



# Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program

A Bureau of Justice Assistance,  
U.S. Department of Justice Grant Initiative

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**L**arge numbers of people with serious mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders are caught up in the criminal justice system, often with tragic results for these individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live. Jurisdictions across the nation are looking for help to address how to improve the use of law enforcement, court, and corrections resources to link people in need to effective treatment and ensure public safety.

Researchers estimate that 16.9 percent of people admitted to jail have serious mental illnesses—rates three times higher for men and six times higher for women than those found in the general population.<sup>1</sup>

## JMHCP

In 2004, Congress authorized the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) through the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA). This grant program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, was created to help states, units of local government, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations improve responses to justice-involved people with mental illnesses or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. The JMHCP facilitates collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment systems to better serve individuals with mental illnesses and to increase public safety. The program provides funds to

- create effective responses at each step of the criminal justice process, from first encounters with law enforcement through reentry from prison or jail to the community;
- provide training and cross-training for mental health and justice professionals;
- support strategic planning among partners from justice, mental health, and substance abuse agencies.

In the first nine months of 2006, the Los Angeles (Calif.) Police Department made 46,129 contacts with people suspected of having a mental illness.<sup>2</sup>

# JMHCP Grant Award Categories

*Grants can support such efforts as collaborative law enforcement response programs; mental health courts and other court-based programs; specialized training for justice and treatment professionals; service delivery for recovery support resources such as housing; and corrections, transitional, and reentry efforts to create or expand support services. For additional examples of how grant funds have been used in the past, see the Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project's Local Programs Database at [http://consensusproject.org/programs\\_start\\_and\\_search](http://consensusproject.org/programs_start_and_search) "JMHCP grantees." (All collaborative programs can be searched by issue area as well.)*

## Planning Grants (Category 1)

Category 1 allows jurisdictions to design a strategic, multidisciplinary plan to identify and treat individuals with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders involved in the criminal justice system.

**Example:** A Virginia county with a regional law enforcement Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program received a planning grant to support officers' efforts to safely divert people with mental illnesses to treatment providers when appropriate. The rural nature of the county has made it difficult for officers to quickly link individuals with community resources. The Planning grant allowed program coordinators to conduct site visits to cities around the country to learn about effective community-based treatment options and officer-friendly policies to help inform their planning process.

## Planning and Implementation Grants (Category 2)

Category 2 gives jurisdictions the opportunity to *complete* a strategic planning process for their criminal justice/mental health collaborative program, and then implement a program.

**Example:** A North Dakota grantee planned and implemented a jail-based, post-booking program to identify individuals with mental illnesses and link them to services that can reduce the likelihood of future criminal justice involvement. A grant-funded, clinical mental health coordinator conducted screenings and assessments to determine program eligibility. The program has linked individuals to medication monitoring, housing assistance, case management, and chemical dependency treatment. Data revealed that only 92 individuals were identified for assessment in 2005, whereas 550 were assessed in just four months of the new grant's implementation.

## Expansion Grants (Category 3)

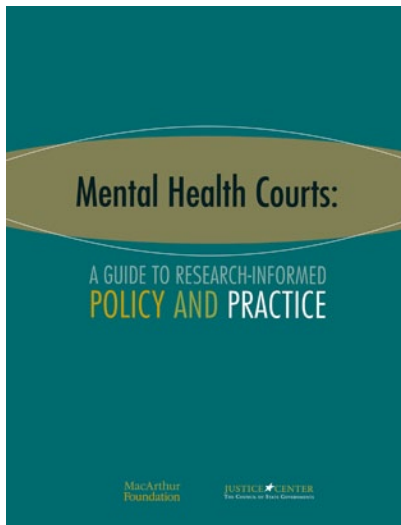
Category 3 allows jurisdictions to enhance an existing collaborative project, such as supplementing services for justice-involved individuals with mental illness or expanding the capacity of a program.

**Example:** An Ohio county expanded its *Court Assessment Services Team (CAST)* to work collaboratively with probation, education, and community systems to increase the number of youth diverted from further juvenile court involvement to alternative programming. The expansion grant allowed the county to add two additional specialized mental health professionals to the existing court services team, which they project will double the number of youth served. In particular, through its mental health court liaison work, the county expects to increase by more than 275 percent the number of youth screened and referred to mental health and community services in 2010.

# Technical Assistance

BJA supports JMHCP grantees by providing training and technical assistance (TTA) through the Council of State Governments Justice Center to facilitate planning, implementing, and expanding collaborative initiatives.<sup>3</sup>

TTA involves both on- and off-site support, including in-depth consultations with field experts and experienced practitioners, strategic planning assistance, and participation in national training events and web-based seminars. TA for grantees has been organized around the *Planning and Implementation Guide*, created by the Justice Center as a tool to help grantees assess the status and progress of their initiatives, identify key next steps in the planning and implementation process, and flag the challenges they will need to address. Among the other resources that have been developed are a series of publications on law enforcement, courts, and community corrections. These and other useful materials can be found on the Justice Center's criminal justice/mental health online resource center ([www.consensusproject.org](http://www.consensusproject.org)).

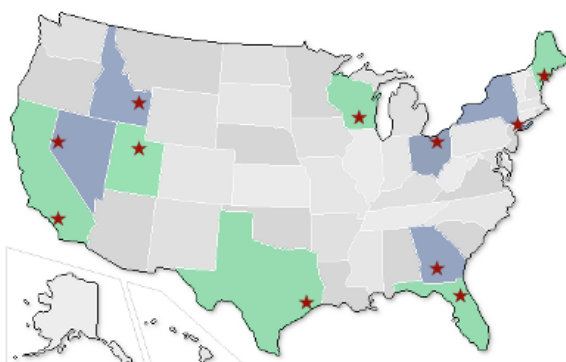


A 2006 prevalence study by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) found that the majority (70.4 percent) of youth in the juvenile justice system meet criteria for at least one mental health disorder.<sup>4</sup>



## Local Programs Database

To feature your criminal justice/mental health program in the Local Programs Database register at <http://consensusproject.org/register>. Once registered, you may log-in to manage your own content at [http://consensusproject.org/programs\\_start](http://consensusproject.org/programs_start).



## Criminal Justice/Mental Health Learning Sites

The Justice Center and BJA have identified five mental health courts and six law enforcement agencies that use a range of effective responses to people with mental illnesses involved with the criminal justice system. Go to <http://consensusproject.org/learningsites> for more information.

*The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. BJA supports law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, victim services, technology, and prevention initiatives that strengthen the nation's criminal justice system.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Henry J. Steadman, Fred C. Osher, Pamela C. Robbins, Brian Case, and Steven Samuels, "Prevalence of Serious Mental Illness Among Jail Inmates," *Psychiatric Services*, 60 (2009): 761–65.
- 2 Lt. Richard Wall, Los Angeles Police Department, *Personal communication*, March 2007.
- 3 The CSG Justice Center ([www.justicecenter.org](http://www.justicecenter.org)) has been the technical assistance provider for BJA's JMHP grantees since the program's inception in 2006. More information is available at [http://consensusproject.org/issue\\_areas/justice-and-mental-health-collaboration-program](http://consensusproject.org/issue_areas/justice-and-mental-health-collaboration-program).
- 4 Jennie L. Shufelt and Joseph J. Coccozza, *Youth with Mental Health Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System: Results from a Multi-state Prevalence Study* (Delmar, NY: National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2006).