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COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSE TO OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN RURAL AMERICA LAUNCHES WITH \$14.8 MILLION FOR 21 SITES

Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic Initiative blends expertise and funding of Bureau of Justice Assistance, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and State Justice Institute

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Twenty-one rural American communities that have borne the brunt of the opioid epidemic will receive \$14.8 million in funding to develop tailored and innovative responses to gaps in prevention, treatment and/or recovery services for individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

The Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic Initiative is co-funded by the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) (BJA), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [State Justice Institute](#) (SJI).

The new initiative will integrate public safety and public health approaches and blend interagency expertise and funding to address the epidemic. It will enable rural areas to implement evidence-based solutions and promising practices in a way that utilizes the unique assets of their communities. Its goal is to reduce opioid overdose deaths in high-risk rural communities, and to support and promote a shared understanding of the patterns and characteristics of local opioid use.

“While no corner of the country has gone untouched by the opioid epidemic, rural America has been hit particularly hard. A challenge of this magnitude requires a response in kind, one that marshals resources, data and innovative approaches in the service of the most effective local responses. The Rural Responses Initiative enables these 21 rural communities to take control of their individual battles against opioid use disorder,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan.

Each site will receive up to \$750,000 to establish or enhance public safety, public health and behavioral health collaborations. Sites may also leverage funding to expand peer recovery and recovery support services.

The 21 sites, selected as a result of a competitive, nationwide grant process, represent several regions of the country:

- Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (AR)
- County of Rio Arriba (NM)
- Ellenville Regional Hospital (NY)
- Franklin County Sheriff's Department (MA)
- Grays Harbor Public Health & Social Services (WA)
- Marcum and Wallace Hospital (KY)

- Marshall University Research Corporation (WV)
- Memorial Regional Health (CO)
- Mohave Substance Treatment Education & Prevention Partnership (AZ)
- Northern Kentucky University (KY)
- Northumberland County (PA)
- Porter-Starke Services Inc. (IN)
- Portsmouth City Health Department (OH)
- Prisma Health–Upstate (SC)
- Project Lazarus (NC)
- Reno County Health Department (KS)
- SMA Healthcare, Inc. (FL)
- St. Mary's Regional Health Center (MN)
- Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency (TN)
- WestCare Tennessee, Inc. (TN)
- Whitley County Health Department (KY)

The Rural Responses Initiative is the latest demonstration project supported by BJA's [Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program \(COAP\)](#), which supports effective local, state and tribal responses to the opioid epidemic.

BJA's other demonstration projects, which may be found at <https://www.coapresources.org/Program/DemoProjects>, are:

- [ODMAP Statewide Expansion and Response Initiative](#)
- [Partnerships to Support Data-driven Responses to Emerging Drug Threats Initiative](#)
- [Planning Initiative to Build Bridges Between Jail and Community-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder](#)

BJA, a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system. Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local and tribal governments with the cutting edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement and combat victimization.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is the leading national public health institute in the United States, and part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The State Justice Institute, a non-profit corporation, was established by federal law in 1984 to award grants to improve the quality of justice in state courts and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common issues faced by all courts.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.