



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
Contact: (202) 307-0703

### **Justice Department and The Council of State Government Justice Center host national conference on reducing recidivism among adults and youth**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Justice Department welcomed more than 1,400 state and local government officials and their community-based partners to the 2015 Second Chance Act and Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) National Conference last week. The conference program reflected a bipartisan effort to reduce recidivism among adults and youth.

In her remarks to the conferees, Attorney General Loretta Lynch stressed the urgency of the issue: “At this critical juncture – this moment of rare bipartisan agreement – it is more important than ever that we harness this momentum and continue to push forward, so that every American returning from prison can find dignified work and adequate shelter; so that they can receive fair treatment and full opportunity; so that they return to a society that values them as fellow citizens; so that they can, in fact, truly return home.”

The week-long conference featured nationally known experts in the field of criminal justice and a broad range of discussion panels on such issues as behavioral health, enhancing continuity of care, and responding to the needs of women and youth in the justice system. During the conference, agency officials, practitioners, and community-based partners discussed common challenges to their efforts to increase public safety while supporting people returning to their communities from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities.

“Our efforts to get justice-involved citizens back into their communities and to improve the fairness and effectiveness of our justice system have support at the highest levels of this Administration,” Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason said.

The Second Chance Act (SCA) programs and JMHCP are administered through the Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). “The future of the reentry movement depends on achieving measurable reductions in recidivism, and we are eager to assist the reentry field to maximize the value of investments in reducing recidivism,” BJA Director Denise O’Donnell said.

These programs include training and job placement for incarcerated or detained adults and youth in technology-related jobs; training for mentors to assist pre- and post-release; screening and assessments pre-release and evidence-based treatment after incarceration to improve outcomes for individuals with substance abuse and mental disorders; and assistance for jurisdictions providing reentry services to members of Native American tribes.

In October, the Department awarded grants totaling \$53 million to 45 jurisdictions to reduce recidivism and improve existing reentry research and programs, including ongoing data-driven assessments of the n

eeds, policy barriers, and resource gaps for successful reentry. Since 2007, the Office of Justice Programs has provided 750 SCA grants totaling more than \$400 million dollars to provide critical assistance in reducing recidivism.

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The Office of Justice Programs (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. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.