

Background

- **4.5% (174,000) Louisiana of youth (12 and older) reported opioid misuse between 2017-2019¹**
- **Substance use and delinquent behaviors are positively correlated⁵**
- Adolescent substance use has been correlated with poor outcomes such as **poorer academic outcomes, increased mental health issues, and increased involvement with the juvenile justice system²**
- The CRAFFT and CAGE
- Person-Centered approaches have shown improved outcomes for addressing substance use³
- Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment (**SBIRT**) is an evidence-based method for identifying substance use youth and adults in various settings

Description

FINS-AP is a voluntary program designed to evaluate, assess and refer youth and families to needed social services. FINS-AP received 4,956 referrals between 2019-2020, giving them a unique opportunity to implement early interventions with youth. At the start of this project, there was no substance use screening protocol for all 42 FINS offices throughout the state. **The Aim of this project was to train staff members in using the SBIRT model to assess both youth and caregivers for substance use.** The research team introduced two brief, open-access, substance use screening survey for adults and youth. These surveys predict substance use risk, and the SBIRT model provides guides on how to briefly intervene for level of risk. Youth involved with the juvenile justice system as well as those using substances may be subjected to stigma, and they may not be receptive to substance use services. The person-centered approach focuses on the needs and desires of the persons as a method to reach positive outcomes.

Accomplishments

- **Focus Group Findings**
- Semi-structured focus groups were conducted to elucidate FINS-AP staff substance use screening processes
- Intake and substance use screening processes varied widely
- **There was no universal substance use screening protocol for youth or caregivers**
- Most staff members reported establishing trust with the youth and families was important during the intake process
- **5 (17.9%) of staff reported using the court as a method to keep youths compliant with the FINS program**
- The findings were compiled into a brief and utilized in forming the SBIRT training curriculum
- **SBIRT Training**
- Five regional in-person trainings were conducted in 2022 (see Figure 2)
- A protocol for implementing SBIRT for adults and youth were created and distributed
- Person-centered practices were modeled and practiced during trainings

Figure 1: FINS Staff Who Felt the Training Improved their Knowledge of Screening for Substances

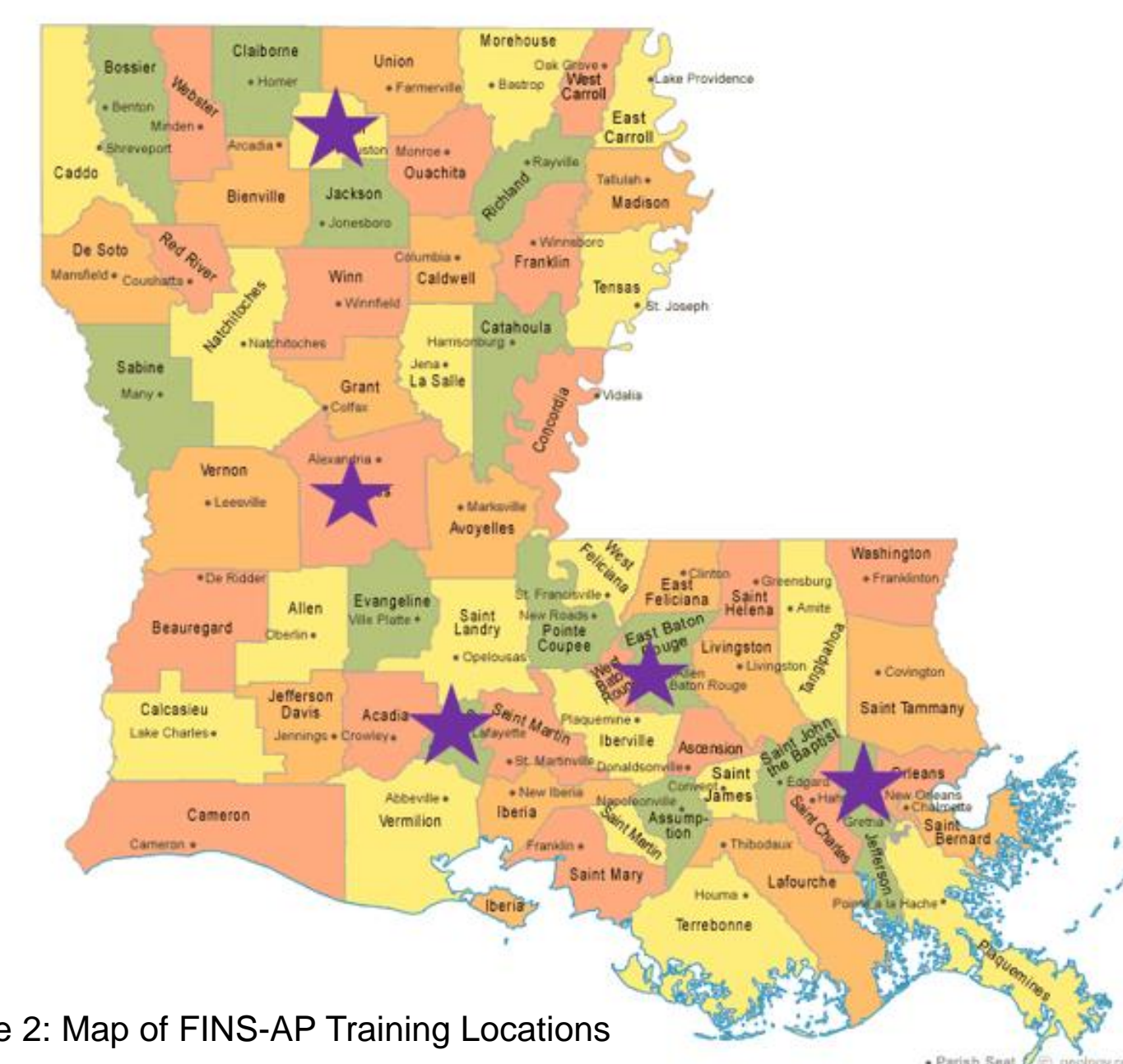
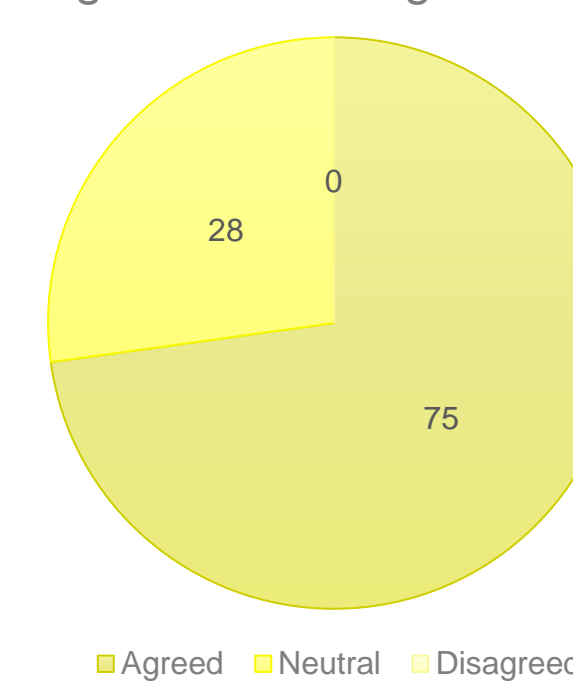


Figure 2: Map of FINS-AP Training Locations

Discussion

There is a correlation between youth substance use and delinquent behaviors, and both behaviors are linked with poor psychosocial and health outcomes.⁵ FINS-AP provides referrals to services meant to prevent continued involvement with the justice system; thus, **having a universal tool to address substance use as multiple levels of risk could provide critical services to the families in need.** Further, the youth involved with FINS-AP may have never had formal evaluations performed prior to their referrals to the program. The person-centered approach of SBIRT offers a technique to meet the families where they are and may guide FINS staff Substance use is involvement with the juvenile justice system is multifaceted. As such, a limitation of this study is that the FINS-AP staff are limited to identifying potential substance use and addressing those specific needs. Additional resources are needed, and rural areas of the state may not have many options. An additional limitation is that implementation evaluations have not been conducted to measure how SBIRT is being used in the field.

Future Steps

- Additional evaluation of SBIRT implementation should occur
- The results of this project could be further implemented into other avenues of the Louisiana Juvenile Justice system

References

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