

## FACT SHEET: CITY GIRLS PROGRAM

Interventions 312-663-0817

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The City Girls program was established in 1991 in cooperation with the City of Chicago Department of Health. Interventions was contracted to operate the program as part of a privatization of selected City health services. Consultation with the health department, Chicago public schools and juvenile court resulted in the development of this program specifically for adolescent girls.

Girls entering the program must be residents of the City of Chicago. Referrals into the program come both directly from welfare agencies, juvenile court and department of corrections.

This program is one of only a few specialized adolescent girls substance abuse treatment programs in the nation. Interventions operates two other similar programs for girls. The program's therapeutic milieu is modeled on a therapeutic community design with special adaptations for both gender and age of the residents.

Girls remain in the program on average for six months. At the point of discharge a comprehensive plan is developed for each girl. In many instances these girls move to a different level of care at discharge. A halfway house for adolescent girls is a preferred placement in many cases. Such a resource is very difficult to find.

Of the girls admitted to the program one third are either pregnant or parenting teens. For pregnant girls the program medical staff provides case management and linkage to prenatal care. For girls who are parenting the program provides parenting classes on an ongoing basis. Girls who are not in a primary parenting role because of their substance abuse are assisted in becoming reunified with their children and extended family.

The girls in this program all come from an urban environment. The issues they bring are a major part of what staff of the program deals with in developing recovery plans from substance abuse. Many of the girls have been involved in gangs, prostitution, criminal activity and a drug subculture controlled by older adult men.

From our experience treating girls we have learned that it is through therapeutic relationships with adult women staff and other girls that individual growth and healing takes place. The all female environment provides an atmosphere of safety where the women can share their unique experience as young women who have experienced damage and trauma as a result of their violent, hostile home and community life.