



February 2012

## In the Spotlight

### Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court Celebrates 4 Years of Service

Since 2004, the number of veterans being treated for mental illness and substance use disorders has increased 38 percent. It is estimated that out of the 2.2 million veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 550,000 have a substance abuse problem. An increasing number of veterans are appearing before the courts to face charges stemming from substance abuse and mental illness. Rather than put them in jail, communities throughout the country are looking to Veterans Treatment Courts.

Buffalo, New York recently celebrated the founding of the nation's first Veterans Treatment Court, a program started 4 years ago by Acting Erie County Court Judge and Buffalo City Court Judge Robert Russell. In Veterans Treatment Courts, veterans are given the structure and accountability to help them reconnect with values learned while in the military. Surrounded by their peers, participants are linked with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs representatives and the volunteer mentors helping them access a variety of benefits and services available at the federal, state, and local level. The Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court has had 65 veterans complete the program, and not one of them has been rearrested. Today, there are over 80 Veterans Treatment Courts operating in the United States, and hundreds more are being planned. Veterans who were once on the brink of a debilitating life of substance abuse, mental health disorder, and crime are going back to school, returning to the workforce, and most importantly, remaining united with their families. For more information about the Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court and others, visit [www.nadcp.org/node/812](http://www.nadcp.org/node/812).

## DID YOU KNOW?

On Monday, February 13, the President released his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2013. The budget proposes over \$27 billion for the Department of Justice and focuses on providing resources to sustain critical national security programs, upholding the department's traditional missions with an increased focus on financial and mortgage fraud and civil rights enforcement; investing in prisons, detention capacity, and reentry; and assisting state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners. [Read more.](#)

## News You Can Use

### Webinar Available on Best Policing Practices

Plan to attend the "International Best Policing Practices" webinar on February 28, which will be hosted by the RAND Corporation and the University of Texas at Dallas. [More](#)

### Funding Available for Community-Police Partnerships

MetLife Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) are partnering for the eleventh year to recognize, sustain, and share the work of innovative partnerships between community groups and police to promote neighborhood safety and revitalization. 2012 grant applications are due March 11, 2012. [More](#)

## Grants & Funding

BJA has released the following solicitations:

- [Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation \(CTAS\)](#)  
Applications are due April 18, 2012
- [Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking](#)  
(A joint solicitation of BJA and the Office for Victims of Crime)  
Applications are due March 29, 2012
- [PREA Demonstration Projects to Establish "Zero Tolerance" Cultures for Sexual Assault in Local Adult and Juvenile Correctional Facilities](#)  
Applications are due March 15, 2012
- [Tribal Civil and Criminal Legal Assistance Grants, Training, and Technical Assistance](#)  
Applications are due April 17, 2012

For more funding opportunities, visit the [OJP Open Solicitations page](#).

## This Month in Law Enforcement

BJA and the Council of State Governments Justice Center have worked in partnership to identify and highlight agencies from across the country with comprehensive and successful criminal justice/mental health programs that are willing to share their expertise. Six law enforcement agencies have been identified to serve as the Law Enforcement/Mental Health learning sites. They collectively reflect the range of strategies a law enforcement agency might consider when developing a collaborative initiative to address the needs of individuals with mental illnesses in their community. As centers of peer-to-peer learning and support, learning site personnel are committed to providing guidance to agencies in other jurisdictions that are interested in creating or expanding their own Specialized Policing Responses. [Learn more or request technical assistance.](#)

## 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](#).

## FEATURED PROGRAM

Speaking before the American Bar Association's (ABA) National Summit on Indigent Defense in February, Attorney General Eric Holder [announced a series of initiatives](#) that the Justice Department will undertake to strengthen legal representation for individuals too poor to hire a lawyer to represent them in criminal proceedings. One initiative will focus on strengthening state, local, and tribal indigent defense systems. In response, BJA will be releasing a solicitation this spring to support projects that help make achievement of these principles a reality.

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