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BJA's Justice Today



BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

DENISE E. O'DONNELL, DIRECTOR

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In the Spotlight

Working to End Human Trafficking

Modern-day slavery and human trafficking—the illegal trade of people for exploitation and financial gain through force, fraud, or coercion—is a growing problem in the United States.

BJA is proud to collaborate with the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to provide funding to combat human trafficking through the Enhanced Collaborative Model Human Trafficking Task Force Initiative. Each year this initiative provides grant funds to law enforcement agencies and victim service providers to rescue victims of trafficking and investigate and prosecute cases of sex and labor trafficking.

For additional information regarding the task force and training and technical assistance opportunities available to law enforcement, visit the BJA Human Trafficking [web page](#), read the latest International Association of Chiefs of Police blog post, "[It's Happening Here: Identifying Partners for Proactive Labor Trafficking Investigations](#)," or view the OVC/BJA Human Trafficking Task Force [e-Guide](#).



DID YOU KNOW?

Enhancing Officers' Trust-Building and Tactical Skills

What training and technical assistance is available to help police officers improve their community trust-building skills? The city of Richmond, California, a [Violence Reduction Network](#) (VRN) site, was looking for opportunities to help their officers practice effective verbal communication and learn tactics to minimize the use of force. The VRN, in collaboration with the BJA [National Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) (NTTAC), connected the Richmond Police Department (RPD) with a series of five one-day introductory T3™ - Tact, Tactics, and Trust training classes. Police veteran Dr. Jonathan Wender discusses T3™ training principles, as well as the RPD course, in a BJA NTTAC TTA Today blog post. Click [here](#) to read the post and learn more about the training series.



News You Can Use

SPI Collaboration Workshop

The [Smart Policing Initiative](#) (SPI) and the [Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative](#) (BCJI) hosted a workshop in Portland, Oregon on January 13 and 14. The workshop focused on community collaboration and effective strategies for engaging communities around crime reduction issues, and featured presentations from prominent policing, criminal justice, and community agencies that have experience in improving police-community relations. BJA



Associate Deputy Director Cornelia Sorensen Sigworth and BJA Policy Advisor Catherine McNamee attended and presented. Attendees included department chief executive and command staff, outreach coordinators, sergeants and patrol officers, representatives from local government, community service providers, and community members.

BCJI Presents Webinars on Place-Based Crime Reduction Strategies

The [Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative](#) (BCJI) program recently sponsored a webinar titled "Combining Revitalization and Community Safety," which featured the efforts of grantees to connect crime reduction strategies to revitalization efforts. BCJI sites convene diverse partners, including residents, researchers, and local law enforcement, to analyze crime drivers and pursue strategies that improve safety and build trust long term. Police and community leaders from Austin, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, described how they addressed crime associated with vacant properties ranging from residential homes to large undeveloped areas of land in the webinar, available [here](#).

The program also released another webinar, titled "Research Partnerships in the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program (BCJI)," in which BJA joined researchers from Omaha, Nebraska to discuss BCJI's place in the Smart Suite and identify tips for successful research-practitioner

FEATURED PROGRAM

West Virginia Expands Access to Substance Use Treatment through Justice Reinvestment Initiative

In 2012, West Virginia had the highest drug overdose death rate in the country, funding for addiction treatment in the community was scarce, and the

partnerships. The archived presentation is available [here](#).

NIJ Seeks Information on Strategies to Address Needs of Justice-Involved Young Adults

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), through its research component, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), seeks to better understand the range of responses and strategies that address the needs of justice-involved young adults. NIJ has contracted with an independent consultant to conduct an environmental scan of practices used with young adults involved in the criminal justice system. This information will help OJP and NIJ establish program and research priorities for this critical population.

Recent research confirms that the region of the human brain that regulates impulse control and reasoning continues to develop well into a person's 20s, making young adults more likely to engage in risk-seeking behavior and have difficulty moderating their responses in emotionally charged situations. Young adults ages 18–24 account for a disproportionately high percentage of arrests and prison admissions. About half of them return to prison within three years following release. However, because of the rapid development that occurs during this time, the brain is more malleable to appropriate intervention. Therefore, the opportunity exists to reduce future criminal activity—and consequently the number of future victims—by having a justice system that responds to criminal behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner and helps young adults rebuild their lives.

If your organization is implementing any programs or strategies that address the needs of justice-involved young adults, or if you are aware of successful efforts in place in your community or elsewhere, send them to YoungAdultCrimJustPrograms@usdoj.gov. Read more [here](#).

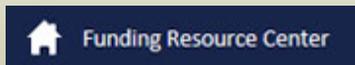
Funding Available for Community Courts

BJA, in partnership with the Center for Court Innovation, launched its 2016 Community Court Grant Program, which will provide up to 10 jurisdictions with funding and technical assistance to create or enhance a [community court](#). Click [here](#) for application instructions. Proposals are due on **Friday, February 19, 2016** by 5 p.m. eastern time.

Grants & Funding

No BJA FY 2015 competitive grant solicitations are currently open. Visit our [Funding Page](#) to stay up-to-date on upcoming BJA solicitations.

Don't forget to visit [OJP's Funding Resource Center](#), where you'll find OJP funding opportunities, an overview of OJP's grant process, and more!



In Focus This Month

BJA Staff Present at ACA Winter Conference

BJA Associate Deputy Director Ruby Qazilbash and BJA Policy staff Andre Bethea, Emily Chonde, Maria Fryer, and Tom Talbot participated in the 2016 [American Correctional Association \(ACA\)](#) Winter Conference, held January 22–27 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference convened leadership, advocates, researchers, practitioners, and policy leaders within the corrections field to discuss emerging trends, learn about new innovations, and exchange ideas on ways to improve the criminal justice system, as well as participate in relevant training sessions and apply for accreditation and certification.



BJA staff presented to committees and conducted workshops on a variety of topics at the conference, including Second Chance Act support for reentry initiatives, implementation of PREA standards, and postsecondary correctional education programs. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch also spoke at the event.

prison population was rising faster than nearly every other state in the nation. If no action was taken, state leaders would be forced to spend as much as \$350 million over the next five years to build more prisons.

In response to these urgent problems, state leaders reviewed data-driven analyses conducted by the [Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#), and adopted [Justice Reinvestment Initiative \(JRI\)](#) legislation in 2013. BJA provided training and technical assistance and a subaward for JRI-related activities through the CSG Justice Center.

The justice reinvestment legislation provided more alternatives to incarceration for judges and prosecutors to use for people with substance use treatment needs. Because of West Virginia's justice reinvestment policies and implementation, probation and parole revocations declined between 2012 and 2014 and the prison population remained stable. Drug courts will be expanded statewide by July 1, 2016, and there is now a new sentencing option called "treatment supervision," which ensures people on community-based supervision receive substance use treatment and services.

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Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) [website](#) has been updated with new Fact Sheets and Checklists of Required Documents to assist agencies, survivors, and injured officers as they file for PSOB benefits. Enacted in 1976, the PSOB Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program. Visit the [PSOB website](#) to apply for these federal benefits for law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders killed or catastrophically disabled in the line of duty. For questions regarding these new resources or the PSOB Program, call the PSOB Office at 888-744-6513 (toll-free) or 202-307-0635.



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