

In the Spotlight

Criminal Justice Professionals Convened on Mental Health & Recidivism Reduction

In partnership with BJA, the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG Justice Center) convened more than 800 criminal justice experts and professionals on May 13-16, 2014 for a pair of overlapping conferences designed to promote collaboration among federal grantees combatting issues of mental health and recidivism. The CSG Justice Center live-streamed and video recorded the plenary sessions.

Conference attendees included representatives from organizations and agencies across the country that receive funding through one of two federally funded programs: the Second Chance Act (SCA) or the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHC). Officials from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP), BJA, and other federal agencies participated.

The 3-day conference featured keynote addresses by a number of dignitaries, including BJA Director Denise E. O'Donnell, OJP Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, Superintendent Tom Stickrath from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Acting Director Michael Botticelli from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and others.

To view the agendas, see photos, or watch the video recordings of the live stream of the events, visit: <http://csjjusticecenter.org/2014-jmhc-sca-conferences>.



BJA Director O'Donnell at the JMHC/CP grantee orientation

DID YOU KNOW?

Rural Drug Court Initiative

The BJA Drug Court Technical Assistance Project at American University has launched a special Rural Drug Court Initiative to provide focused services to rural drug treatment courts through multiple media, including an [interactive webinar](#) featuring drug court judges and coordinators from 4 states addressing 10 common challenges rural drug courts face and strategies being used to address them; a [series of Questions/Responses](#) from attendees at the webinar (from over 20 states and 2 foreign countries) on a wide range of issues relating to Rural Drug Court program services that is updated regularly; a special chapter on "Rural Drug Court Needs and Strategies" for addressing them included in the recently completed [Technical Assistance Guide for Drug Court Judges on Drug Court Treatment Services](#); and a Rural Drug Court listserve, launched to continue the interchanges begun during the webinar. [Read more.](#)

FEATURED PROGRAM

New Study on Michigan's Sentencing Guidelines Shows Promise in Cutting Costs & Reducing Recidivism

In partnership with BJA, the Council of State Governments Justice Center issued a report — "Applying a Justice Reinvestment Approach to Improve Michigan's Sentencing System"—to the Michigan Law Revision Commission (MLRC) summarizing the findings of a study that could lead to improvements in the state's sentencing guidelines and savings to Michigan taxpayers. The Justice Center identified areas in which the state could improve its felony sentencing system while reducing recidivism and cutting costs. The findings are part of the Justice Reinvestment data-driven approach to increase public safety, reduce corrections spending, and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and recidivism.

"This report is a significant step toward establishing criminal justice policies that maximize our state's public safety and reduce costs," said Richard McLellan, chairman of the MLRC. "The commission intends to carefully review these findings and seriously consider feedback from the public on these issues, as well."

Read the [press release](#) or the [full report](#).



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News You Can Use

Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy Symposium

The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University will host its annual symposium on June 23-24, 2014. Presentations and events will cover many pressing criminal justice policy concerns including community crime prevention (including BJA's Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program), deterrence and diversion, police technology, crime analysis, science and criminal justice policy, and firearms violence. [More information.](#)



Smart Policing DDACTS Webinar

BJA's Smart Policing Initiative will host a webinar on "Data-Driven Approaches to Traffic and Crime Safety (DDACTS)" on May 28, 2014.

Attorney General Honors Fallen Officers

"Our nation can never repay the debts we owe to our fallen officers and their families," said Attorney General Holder during his [remarks](#) at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund's 26th Annual Candlelight Vigil on May 13, 2014, one of the events during National Police Week.



BJA Web Site Wins Award

BJA's web site received a 2014 Award of Excellence from [Communicator Awards](#), the leading international awards program recognizing big ideas in marketing and communications. Over 6,000 entries were submitted in various categories, and BJA was one of 12 Award of Excellence recipients in the "Websites—Government" category. The Award of Excellence, the highest honor, is given to those entrants whose ability to communicate positions them as the best in the field. Be sure to visit our award-winning site today at www.bja.gov!

Grants & Funding

Below are some of BJA's current funding opportunities:

[Smart Pretrial Demonstration Initiative](#)

Closes May 27, 2014

[National Training and Technical Assistance, Capital Case Litigation](#)

Closes May 27, 2014

[Joint Adult Drug Court Solicitation to Enhance Services, Coordination, and Treatment](#)

Closes May 28, 2014

[Second Chance Act Comprehensive Community-Based Adult Reentry Program Utilizing Mentors](#)

Closes June 2, 2014

[BJA Visiting Fellows Program](#)

Closes June 4, 2014

For all OJP funding opportunities, visit www.ojp.gov/funding/solicitations.htm.

In Focus This Month

BJA Hosts Top Governors Criminal Justice Advisors in Washington, DC

The National Governors Association, in partnership with BJA, hosted the 2014 Institute for Governors Criminal Justice Policy Advisors (CJPAs) at OJP on May 1-2, 2014. CJPAs convened and heard from experts on emerging topics in corrections and pretrial reform; sentencing and corrections reform in the states; technological innovations in crime prevention and policing; and evidence-based, data-driven strategies for reducing violent crime, among many other topics.



BJA Senior Policy Advisor Ball, Anne Milgram, Vice President of Criminal Justice, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, and BJA Director O'Donnell

BJA Director O'Donnell and Senior Policy Advisor Kim Ball participated on a panel that examined emerging issues in sentencing and corrections reform across the country, with a special focus on pretrial practices. In her remarks, Director O'Donnell referred to this time in which we live as a "renaissance" in criminal justice thinking. "We know so much more than ever before about what works in the criminal justice system. Because of improved data and action-based research there are more opportunities now than ever before to achieve true systems reform that results in stronger communities, and safer communities," she said.

Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program. For details regarding these federal benefits for law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders killed or catastrophically disabled in the line of duty, call the PSOB Office toll-free at 888-744-6513 or 202-307-0635, or visit the PSOB [web site](#).

