

**Committee on County Criminal Justice System Best Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century –  
Annual Award Program 2019  
Honoring Best Practices County Jail Programming**

**BACKGROUND**

The County Criminal Justice Systems for the 21st Century, a subcommittee of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) Courts and Corrections Committee has been charged by the CCAP Board with developing programs to promote best practices in criminal justice. First introduced as a means of promoting the 2003 CCAP Prison Overcrowding Task Force recommendations, the awards program has evolved over time to focus on best practices in general, rather than just programs that are designed to address overcrowding.

**HISTORY**

The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania undertook the Pennsylvania Prison Overcrowding project in 2001, in response to concerns raised by members about jail overcrowding and construction costs. The committee appointed a task force to conduct a study and report back its findings, assuming the board would take a policy position in support of finding funding for expansion and upgrades. A study was commissioned that examined the state of overcrowding, including the reasons behind those conditions, and the findings demonstrated a need to examine process before deciding on expansion of jail space.

In order to assure that counties would take advantage of the report findings to look for strategies that could be employed locally, the CCAP Board created the Committee on County Criminal Justice Systems for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and charged them with education for members and promotion of the report. The Committee designed the awards program as a way to highlight the work that counties are doing in this regard and to share that information for other counties to consider for their own plans.

The Awards program has evolved to include a component for juvenile detention and alternative programs, and an award honoring a county partner for their efforts in assisting counties with criminal justice goals. The awards program is in its eighth year.

**AWARD PROGRAM GOAL**

The focus of the award is to recognize county jails for implementation of best practices for jail operation. These may be consistent with the 2003 report recommendations or the recommendations of the recently released CCAP Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force Report. Best Practices may address conditions of confinement using successful re-entry initiatives, prevention or early intervention programs, development of effective linkages with community behavioral health services, family involvement, school communication and efforts to make communities safer. Efforts to introduce sharing or collaborations that result in improved outcomes for local justice systems are areas of interest, in that other counties may use the example of awardees in developing their own programs. Initiatives that may be considered include the following:

- Efforts to stabilize or reduce the jail population
- Adoption of assessment methodologies which identify areas for effective change
- Implementation of re-entry initiatives
- Establishment of community corrections programs
- Use of technology to enhance operations of the jail and outcomes for inmates
- Improving the quality of data
- Employment of innovations in housing and treatment of mentally ill inmates
- Development of community services efforts
- Implementation of diversion programs for specific populations
- Collaboration between county departments that are not traditionally involved with corrections
- Innovations through public/private partnerships

### **2019 Themes**

While all projects and programs are of interest to the Committee and eligible to enter, the committee is encouraging the submission of projects that demonstrate the following:

- Addressing the Opioid Crisis
- Successful collaboration and partnerships at the local level
  - Court/judicial team impact on jail population, lives of inmates, successful community re-entry
- The use of evidence based correctional programming
  - Assessment of need/risk levels
  - Enhancement of offender motivation
  - Targeted interventions
  - Staff training consistent with delivery of programs, including positive reinforcement, environments conducive to success

### **NUMBER OF AWARDS**

No more than one large county and one small county jail will receive an award. A large jail is one from a county of the first, second, second A or third class. A small county jail is one from a county of the fourth through eight class.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Entries will be judged on the following categories:

Problem description (10 points)

Background (20 points)

Soundness of approach (20 points)

Description of specific program elements (20 points)

Expectations and measurable goals (20 points)

Evaluation, sustainability (10 points)

## **PREPARING AND SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY**

Use the official award form in this brochure or available online at <http://www.pacounties.org/ProgramServices/Pages/Criminal-Justice.aspx> click on "Criminal Justice System Best Practices Awards"

### **ELIGIBILITY**

A county jail is eligible to enter under the following conditions:

- The project took place in and was operating during calendar year 2018
- The county has applied for this award in the past, but can show an ongoing benefit to the project
- The county plays a significant leadership role in the development and implementation of activities
- The county commits to follow up evaluation by phone if requested by the committee
- The chair of the board of county commissioners must sign the form for non-home rule county submissions and the Chief Executive Officer must sign the form for home rule county submissions

Projects submitted in previous years are eligible for resubmission and the committee urges those counties to reapply.

### **DEADLINE**

Entries must be submitted via email using the electronic form no later than close of business **February 15, 2019.**

### **JUDGING AND SELECTION**

All entries will be scored by the Committee on County Criminal Justice System Best Practices. The winning entry in each category will be announced at the CCAP annual conference in March, and afterwards, contacts identified for each winning submission will be notified. Awards will be presented at a time and location chosen by the awardee.

### **NOTICE**

By applying the applicant agrees that items submitted for the program narrative will be posted on the CCAP and JDCAP websites, and made available to counties who wish to establish similar best practices. The signatures on the submission indicate agreement with the public posting, and the award recipient may be asked to share additional information with other counties. The Committee on County Criminal Justice Systems Best Practices reserves the right to disqualify and entry if all of the required elements are not included. Further, entries not receiving a minimum score may be disqualified. Further, entries that fail to achieve a minimum score may be disqualified.

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered by the Committee. A copy of this official entry is available at [www.pacounties.org](http://www.pacounties.org)

County	Dauphin County
County Class	Third Class
Address	2 South 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor
City, State, Zip Code	Harrisburg, PA 17101
Primary Contact, Title	Brian Clark, Prison Warden
Contact Phone	717-780-6300

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Title Dauphin County Steps Up to Reduce Prison Recidivism and Reform the Criminal Justice System to Improve Outcomes for Those in the System

Project Start Date 2018

### PROGRAM NARRATIVE

**Enter program narrative that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be submitting using this form. All sections must be complete. Entries submitted without the required information may be disqualified.**

**Problem Discussion** - Enter comments on the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort. This section is worth 10 points.

One of the most significant injustices our country faces is the continued jailing of the mentally ill, who end up trapped in an endless cycle of recidivistic behavior. Not only is this a tragedy for those behind bars and their families, but for society at large which is squandering precious resources on fruitless incarceration rather than treatment.

We are proud to nominate **Dauphin County** for CCAP's Criminal Justice Awards Program because of its groundbreaking work to bring the courts, law enforcement, and the social services communities together and provide real change that is getting results.

**Background** – Enter history of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county- wide planning strategies, etc. This section is worth 20 points.

Through Dauphin County's Criminal Justice Advisory Board, which includes the County Commissioners, District Attorney, Sheriff, President Judge, Warden, Chief of the Probation Department, and representatives from the Human Services, including Children & Youth, Drug & Alcohol Services and Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities, we have made tremendous strides with implementing national best practices and diverting offenders into programs that will help them in the long term. The Advisory Board, which has more than 400 years of combined experience, also includes local law enforcement, a Magisterial District Judge and additional representatives from the court system.

Realizing that many of those with mental illness are also dealing with addiction issues, Dauphin County has implemented a holistic approach that looks at the entirety of individuals' needs, from counseling and addiction treatment to job training, child care and housing.

The level of collaboration between all the parties involved and the close cooperation of the county's Judges and County Commissioners is truly unparalleled and has allowed the county to initiate sweeping improvements in the criminal justice system. As detailed in our application, whether it's spearheading a pilot program to link released inmates with treatment or ensuring those suffering from drug addiction receive Vivitrol shots, Dauphin County is in the forefront of creating best practices that other jurisdictions will seek to adopt.

**Soundness of approach** – Enter a description of the ways the project conforms to either program themes or goals as established in the criteria. This section is worth 20 points

### **Pre-Trial Risk Review**

The county this year is implementing the Allegheny County risk assessment screener for use preliminary arraignment reports and by the bail review team. The screener looks at a variety of factors and assigns a score for each, from arrest history and charges to educational level and age of the first arrest.

So far, 822 new cases were reviewed, beginning May 1, 2018.

Depending on the points, recommendations are made for differing levels of bail options, from release with a promise to appear to report over the phone, a low or high level of supervised bail, or no release.

With the use of this tool, there is an evidence-based effort to reduce the prison population of low-risk defendants detained on bail.

**Program Elements** – Enter a description of the elements of the project, utility, adaptability, strategies used, community and stakeholder involvement, evidence-based approached. This section is worth 20 points.

### **Problem Courts**

A starting point was the creation of Dauphin County's Drug Court in 2008.

It's not an easy process. Those in the program must make weekly court appearances, obtain jobs, stay

sober and follow treatment programs to kick their habits. “I can’t believe how much my life has changed over the last two years,” said one mother and Drug Court graduate. “I just did it. I had no choice...I am not willing to go to jail or get hurt and have someone else raise her.”

Since its inception, Dauphin County’s Drug Court has celebrated 92 graduates. Roughly 60 percent of all graduates do not re-offend -- a significant achievement considering the chance of re-offending by the high-risk, high-need population served by the court is between 70 to 80 percent. Without the intense supervision and network of programs provided by the court, including behavioral health counseling, a majority of these defendants would receive lengthy state prison sentences.

That successful effort was followed by the Dauphin County Veterans Court in 2012. To date, 52 defendants have successfully graduated and, on average, 92 percent avoid further problems with the criminal justice system. The Judiciary Committees of Pennsylvania’s House and Senate and the state’s Department of Veterans Affairs have looked at our court as a model of best practices.

Among the first graduates were a 54-year-old Navy veteran with two DUI convictions and a 23-year-old former Army combat engineer who served in Baghdad. In cooperation with the VA, both received substance abuse treatment and programs to help them deal with service-related issues, such as post-traumatic stress. Mentors from the same service branch as defendants have also been recruited to provide additional support for those in the program.

It is worth noting that Dauphin County’s problem courts typically accept more challenging cases than those handled by other jurisdictions. The fact that our courts can show the same or better graduation and success rates as other areas in the state and nation – while handling higher-risk offenders – underscores the effectiveness of our programming and supervision.

Expectations and Measurable Goals – Enter a description of the costs of the project, how it was funded, projected impact, number of inmates diverted or assisted, utilization of risk assessment, impact on recidivism. This section is worth 20 points.

### **Services following release from prison**

About 40 percent of Dauphin County prison inmates have court-ordered drug and alcohol abuse counseling. Many times, however, progress made behind bars is lost because they have trouble continuing treatment after their release.

In 2014 and under Dauphin County’s auspices, we joined five other counties in a pilot program that involved caseworkers enrolling inmates in Medical Assistance before their release and connecting them with outpatient counseling services that begins immediately after leaving prison.

The clear benefit demonstrated by the pilot program led the Pennsylvania Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs to require all the Commonwealth’s prisons to begin enrollment programs.

To date, we have enrolled 597 released inmates with MA, linking 326 with in-patient services and 257

with outpatient assistance. Additionally, the increased availability of services has allowed for earlier release of non-violent offenders to either work release or other programs.

Under another pilot program that Dauphin County spearheaded and in a move to lower incarceration and recidivism rates, in 2017 the county began treating heroin-or prescription opioid addicted offenders with monthly Vivitrol shots, a non-addictive medication that blocks the opioid receptors in the brain and reduces cravings for both opiates and alcohol. A unique aspect of the program is that one of the county's providers offers the treatment at various sites through the use of a camper-like mobile unit. Since the program started, 30 people have received treatment.

## **Diverting those with mental illness and addiction from prison**

Dauphin County realizes that to make a real impact, those needing treatment needed to be diverted at the time of their arrest or, if held on low bail, develop methods for supervised release.

### **Bail review**

For the past two years, Human Services caseworkers have joined with the Dauphin County District Attorney's Bail Review Team, which looks at pre-trial detainees held on low bail with the goal of having them released under certain conditions. On average, 14 individuals are reviewed on a weekly basis. The Team ensures evaluations are completed and that alternatives to incarceration such as treatment services, bail modifications, pre-trial and work release options are implemented when possible. All changes are court ordered by the appropriate judge.

### **Ongoing emphasis on treatment instead of prison**

More than five years ago, we began looking at how the criminal justice system – especially at the preliminary arraignment level – could be changed so that non-violent offenders are released with conditions instead of pretrial confinement.

With this in mind, in 2013 the Dauphin County Judicial Center opened. Two primary goals drove the center's creation:

- Allow police to get back on the streets more quickly by handing off booking responsibilities to the center's staff.
- Create a facility where arrestees are assessed and diverted to treatment options instead of jail by having caseworkers on hand who make recommendations to the MDJ.

The county immediately realized its first goal and today more officers can resume patrols quicker after dropping detainees at the center. However, it has taken more research and planning to implement the second goal.

Over the past several months, Human Services case managers have joined with Dauphin County Pretrial Services. At the time of preliminary arraignment, the MDJ receives options for releasing detainees on their promise to appear subject to their agreeing to receive mental health and addiction evaluations and/or treatment. Where needed, caseworkers at the Judicial Center arrange to have detainees immediately enter either in- or outpatient treatment.

**Evaluation/Sustainability** – Enter details describing the process for evaluating success including assessment methodologies, data reports, continuation, and determination of success. This section is worth 10 points.

### **Next steps**

Dauphin County is working closely with the Council of State Governments (CSG) in its launch of the Stepping Up Initiative, aimed at reducing the number of mentally ill in prison. Researchers from the CSG Justice Center recently reviewed those incarcerated in Dauphin County Prison in 2016 and findings included:

- The average length of stay in DCP for those with serious mental illness is 28 days longer.
- Even for low-risk offenders, those with mental illness spent 117 days in DCP compared to 57 days for those not suffering from severe mental illness.
- When given bail, those with serious mental illness remain incarcerated an average 32 days, as opposed to those without mental illness making bail after 16 days.

This research was necessary not only to make a case for broad systematic change but also because it pointed out difficulties in collecting accurate information for assessments. Moving forward, the county, working with the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, is taking the following steps:

- In November 2017, the county approved a \$1.2 million with Deloitte Consulting to fully integrate the county's Human Services, including but not limited to Children and Youth, Drug & Alcohol and Mental Health & Intellectual Disabilities. The specially designed software will bridge the informational barriers between the departments and allow care teams to more easily assess client needs and coordinate and track services. This enables caseworkers to more easily see if an arrestee has received services previously and re-connect individuals with the treatment they need.
- The county this year is implementing the Allegheny County risk assessment screener for use preliminary arraignment reports and by the bail review team. The screener looks at a variety of factors and assigns a score for each, from arrest history and charges to educational level and age of the first arrest. Depending on the points, recommendations are made for differing levels of supervision, from release with a promise to appear to report over the phone, in-person supervision or no release. If bail is ordered, the screener will also help in considering the amount.
- Implementation of a comprehensive behavioral health screener that will complement the Allegheny tool and determine if arrestees have mental illness and, importantly, which individuals can safely be diverted from prison to treatment. Working with CJAB, the county's Human Services are exploring existing screeners. The goal is to have the screener in use by the end of 2018.

Overall, Dauphin County has been responsible for driving the success Dauphin County has experienced in lowering the number of non-risk offenders incarcerated in county prison and continues to be a force for implementing effective, evidence-based programs and policies.

For the exceptional and forward-thinking work that has been done, and for the continual improvements



that are being made, we believe Dauphin County is deserving of the CCAP County Jail, Re-entry, Detention and Alternative Programs Award for 2019.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Please include any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant's description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SHOULD BE COPIED AND PASTED DIRECTLY INTO THE FORM USING THE BOX BELOW.**

## Press release:

[Keeping Those With Serious Mental Illness Out of Prisons Focus of Public Meeting at HACC on April 25, Hosted by Dauphin County Leaders and the Council of State Government's Justice Center](#)

A public meeting will be held at Harrisburg Area Community College, Midtown 2, Room 206, 1500 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg, on Wednesday, April 25 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. to recommendations on how Dauphin County can reduce the number of people with serious mental illness (SMI) in prison.

Dauphin County Commissioners Jeff Haste, Mike Pries and George P. Hartwick, III, along with the county's Criminal Justice Advisory Board, asked the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center to conduct the in-depth analysis of how the criminal justice system is dealing with individuals with SMI. Done as part of CSG's nationwide "Stepping Up" initiative, the goal is to get those with mental illness into treatment programs rather than keeping them behind bars.

The Dauphin County Commissioners will also be briefed on the report during the board's public meeting at 10 a.m. in the 4th Floor Hearing Room, Dauphin County Administration Building, 2 S. Second Street.

In June 2016, Dauphin County joined Stepping Up, a national movement to mobilize local and state leaders to commit to reducing the number of people who have mental illnesses in jails. Across the country more than 425 counties—23 of which are Pennsylvania counties—have also launched Stepping Up initiatives.

As part of the report being released Wednesday, CSG will outline recommendations on how to improve policies, programs and practices to get those with SMI into treatment instead of prison. Incarcerating those with mental illness is both costlier for taxpayers and doesn't provide the help individuals need to allow them to successfully rejoin society and break the patterns that lead to re-arrest.

The Pennsylvania Departments of Corrections, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and van Ameringen Foundation funded the study.

Conducted over a 12-month period, the analysis found that like other county jails across the country, Dauphin County Prison has a higher number of people with SMI than found in the general population. In total, 16 percent of people released from DCP in 2016 were identified as having SMI, compared with four percent of the general population nationally.

Other studies have found the number of people who have SMI in jails is often three to six times higher than that of the general public.

In commissioning the report and moving forward with the recommendations, the Dauphin County Commissioners are committed to finding alternatives that place those with mental illness in treatment programs and not prison.

[Article on Transforming Health, a WITF project:](#)

Dauphin County launches plan to keep people with serious mental illnesses out of prison

**Brett Sholtis/Transforming Health | 04.25.18**

Across the nation, 17 percent of people in prison have a serious mental illness like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

That trend plays out in Dauphin County as well, where 16 percent of Dauphin County Prison inmates have a serious mental illness, according to recent findings from the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Dauphin County is launching a plan, based on the findings of that study, to change that trend.

The county hopes to keep those with serious mental illness out of prisons and to get them involved in community behavioral health services. The program is part of a national initiative called 'Stepping Up,' and comes two years after Dauphin County passed a resolution to be part of the effort.

Citing the study, County Commissioner George Hartwick III said people with serious mental illnesses often spend more time in prison than other inmates. They also return to prison more frequently, often for minor offenses.

This does them a disservice and also wastes criminal justice resources on people who are of low risk to the public, Hartwick said.

The plan would change the way the court system works with people who have a serious mental illness, Hartwick said.

He says the plan also involves embedding mental health experts with law enforcement.

"The ability for us to have maybe a response team that deals in a more mobile crisis way along with law enforcement at the very first interaction could help to de-escalate that situation and stop it from being something that would be tragic."

The county is seeking a federal grant to help fund the program.

**All forms must contain at least one signature.** Signatures can be entered electronically, or submitted via fax using a separate form. To sign, right-click on the signature line, select "Signature Setup" from the drop down, and follow the prompts. If submitting signatures on a separate form, enter "FAXING" on the signature line.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Hasto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chairman, Dauphin County Board of Commissioners

**SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY – To submit the entry, save a copy of this completed form after all information, including signatures and supporting materials have been added. When saving the form, please assure that the document name includes the county name, the type of project and the year – (i.e. FranklinJailAward2019). Address an email to [bpenyak@pacounties.org](mailto:bpenyak@pacounties.org) and attach the award submission.**