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Bureau of Justice Assistance Provides \$27 million to Drug Courts and Mental Health Programs

WASHINGTON – The Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) today announced it awarded \$27 million under the Drug Court Program and the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) in Fiscal Year 2012. These two BJA programs provide assistance and support for states, tribes and localities offering specialized services for individuals within the justice system who have substance abuse and mental health disorders.

“People with mental illnesses often cycle repeatedly through courtrooms, jails, and prisons that are ill-equipped to address their needs and, in particular, to provide adequate treatment. BJA has been exploring new ways of responding to these individuals to break this costly and damaging cycle,” said BJA Director Denise E. O’Donnell. “BJA has an entire portfolio dedicated to addressing the revolving door of justice for individuals with behavioral health needs.”

This year, through the Drug Court Program, sixty grants totaling nearly \$18 million were made to jurisdictions for establishing new adult drug courts and expanding capacity and services at existing drug courts. Ten of these awards were made jointly with the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration where the CSAT grant funds support treatment and recovery support services and the BJA funds support court services, coordination and supervision. BJA also funded awards to American University’s Justice Programs Office, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and the Center for Court Innovation. These organizations provide training and technical assistance to improve drug court practice and connect drug court practitioners with experts in the field.

Drug courts are judicially supervised court dockets that handle cases of substance abusing offenders under the adult, juvenile, family and tribal justice systems. They operate under a specialized model in which the judiciary, prosecution, defense, probation, law enforcement, mental health, social service, and treatment communities work together to help offenders recover and become productive citizens.

Through the JMHCP, 34 states and local jurisdictions were awarded \$9 million in FY 2012 for planning, implementing, and expanding diversion programs, family and juvenile-centered programs, mental health courts, corrections and reentry programs, housing and employment-focused service programs, and community treatment programs. The awards increase public safety by fostering collaboration among criminal justice, mental health, and substance abuse

treatment systems to improve offenders' access to mental health and other treatment services. BJA also funds awards to the Justice Center at the Council of State Governments for national training and technical assistance and state-based capacity building.

Related to these awards, BJA, along with the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Institute of Corrections, recently released a report, *Adults with Behavioral Health Needs under Correctional Supervision: A Shared Framework for Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Recovery*. The report is designed to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health disorders under correctional control and supervision, by creating a framework to help corrections and behavioral health systems prioritize resources based on individual assessments of a person's criminogenic needs and risk of reoffending.

“There are large numbers of individuals with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders cycling through our prisons and jails,” said O'Donnell. “This report draws on the science of recidivism reduction and uses evidence-based methods to address mental health and substance use disorders.”

More information about BJA's Drug Court and Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Programs can be found at: www.bja.gov

The recently released *Adults with Behavioral Health Needs under Correctional Supervision: A Shared Framework for Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Recovery* can be found at: http://consensusproject.org/jc_publications/adults-with-behavioral-health-needs

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, 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 www.ojp.gov.