



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
202-616-3227

### **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT EXAMINES SUICIDE IN NATION'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

#### *Two Studies Examine Prevalence among Police and Inmates*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) today announced its latest efforts to raise public awareness and build knowledge about the issue of law enforcement officer suicide and inmate self-harm. OJP’s National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has awarded a grant of \$499,000 to the RAND Corporation to examine how law enforcement agencies nationwide are attempting to prevent suicide among their employees, and a grant of \$851,421 to Michigan State University to address the gap in evidence-based suicide prevention among inmates and former inmates.

Through NIJ’s “Research into the Use of Suicide Prevention and Intervention Strategies by Law Enforcement Agencies” solicitation, RAND proposes to interview law enforcement agencies in the United States and Europe to learn about their suicide prevention programs and practices, the resources required to implement them, and their efficacy. “Many law enforcement agencies lack the resources to prevent officer suicide and are unable to respond effectively when it occurs,” said NIJ Director Nancy Rodriguez. “We hope to find a strategy with proven results that could serve as a model for adoption by other law enforcement agencies.”

The grant to Michigan State is part of NIJ’s collaboration with the National Institute of Health’s Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research and National Institute of Mental Health to address a critical gap in evidence-based suicide prevention and focus on the high-risk individuals who are transitioning from jail to community. The ultimate goal of the study is to address the need for cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to mitigate attempted and successful suicides among these populations.

“In a tragic parallel to instances of suicide by law enforcement, suicides and incidents of self-harm among inmates continue to be the leading cause of mortality in U.S. jails,” said Director Rodriguez. “These incidents of suicide and self-harm indicate a breakdown in systems that should ensure inmate health and safety.”

More information on the NIJ awards is available at:

<http://www.nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2015-IJ-CX-K004>;  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2015/embracing-the-spirit-of-reducing-suicide.shtml>; and <http://nij.gov/funding/awards/Pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2014-IJ-CX-0030>

## **About the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)**

OJP, headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: 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. To learn more about OJP, visit [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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