



A MESSAGE FROM THE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner
Jim Shuler, Director
Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

3408 Covington Highway • Decatur, Georgia • 30032-1513
Telephone: (404) 508-7147 • Fax: (404) 508-7341

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2014

CONTACT:
Jim Shuler, Director
DJJ Communications
(404) 508-7238
JimShuler@djj.state.ga.us

**DJJ AWARDED "SECOND CHANCE" FEDERAL GRANT
FOR OFFENDER REENTRY INITIATIVE**

(ATLANTA - GA) Commissioner Avery D. Niles is pleased to announce a significant grant has been awarded to the state of Georgia for DJJ's innovative strategic plan for juvenile justice reform initiatives, with recognition from the federal Office of Justice Programs. Commissioner Niles says Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice will receive a three-quarter-million dollar federal Justice Program award to support DJJ's enhanced Reentry Service Initiative.

"We're extremely proud that Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice was selected to receive this notable grant for our reentry demonstration project," said Commissioner Avery Niles. "The Justice Program grant award speaks volumes about the quality of reform initiatives we have in progress and the dedicated Team we have in place to implement the updates in our community transition strategies."

The DJJ Reentry Strategic Model is designed to enhance the process of preparing young offenders for transition back to their communities upon release from secure facilities. The ultimate goal of DJJ's strategic plan for Reentry is to strengthen communities and families and reduce the number of juvenile offenders who may become entangled in what's often been called a "revolving door of recidivism."

"This program grant is an important step in the restructuring of our juvenile detention settings in support of Governor Deal's Criminal Justice Reform Initiative and HB242," said Commissioner Niles. "DJJ is committed to ensure that we do everything necessary to help youth be successful when they are released from custody

The mission of DJJ's Office of Reentry Services is to set up collaborative partnerships with agencies, organizations and stakeholders in Georgia communities. This will help strengthen the rehabilitative process for youth and impact high rates of recidivism that have been consistent for several years. The foundation for DJJ's reentry initiatives is built on evidence-based strategies and interventions to support placement of young offenders back in their communities where they will become productive law-abiding citizens.

(MORE MORE MORE)

The \$750-thousand dollar "Second Chance Act" (SCA) award from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a two-phase planning grant to assist with development of basic components for successful juvenile justice system reforms. In 2013 the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice was presented with the first \$50,000.00 phase of the award as a Reentry Services demonstration grant.

In his recent letter to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquencies Prevention, Governor Nathan Deal expressed his gratitude for the demonstration grant funding, along with his personal pledge to continue to remain connected to Georgia's reform activities developed through the states' Reentry Program initiative.

"I am dedicated to facilitating community involvement in reducing recidivism and enhancing reentry services available for Georgia's youth," Governor Deal wrote. "Obtaining this grant will enhance reentry efforts that support the goal of making a safer, healthier, better educated and more efficient Georgia," the Governor said.

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Reentry Model has as its primary goals:

- To promote public safety and reduce recidivism by implementing Juvenile Justice Reform – This initiative was set in motion by recommendation of the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians and signed into law by the Governor following the passage of the state's new Juvenile Code during the 2013 Georgia Legislative Session.
- To prepare youth and their families for community transition after completion of sentences, using a family-focused approach to encourage parental involvement in youth offender placement, growth, and preparation for reentry.
- To effectively prepare youth for community reentry through educational and vocational skill advancement, appropriate medical and behavioral health services, and evidence-based programs which provide adaptive social tools for reentry.

Commissioner Niles said, "The State Legislature has provided full support behind Georgia's juvenile justice reform initiative and Governor Deal's Administration is committed to help acquire these additional funding resources to strengthen reentry services for DJJ through the Second Chance Implementation Grant.

DJJ will focus the federal grant funds on addressing the behavioral needs and treatment for risk factors closely associated with reoffending behaviors that often result in recidivism. Many of DJJ's behavioral change programs include problem solving skills and help for developing social skills while addressing other life skill deficits and psychological problems for young offenders.

The reentry initiative includes programming designed to help adolescents address their drug problems and guidance for personal decision-making and commitment to change. The programming provides a framework to help youth think through decisions about their lives, situational problems, and their use of drugs and alcohol. Aggression Replacement Training programming for chronically aggressive children and adolescents, ages twelve to seventeen, helps manage anger, reduce aggressive behavior, and improve social skill competence and moral reasoning.

Resources from the Second Chance grant will also be used to provide training for DJJ staff on the appropriate use of behavioral interventions and strategies. The Department of Juvenile Justice will continue its relationships with national experts to assist with measuring the metrics of youth reentry outcomes. Commissioner Avery Niles said, "The Justice Program grant award marks another milestone in Georgia juvenile justice reform for assisting our youth in detention through their critical recovery, rehabilitation, and reentry process."

For more information about the development of the Reentry Initiative at the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, use this link to visit us on our DJJ webpage at <http://www.djinewsandviews.org/juvenilejusticereform/reentryservices.html> .

(END RELEASE)