of the trainings, as it was hard to pick just one.

“ It helped connect addiction to emotion and response

“ Gave me many positive ways to interact with clients





Ohio START participants William and Tiffany wrote these letters to officials involved in their case as they were graduating from their rehabilitation program and moving to sober living.

## William's Letter

I am pleased to inform you that my recovery is going excellent. I am glad we decided to come. I am also excited to be going to sober living in a few days.

**I am reaching and achieving my goals that we tried so hard for at home but could not reach. I am honestly looking forward to making a better life for myself, especially for my family, and now we have a great start and chance to do so.**



**I've been thinking of ways that I can use my experiences and the knowledge I've gained to give back and possibly help others that may be in similar places or situations.** That is something that weighs on my heart a lot the closer I get in touch with God and my spiritual self. It saddens me more when I think about the number of people that are homeless and in the drug epidemic in my hometown.

So hopefully when I get farther in my recovery, maybe I can find a way to come back and give back to my community because it is something I'd really like to do. Plus, it has always made me feel better to help others. That is all I have for now, but I look forward to writing to you in the future as I progress in my recovery to give you more updates. Thank you, and God bless you.

*william*

I also want you to know that I am going to work on my GED and possibly look into furthering my education. I have all the motivation and determination to move forward in life and look forward to being a productive member of society.

I want to thank you for the care and support you showed us. It was definitely unusual for me to see that from a public official where we live but I was glad that I got to. But it still saddens me that there isn't more of it.

“

**I HAVE ALL THE  
MOTIVATION AND  
DETERMINATION TO  
MOVE FORWARD IN LIFE  
AND LOOK FORWARD TO  
BEING A PRODUCTIVE  
MEMBER OF SOCIETY.**



## Tiffany's Letter

Hello, there. I hope things are going as well for you as they are for me. I just wanted to take some time to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come here. I really feel like this is the best decision I've made in a very long time.

This place is absolutely amazing! I definitely recommend it for anyone who is serious about getting their life straightened out. In all honesty, I'd even recommend it for those who are not. I believe this place would for sure change their mind about it.

The staff here, let me tell you, they are hands down a Godsend. They are 100% wonderful people. I will definitely stay in touch with a lot of them. I'm super happy to tell you that I am going to sober living when I leave here. I am so excited to go!



**I graduated today.** It was a fantastic ceremony; it was really awesome. I really cannot thank you enough...and there are just no words to tell you how much I appreciate all of the agency staff.

**My journey is far from over. I hope and pray that I continue to grow from here.** You have my word, though, that I will do my very best. **I really want all of you to fully understand how grateful I am for all that every one of you have done for me and my family.** Please feel free to share our story.

**We are proof that anyone can change their life for the better,** especially when they try to use the excuse that they can't help it. It may not be easy, fun or happen overnight, but if you put in the work, it's totally possible. Not only that, but it's also more than worth it. So, thank you from the bottom of my soul.

*Tiffany*

“

**WE ARE PROOF  
THAT ANYONE  
CAN CHANGE  
THEIR LIFE FOR  
THE BETTER...**