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• Talk Justice, an LSC Podcast: Creating Legal Access Points in Rural Louisiana

THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS (OJP) ANNOUNCES THE INAUGURAL CLASS OF REACHING RURAL FELLOWS

The Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced the 67 fellows selected to participate in the inaugural class of the Reaching Rural: Advancing Collaborative Solutions initiative. Co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State Justice Institute, the initiative will support the fellows’ work to address the overdose crisis that has disproportionately affected rural communities across America.

Throughout the year-long initiative, the fellows will meet to examine their local and regional challenges and identify opportunities to serve justice-involved individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders more effectively.

The fellows were selected through a competitive application process and will participate in the Reaching Rural Initiative through one of two tracks, either as part of a cross-sector team from their community or as individuals. The Initiative is part of an ongoing interagency partnership to strengthen public safety and public health collaboration under BJA’s Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program.

The selected fellows reflect a diverse network of professionals representing 80 rural communities in 14 states.
RURAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Rural communities face unique challenges that impact their ability to deliver fair and equitable justice. Despite these challenges, rural communities rely on their many strengths to address the needs of their residents.

The National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Rulo Strategies, launched the Rural Justice Collaborative (RJC) to showcase the strengths of rural communities and highlight the cross-sector collaboration that is a hallmark of rural justice systems.

The work under the RJC is supported by a cross-sector advisory council composed of rural judges along with additional stakeholders in the justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. The advisory council guides and identifies innovative programs and practices.

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR RURAL JURISDICTIONS

The Bureau of Justice Assistance and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention leadership, in collaboration with the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) team at the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, invite you to this no-cost Learning Community for Rural Jurisdictions occurring the second Tuesday of each month beginning February 14 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET.

This eight-part series will feature each COSSAP TTA provider and rural community partners/COSSAP grantees to demonstrate how COSSAP TTA providers can support rural jurisdictions and the innovative work made possible by rural partnerships.

The Learning Community for Rural Jurisdictions is free and open to any rural community partners that are interested in addressing substance use. Please register at Learning Community for Rural Jurisdictions Registration to receive calendar invites.

THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION SEEKS APPLICANTS ENHANCING SUPPORT SERVICES IN APPALACHIA’S RECOVERY ECOSYSTEM

The Appalachian Regional Commission issued a Request for Proposals for its Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. The grant program addresses the disproportionate impact of the
ARTICLES

AS OVERDOSES SOAR IN RURAL AMERICA, MORE CLINICIANS ARE PRESCRIBING ADDICTION MEDICATIONS

Federal agencies are spending millions to expand access to medication to treat addictions, including in rural areas. In 2016, just 40% of rural counties nationwide had at least one healthcare provider certified to prescribe buprenorphine, according to a University of Washington study. That figure climbed to 63% by 2020, the study found. The study credited the rise to changes in federal rules that allow nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other midlevel health care providers to prescribe buprenorphine.
RESEARCH & REPORTS

RURAL AREAS COME OUT ON TOP FOR QUALITY OF INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CARE

Recent research from the Rural and Minority Health Research Center has revealed that the quality of inpatient psychiatric care is better in most rural settings. Published in Psychiatric Services, the study examined data from 1,644 healthcare facilities between 2015 and 2019 to assess the quality of inpatient psychiatric services available to rural residents. They found that rural hospitals were more likely to focus primarily on general medicine and surgery, whereas urban areas were more likely to have dedicated, specialized psychiatric hospitals. Despite this and other disadvantages, rural inpatient psychiatric care outperformed urban services on all quality-of-care measures except follow-up care performance trends.

RURAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM: TRANSFORMING CRIMINAL JUSTICE: AN EVIDENCE-BASED AGENDA FOR REFORM

While the national conversation on criminal justice research and reform focuses almost exclusively on urban legal systems, the success of criminal justice reform in the United States depends, in large part, on rural criminal justice systems. This research paper offers an overview of how rural demographic and economic trends shape rural criminal systems and how rural criminal justice systems are defined and described by their operational characteristics: geographic isolation, small scale, and professional scarcity, and challenges unique to rural jurisdictions. Finally, the authors conclude with three ideas for advancing criminal justice reform in rural settings.

POLL: RURAL OPIOID ATTITUDES PROGRESS. RURAL POLL FINDS IMPROVED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES ON OPIOIDS FRONT

Although the number of hospitals and healthcare facilities continues to decline in rural America, more rural residents can access mental health services and are more open to talking about opioid addiction, according to a recent poll funded by the American Farm Bureau Federation. The national poll includes 2,010 rural residents and compares data collected in 2017 and 2022.
SUBSTANCE USE EMPLOYER CALCULATOR

The National Safety Council collaborated with NORC at the University of Chicago to update “The Real Cost of Substance Use to Employers” tool, originally developed in 2017. This cost calculator is an authoritative, easy-to-use tool providing business leaders with specific information about the cost of substance use in their workplace based on the size of the employee base, industry, and state.

PODCAST

TALK JUSTICE, AN LSC PODCAST: CREATING LEGAL ACCESS POINTS IN RURAL LOUISIANA

Founder and Executive Director of Lagniappe Law Lab, Amanda Brown, talks about her research on the justice gap in Louisiana and creating legal access points on the latest episode of LSC’s “Talk Justice” podcast. To understand the gaps in Louisiana’s justice system, Brown’s team began by launching a geographic information systems research project to map people’s access to courts and resources like transportation and the internet. Talk Justice Co-host Cat Moon, who serves as director of innovation at Vanderbilt University’s Law School, interviews Brown about the project’s origins and outcomes.