



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FUNDS MORE THAN \$1 MILLION TO VETERAN TREATMENT COURTS

Substance Abuse, Mental Health Programs Made More Available to Returning Soldiers

WASHINGTON, D.C. –The Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) today announced that it will support four drug courts designed to meet veterans’ needs in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 under the Adult Discretionary Drug Court Program. Veteran treatment courts help veterans within the criminal justice system manage their substance abusing habits so that they can safely return to their communities. A total of over one million dollars is being provided to: the Judicial Council of California; Hennepin County, Minn.; the 13th Judicial District Court in Yellowstone County, Mont.; and Spokane County, Wash.

“Eighty-one percent of all justice-involved veterans have a substance abuse problem prior to incarceration, and 25 percent of these veterans have a mental illness,” said Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson. “It is our hope that these veteran drug courts can provide the services and treatment that these soldiers need in order to help them rejoin our communities safely as the heroes we know them to be.”

Veteran treatment courts integrate substance abuse treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services in a supervised court setting. In addition, with programmatic support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, participants are connected with Veterans Justice Outreach specialists for help with obtaining veterans’ benefits and services to address their treatment and other recovery support needs.

“By identifying justice-involved veterans early and connecting them with mental health and substance abuse services at home, veteran treatment courts can stabilize veterans and ensure that they are able to return to honor and live productive lives,” said BJA Director Denise E. O’Donnell. “At BJA, we are proud to support these drug and mental health court programs that serve the men and women who fought so bravely to protect our nation.”

Research shows that many returning soldiers are diagnosed with cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury, which can lead veterans to abuse illegal substances and alcohol. According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, in studies performed by the RAND Corporation and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, one in five veterans exhibited symptoms of a mental disorder or cognitive impairment, while one in six veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom suffered from substance abuse. Untreated cases of PTSD and Traumatic

Brain Injury in veterans have been linked directly to homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system.

A complete list of OJP's Fiscal Year 2011 funding awards is posted in the funding section of the OJP Web site at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/11grantawards.htm>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>