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BJA's Justice Today



BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

DENISE E. O'DONNELL, DIRECTOR

August 2016

In the Spotlight

BJA Hosts National Meetings

BJA, in partnership with Brandeis University's PDMP Training and Technical Assistance Center, hosted the 2016 Research-Practitioner Partnerships & Data-Driven Pilots National Meeting and the Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) National Meeting during the week of August 15–19 at the Marriott Metro Center in Washington, D.C.



The 2016 Research-Practitioner Partnerships & Data-Driven Pilots National Meeting was the first meeting bringing together recipients from both the BJA Category 2 and 3 grants. The 49 attendees included representatives from 12 states and 7 PDMPs. The meeting included presentations and discussions on grantee progress on their activities, data integration and analysis, overdose prevention, provider education, and interagency collaboration.

The PDMP National Meeting was attended by 184 individuals representing 39 states, 34 PDMPs, 13 federal agencies, and 28 organizations. The meeting began with the announcement that the Washington, D.C. PDMP began operations two days earlier and that approximately half of the participants were attending the PDMP National Meeting for the first time. There were keynote presentations by Director Denise E. O'Donnell, ONDCP Senior Policy Advisor Cecelia Spitznas, and Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor of the Ohio Supreme Court. The meeting featured presentations on prescription abuse and heroin epidemics as well as innovative efforts around the country to address these problems. Current activities of the nation's PDMPs as well as federal efforts and funding opportunities were explored in several meeting sessions.

Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

PSOB Promotes Officer Safety and Mandatory Wear Policies

BJA has released a new policy memorandum regarding mandatory wear policies and the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program. The *PSOB Policy Memorandum for Mandatory Wear Policies* confirms that the existence of an agency's mandatory body armor or seat belt policy will not serve as a basis to deny PSOB benefits, and promotes officer safety in furtherance of Pillar 6 of The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Final Report. View the complete memorandum [here](#).

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

Writing the Grant is the Easiest Part

Criminal justice agencies must think strategically when pursuing public and private grant funding. A successful grant strategy involves more than just a well-written application; agencies should take the time to identify their needs, develop an effective presentation of their ideas, and outline projected costs. Check out the latest [BJA NTTAC TTA Today blog](#) by grant writer and strategist Joan Brody, for her expert tips on the components of a robust grant application and strategy. You'll see why she says "writing the grant is the easiest part."

Center for Court Innovation Hosts Regional Summit

The Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with BJA and the Quinnipiac University School of Law, will host "[Justice Innovation in Times of Change: New Challenges, New Opportunities](#)," a no-cost regional summit, on September 30, 2016 at the Quinnipiac University School of Law in North Haven, CT. Seats are limited, so [register](#) now!

FEATURED PROGRAM

BNCP Releases New Practice Brief

The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) has released a new practice brief, [Developing Local Knowledge](#). This brief, the first in a series of four, shares guidance and examples from BNCP sites (Flint, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; and Milwaukee, WI) about how community members can learn about their neighborhoods as a key building

News You Can Use

BJA Staff Open Panel at NCJA National Conference

Associate Deputy Director J. Patrick McCreary opened a panel discussion at the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) National Conference, held on August 9 in Philadelphia, PA. The panel session, titled "Medication-Assisted Treatment: How Criminal Justice Leaders Can Ensure Utilization," discussed the importance of the availability of FDA-approved medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in the criminal justice system.



Topics covered included using evidence-based practices to combat opioid overdose and reduce recidivism, assessing ways the criminal justice system can initiate MAT programming to ensure that justice-involved persons with substance use disorders receive standard of care treatment, reducing the stigma attached to those who have addiction issues and allowing greater access to treatment for persons with opioid use disorders, and learning from real-life examples of successful correctional and drug court MAT programming.

Director Denise E. O'Donnell moderated panels on Justice and Mental Health Collaborations, Addressing the Backlog of Untested Sexual Assault Kits, and the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program.

Correctional Education Association Conference

On August 2, Policy Advisor Andre Bethea was a featured keynote speaker at the Correctional Education Association conference in Long Beach, CA. He explained BJA's commitment to correctional institutions selected to participate in the Second Chance Pell Initiative.

The BJA-supported 2013 Rand study proved that correctional education does lead to positive outcomes for returning citizens. Through the Second Chance Act, BJA provides a competitive grant program for state prisons and local jails that offer technology career training for incarcerated adults and juveniles. Through a partnership with Vera Institute of Justice, BJA will provide training and technical assistance to state prisons that have been selected to be demonstration sites for the Second Chance Pell Initiative.

Urban Institute Releases JRI Final Report

The Urban Institute, funded by BJA to coordinate and assess JRI, recently published a [final report](#) summarizing the work of the local JRI sites, whose work came to a conclusion this year. The report found that the sites successfully implemented a variety of strategies, including pretrial risk assessment and increased release of low- and moderate-risk defendants, streamlining case processing, and improving pretrial diversion programs.

Vera Solicits Applications

The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera), with support from BJA, is soliciting applications from state or local corrections departments seeking technical assistance with the safe and effective reduction of segregation/restrictive housing. Expanding on the work of the Safe Alternatives to Segregation (SAS) Initiative, Vera will provide technical assistance to up to five jurisdictions by providing (1) an assessment of the department's use of segregation through a thorough review of relevant policies, an analysis of administrative data, and site visits to tour facilities and meet with department leadership, facility staff, and incarcerated people; (2) a presentation of findings from the assessment and recommendations for safely reducing the use of segregation and enhancing alternative responses; and (3) planning and implementation assistance of recommended policy and practice changes. Applications will be reviewed for both need and motivation for reform. To learn more about the SAS Initiative and view the Request for Proposal, visit Vera's [website](#). Applications are due 11:59 p.m. ET, September 30, 2016.

block to achieving what they want for the future.

Recognizing the power of place to influence access to opportunity, BNCP launched in 2012 as part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. BNCP catalyzes community-driven change in neighborhoods that have historically faced barriers to revitalization and public safety.

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Grants & Funding

Visit our [Funding Page](#) to view all BJA solicitations open in August.

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



In Focus This Month

Alaska and Maryland Approve Justice Reform Legislation

Two states recently passed comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), a public-private partnership between BJA and the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew). Alaska's Senate Bill 91 (2016), enacted in July 2016, adopts evidence-based pretrial release practices, expands jail diversion and reduces jail sentence lengths; reclassifies drug offenses and reduces drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor; reduces presumptive sentence lengths for felonies, expands eligibility for discretionary parole release and streamlines the parole process for people convicted of first-time felony offenses; and strengthens community corrections.

The law is projected to reduce the state's prison population by 13 percent by 2024, saving the state \$380 million. Alaska also committed to reinvest \$98 million over the next six years into treatment services in prison and in the community, reentry supports for people returning home from prison, pretrial services and supervision, violence prevention programming, and crime victims' services. In May 2016, Maryland passed into law the Justice Reinvestment Act, Senate Bill 1005, which repealed mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug crimes; reduced prison sentence lengths; eliminated the use of jail as a sanction for driving without a license; capped sentences for technical revocations of probation or parole; required the state to provide drug treatment if ordered by a judge within 21 days; moved up parole eligibility dates; and expanded expungement relief, among other things.

The law is projected to reduce Maryland's prison population by 1,200, freeing up \$80.5 million for investment in other public safety priorities. BJA recently received and approved requests from these states' leaders for assistance in implementing their JRI reforms.

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