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## INDIGENT DEFENSE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is committed to serving and supporting the criminal justice system, including the courts. BJA recognizes that public defenders play a vital role in ensuring the administration of justice, and as such has dedicated attention and resources to supporting and enhancing indigent defense across the nation. Below are current projects and programs that BJA is supporting.

### **Current Projects:**

#### **Indigent Defense Training and Technical Assistance**

BJA has provided a grant to the American Bar Association's (ABA) Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants, who has partnered with the Spangenberg Project at George Mason University and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to provide training and technical assistance to public defender services across the nation. They will deliver four regional trainings that address the challenges and immediate training needs of public defenders. They will also administer a public defender fellow program where 20 new public defenders will be assigned to a mentor host agency for four weeks, working alongside an experienced public defender or team of public defenders. ABA will convene an advisory group to develop the training referenced above and produce a series of reports on best practices and recommendations for public defender offices.

#### **Indigent Defense Hiring Pilot Project**

Under the FY 2009 National Initiatives: Adjudication Program, BJA solicited applications from state, local, or not-for-profit agencies and organizations to hire trained public defenders and demonstrate how these positions will assist with quality representation and alleviate the large caseload. As a result, BJA is funding 10 jurisdictions to hire additional public defenders to reduce the stress of large caseloads on public defense offices and improve the quality of representation.

#### **Defining and Sharing the Best Practices in Holistic, Community-Oriented Advocacy at Public Defender Offices**

Under the FY 2009 Encouraging Innovation: Field-Initiated Program, BJA has provided a grant to the Bronx Defenders with the Center for Court Innovation and John Jay College of Criminal Justice to respond to the nationwide call for training and technical assistance for public defenders in the area of holistic, community-oriented advocacy based on the Bronx model. The Bronx Defenders will be creating a web site specifically devoted to sharing information and resources about the holistic defender model. In the meantime, visit their web site at [www.bronxdefenders.org](http://www.bronxdefenders.org) for more information.

### **Funding Opportunities:**

#### **Capital Case Litigation Initiative (CCLI)**

The CCLI program was originally designed to provide high-quality training and technical assistance on death penalty issues to judges, defense attorneys, and prosecutors. BJA provides grant funds to state agencies to split equally for training of prosecutors and defense attorneys who try capital cases. States are required to utilize training curricula that has been developed and piloted by BJA's national partners, the National District Attorneys Association and the National Association for Criminal Defense Lawyers.

For FY 2010, BJA will be accepting applications for the CCLI program through 8:00 p.m. e.t. on March 11, 2010. The complete solicitation including application instructions is available at:  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/10CCLIsol.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/10CCLIsol.pdf)

### **Wrongful Conviction Review Program**

BJA created a new grant program in FY 2009 whose purpose is to provide high-quality and efficient representation for defendants with post-conviction claims of innocence. Post-conviction innocence claims are likely to include complex challenges to the reliability or accuracy of evidence presented at trial. In some cases, post-conviction DNA testing alone can prove innocence, but the majority of cases will rely on other forms of proof, and many will involve DNA testing together with additional proof and/or expert testimony, which may be extremely costly. In addition to providing grant funds to assist in handling post-conviction claims of innocence, this initiative also provides funding for a national training and technical assistance partner, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, to provide support and assistance to the field, including the FY 2009 grantees, which consists of public defender offices, non-profits, law schools, and innocence projects nationwide.

For FY 2010, BJA will be accepting applications for the Wrongful Conviction Review Program through 8:00 p.m. e.t. on March 4, 2010. The complete solicitation including application instructions is available at:  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/10WrongfulConvictionSol.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/10WrongfulConvictionSol.pdf)

### **National Initiatives: Field-Initiated Program**

In FY 2009, BJA unveiled a new solicitation calling for ideas for innovative solutions from the justice field that address a demonstrated gap in areas within the justice system or in the knowledge base of justice system practitioners and allow for replication nationwide. The purpose of the solicitation was to identify those field-generated innovative strategies that may ultimately be added to the pool of criminal justice evidence-based strategies and promising practices.

In FY 2010, BJA will be soliciting similar projects, although the solicitation is still being formulated. It is anticipated that the solicitation will be released in March, although this is subject to change. Please check the BJA web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA) for up-to-date information about this and all of our other grant programs.

### **National Initiatives: Improving Criminal Courts Program**

In FY 2010, BJA will be soliciting national initiatives to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, with one focus being public defense delivery systems. This solicitation is still being formulated; however, it is anticipated that the solicitation will be released in March, although this is subject to change.

Please check our web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA) for other upcoming funding opportunities.

**For more information on these projects and programs and all of BJA's Adjudication Programs, contact:**

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