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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

### DOJ Announces Availability of Funding through BJA to Assist Reform of Fine and Fee Practices

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ or the Department) is committed to reforming justice system practices that perpetuate poverty and result in unnecessary deprivations of liberty. On March 10, the Department announced the availability of resources and funding to assist state and local reform of harmful and often unlawful practices related to the assessment and enforcement of justice fines and fees.

The Department will award **\$2.5 million in competitive grants** through BJA to state, local, or tribal jurisdictions that want to test strategies to restructure the assessment and enforcement of fines and fees. The grant program, titled [The Price of Justice: Rethinking the Consequences of Justice Fines and Fees](#), was posted by BJA on March 14. It will provide four grants of \$500,000 to agencies and their collaborative partners to develop strategies that promote appropriate justice system responses, including reducing unnecessary confinement for individuals who are unable to pay fines and fees. BJA will award an additional grant of \$500,000 to a technical assistance provider.

The Department also plans to provide resources through BJA to support the new **National Task Force on Fines, Fees, and Bail Practices**, led by the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators. The Task Force, which is also supported by the State Justice Institute, is composed of leaders from the judiciary, state and local government, the advocacy community, and the academy. Department officials will also serve on the Task Force.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Reducing the Use of Segregation in Correctional Facilities: Lessons from the Field

#### Webinar 1: Using Assessment to Drive Reform

March 31, 2016, 3:00–4:30 p.m. EST / 12:00–1:30 p.m. PST

This is the first in a series of webinars presented by the Vera Institute of Justice's [Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative](#). The purpose of the series is to highlight reforms to segregated housing (also referred to as restrictive housing or solitary confinement) being implemented by corrections agencies across the country. The first webinar will examine the benefits of reducing the use of segregation in a corrections system, discuss what a system interested in reforming this practice needs to know to get started, and feature reduction strategies implemented by two corrections departments.

The webinar aims to provide on-the-ground examples and ideas for practical solutions, and will be particularly useful for corrections agencies that are interested in reducing their use of segregation. Security, mental health, program, and other staff from state corrections agencies and local jails are encouraged to attend.

Register for this event [here](#). For any questions regarding the webinar or registration, please contact Elena Vanko at [evanko@vera.org](mailto:evanko@vera.org).

## News You Can Use

### BJA Staff Hold LEAD Session

On March 3, BJA held an information session onsite for BJA staff, OJP, and other national partners to learn more about the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program. The LEAD program, which started in Seattle and has spread across the nation, is a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order, where police officers exercise discretionary authority at point of contact to divert individuals to a community-based, harm-reduction intervention for law violations driven by unmet behavioral health needs. For more information, see the [LEAD Fact Sheet](#).



### JRI Workgroup Meeting Held in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania launched a second Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) effort on February 18, and the first workgroup meeting was held on March 9. BJA Senior Policy Advisor Juliene James attended the workgroup, which was held at the Governor's residence in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and featured a

presentation by the BJA-funded Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center regarding the key challenges facing Pennsylvania's criminal justice system and an outline of the next steps to be taken by CSG Justice Center and the workgroup. This justice reinvestment project includes a direct focus on crime, arrest, pretrial, sentencing, county probation and parole supervision, jails, substance use and mental disorders, community-based treatment, and programs to reduce recidivism. Read more [here](#).



### Important Changes to the PREA Certification and Assurance Timeline for 2016

In February 2016, OJP issued a letter to all state and territorial governors outlining their options for complying with the [Prison Rape Elimination Act](#) (PREA). To fulfill their requirements under the statute, each year governors have the option of certifying the state/jurisdiction's full compliance with the National Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Prison Rape (Standards) or assuring that it will use certain DOJ grant funds to adopt, and achieve full compliance with, the Standards in the future.

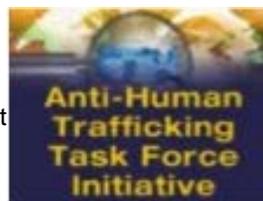
Beginning in 2016, the due date for certification and assurance submissions will occur at the beginning of the federal fiscal year that follows the completion of each audit year. In order to implement this timeline change, 2016 will be a transition year when governors will make two certification and/or assurance submissions.

For the first submission in 2016, governors are being asked to provide a certification or assurance to DOJ for Audit Year 2 (August 20, 2014 – August 19, 2015) of the first 3-year audit cycle. This submission will impact FY 2016 DOJ grant awards. **The first submission is due on March 31, 2016.**

For the second submission in 2016, governors are being asked to provide a certification or assurance to DOJ for Audit Year 3 (August 20, 2015 – August 19, 2016) of the first 3-year audit cycle, and these submissions will impact FY 2017 grant funds. **This second submission will be due on October 15, 2016.** Governors will receive a second letter from DOJ in summer 2016 with additional instructions.

### New Human Trafficking Performance Measures

BJA's performance measurement team, in collaboration with the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), has announced the release of new performance measures for the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking Program. These new Performance Measures are a shift away from the Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS) database and will now incorporate more user-friendly, highly focused, and relevant measures for both law enforcement and victim services grantees. In addition, they will provide BJA and OVC, as well as the general public, with greater detail on evidence-based and data-driven activities of grantees. Grantees will begin reporting on the revised measures on April 1, 2016. Additional information for the program, such as training videos and a copy of the measures, will be made available in the coming weeks and will be posted in the [Performance Measurement Tool](#) (PMT) in the *Information and Resources* section.



### VALOR Training

The VALOR Officer Safety, Wellness, and Resiliency Essential Training was held in York, Pennsylvania from March 1 to March 3. This training is designed for frontline law enforcement to promote officer safety and help prevent injuries and deaths of law enforcement officers and the people they serve. In this training, participants took part in a comprehensive agenda encompassing topics that addressed emerging threats and challenges that officers routinely face in the line of duty. To register for future VALOR training sessions, visit VALOR's Training Events [web page](#).



### Crime Analysis Training and Technical Assistance

Law enforcement agencies use data and analysis to make informed decisions and reduce and prevent crime. The BJA [National Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) (NTTAC) Crime Analysis on Demand program provides training and technical assistance (TTA) to agencies that are looking to implement a crime analysis program or to enhance their existing data analysis capabilities. Julie Wartell, a BJA NTTAC consultant and independent advisor, discusses how agencies are using crime analysis and the increased TTA resources available to the field in a BJA NTTAC TTA Today [blog post](#).

### FEATURED PROGRAM

#### Women in Recovery Wins National Addiction Treatment Award

Oklahoma's Family & Children's Services Women in Recovery (WIR), an alternative to incarceration program for drug-addicted women, has won the Excellence in Addictions Treatment Innovation award from the National Council for Behavioral Health. Founded in 2009, the program works with women facing lengthy prison terms due to addiction and trauma-related crimes, the types of which make them ineligible for other prison diversion programs, such as Drug Court.

WIR's goal is to reduce the number of women with drug-related offenses sent to prison in Oklahoma. WIR works closely with the criminal justice system and other community partners to give women the supervision they need, along

## Grants & Funding

Visit our [Funding page](#) to view all BJA solicitations open in March, including:

- Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)
- Untested Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)
- Technology Innovation for Public Safety (TIPS)
- Body Worn Camera (BWC) Program
- Small Agency BWC Program
- Violence Reduction Network
- National Initiatives: Reaching Criminal Justice Policymakers
- National Crime Gun Intelligence Center Initiative
- Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP)
- JMHCP TTA
- JMHCP State-Based Collaboration
- Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking
- National Initiatives: Law Enforcement
- Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI)
- Price of Justice: Rethinking the Consequences of Justice Fines and Fees
- Police-Prosecution Collaboration Initiative

And look for other opportunities on [OJP's Funding Resource Center page!](#)



with substance abuse counseling, mental health treatment and trauma treatment education, workforce training, and family reunification to ensure they break the cycle of re-offending. The program typically lasts 14-18 months.

Of the 234 women who have graduated from the program since its inception, only 9 percent have gone back to prison since program completion. Over the last three years, WIR's recidivism rate has plunged to just under 3 percent. WIR was recognized at the Celebration of Excellence Awards Dinner on March 8 during the council's 2016 national conference, and presented with a \$10,000 grant.

## In Focus This Month

### Three New Cities Join Violence Reduction Network

Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates and Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) announced on March 1 that New Orleans, Louisiana; St. Louis, Missouri; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, will join 10 existing sites that have adopted crime-fighting strategies as part of the [Violence Reduction Network](#) (VRN). The initiative is a comprehensive approach to reducing violent crime that complements the Attorney General's Smart on Crime Initiative and leverages existing Justice Department resources in communities around the country.



Intimidation of witnesses can be a significant challenge for violence reduction efforts because it infringes upon the effective and fair operation of the judicial process. Without cooperating witnesses, police investigators and prosecutors are denied critical evidence, cases are jeopardized, and confidence in the criminal justice system's ability to protect and represent the members of the community is undermined.

The announcement was made before an audience of U.S. Attorneys, police chiefs, local leaders from the new and existing VRN sites, and department officials. In addition to the announcement about the three new VRN sites, the Deputy Attorney General also announced the Police-Prosecutor Partnership, which is soliciting proposals to encourage out-of-the-box collaborations between law enforcement agencies and prosecutors' offices. This grant solicitation encourages proposals that build on evidence-based crime-fighting models – focusing on reducing violence, sharing intelligence, and engaging the community – by merging and maximizing the expertise of law enforcement officers and prosecutors. The new solicitation is available [here](#).

## Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

### Updates to PSOB Website

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



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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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