

SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

Smart Prosecution Welcomes Five Sites for FY '16

On September 26, 2016, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced five new Smart Prosecution sites for FY '16, as part of its funding announcement for nine Smart Suite programs, who were collectively awarded \$34.5 million. The new Smart Prosecution sites received a collective \$2.2 million to fund sustainable, science-based crime reduction strategies. DOJ noted that the Smart Prosecution Initiative "seeks to promote analysis driven, evidence-based policing by encouraging state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to develop effective, economical and innovative responses to crime." The full funding announcement is available here: [READ MORE](#)

The five newly-awarded Smart Prosecution sites include: the Florida State Attorney's Office, 11th Judicial Circuit (Miami/Dade); The District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General; the Essex County Prosecutor's Office (Newark, New Jersey); the Chatham County District Attorney's Office (Savannah, Georgia); and the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office (Kansas City, Missouri).

Read on to learn about the new sites' respective initiatives, goals, and research strategies:

Florida State Attorney's Office, 11th Judicial Circuit

The office has created The Gun Violence Reduction Initiative that will place a team of prosecutors, investigators, and a community outreach and a victim witness specialist to work directly with police and the community to combat shootings and homicides at the Northside District Station. The Initiative has four goals:

- 1) *Prosecute and convict individuals involved in gun/gang related crimes to reduce crime and victimization in the Northside District*
- 2) *Rely on data-driven methods to proactively identify gang members and chronic offenders*
- 3) *Analyze data from law enforcement agencies and use geographic information systems (GIS) to target "hotspots" and crime generators in the Northside District*

4) *Work with the community to dispel the "anti-snitch" mentality.*

The site's research partner will help identify hotspots and chronic offenders, measure changes over time, and determine how the interventions affect crime, develop a strategy for intervention, conduct an evaluation, and issue a final report that will assist the office with program sustainability.

District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General

The initiative, entitled "Using Our Brains: Reducing Recidivism Among Youth and Young Adults" will use Restorative Justice instead of traditional prosecution for youth (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-24) who commit crimes such as theft, destruction of property, and non-injury simple assault cases with victim consent. Each month, the office plans to facilitate 25-35 Restorative Justice conferences generating 300 cases over nine months. During these conferences, trained facilitators will bring victims/surrogates with offenders to determine how harm can be repaired. The main goals of the initiative are to:

- 1) *Reduce recidivism among youth and young adults*
- 2) *Increase victim participation through Restorative Justice*
- 3) *Amplify lessons learned among prosecutors nationally*

The site's research partner will: receive demographic and booking data on all participants; conduct interviews and focus groups of victims and participants; conduct an impact evaluation; and, issue a final research report including all process evaluation findings, final risk profiles, focus group findings, and impact findings concerning recidivism over one year.

Essex County Prosecutor's Office

The Essex County SMART Social Media Initiative will develop a specialized unit to investigate and prosecute cases based on suspects' usage of social media. The site envisions a systematic, proactive approach to social-media mining that will reduce crime, empower victims, promote fair and impartial justice, and instill the public's confidence in criminal justice. The initiative will focus on two investigation methods:

- 1) From a party to a case, such as a victim, witness, or co-defendant who can identify a suspect through a tweet or post
- 2) By investigator familiarity, when the investigator knows suspects' identities and tracks messages and posts on public feeds

The initiative will track offenders of the most violent offenses residing in the four largest municipalities in Essex County. The research partner will assist with case selection, monitor cases, compare outcome data with a control group, advise on strategy development and project review, and provide a final report evaluating the validity of social media data in criminal prosecutions.

Chatham County District Attorney's Office

The Chatham County Smart Prosecution Program's goal is to reduce gun violence by focusing on group and gang violence. The initiative's plan for reducing violent crime is to:

- 1) Identify local hotspots for gun violence in the Savannah area
- 2) Identify the most violent offenders within these hotspots
- 3) Track and prioritize prosecution within hotspots and individuals within those hotspots
- 4) Divert non-essential cases (e.g. theft and simple drug possession) to alternative programs
- 5) Engage with community groups within the hotspots through meetings, social media forums, and other outreach strategies
- 6) Evaluate the program using a mixed-methods approach

The site's research partners will assist in identifying and analyzing hotspots through crime-mapping, analyze law enforcement data, develop and maintain social media accounts to share pictures, statistics and evaluation results, evaluate the initiative through qualitative and quantitative analyses, and issue a final report to address identified challenges and evaluate the program's impact.

Jackson County Missouri Prosecutor's Office

The geographic-based, Smart Prosecution Initiative will target the "East Zone," the most violent area within Kansas City. Team members will collaborate with law enforcement, community partnership specialists, and community members to assess crime-related problems in the East Zone and implement strategies to address them. The initiative will engage in problem-oriented prosecution, relying on SARA, a four-stage process for problem-oriented policing:

- 1) Scanning the environment to detect specific problems
- 2) Analyzing the problem
- 3) Responding to the problem
- 4) Assessing the effectiveness of the response and adjusting it until it succeeds

The site's research partner plans to use law enforcement data to analyze the nature and scope of violent crime and develop strategies to reduce violence, conduct process and outcome evaluations. The research partner will also complete a final evaluation that will compare the initiative's geographic-based prosecution compared to conventional prosecution used in two other districts.

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Please **contact us** to recommended articles for inclusion in the upcoming Smart Prosecution Weekly News.

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SITE ACTIVITY

OCTOBER SMART PROSECUTION SITE HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS

FY '15 SITES BALTIMORE

PROJECT: IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE PRETRIAL PHASE

The site reports that as of October 19, eleven people participated in the Wilder Collaboration Factor. The site continues collecting pretrial data and recently received archival data. The office's IT department is developing a database.

On October 7, the site participated in a virtual Peer-to-Peer exchange with Mesa County Colorado to learn about pretrial reform. Bo Zeerip, Deputy District Attorney, Mesa County District Attorney's Office, and Joel Bishop, Program Manager, Mesa County Criminal Justice Services Department, presented a webinar entitled "Evidence-Based Reform Outcomes in Mesa County Colorado." Throughout the webinar, Baltimore posed many questions to Mr. Zeerip and Mr. Bishop regarding pretrial release. Mr. Zeerip visited Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office on October 21, to continue discussing pretrial risk assessment and bail reform.

Three members of the initiative traveled to Louisville, KY on October 26-28, to learn about Louisville's pretrial assessment. The team met Louisville's Chief Public Defender and his team, observed the interview/assessment process at the Louisville's Metro Corrections Jail, attended Jail Arraignment Court, and joined various meetings with Louisville prosecutors, pretrial services personnel, and judges.

Weekly News: "Mosby Announces New Drug-Focused Unit Among Other Changes" [READ MORE](#)

KINGS COUNTY (BROOKLYN)

PROJECT: THE BROOKLYN YOUNG ADULT JUSTICE INITIATIVE

As of October 19, the site reports 1,992 case pending in the Young Adult Court Part. 180 of those cases are being handled within the Young Adult Court Bureau.

A Stakeholder meeting occurred on September 20; participants discussed providing services at the "front end"/early in the criminal justice process for young adults eligible for diversion. The next Stakeholder meeting will be held on November 14.

CCI, the site's research partner, is developing a web-based survey to be sent to all stakeholders who attended the September Stakeholder meeting, including: prosecutors,

defense attorneys, legal aid, Brooklyn defender services and judges. The survey is expected to be administered by mid-November.

Weekly News: "Kings County Criminal Court Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month" [READ MORE](#)

"Youth Clubhouse Opens in Brownsville Lot To Provide Safe Community Space" [READ MORE](#)

ST. LOUIS

PROJECT: THE FELONY REDIRECT PROGRAM

As of October 11th, 16 participants are enrolled in the program and another 6 participants are waiting to plea within the next couple weeks.

The office hired Robert Domiano as its new analyst, beginning November 7 to replace Lacey Petersen. Porscha Smith will assume Dan Riley's position of Project Coordinator, and recent hire Colleen Garvey will fulfill Porscha's former role as support staff.

Due to a pending law (effective January 1, 2017) that decriminalizes gun carriers without permits, the initiative has modified its Gun Redirect Program. Participants will take part in the Felony Redirect Program.

Weekly News: "'Time Bank Youth Court' Could Divert Teens in Trouble Near Cherokee" [READ MORE](#)

SAN DIEGO

PROJECT: THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE INITIATIVE (CJI)

As of September 30th, 2,955 people received CJI offers; 1,952 people accepted the offer; 993 rejected the offer; 1480 participants completed the program; 266 people failed; and 43 assessments were conducted.

Throughout April 25, 2016, through October 14, the site completed 263 CJI proxy screenings.

On October 12, the site trained local public defenders (PDs) and their interns about CJI initiatives. The PDs were very receptive, and asked many questions about the program.

The site welcomes Melissa Bond, and is "thrilled" to have her join the initiative as Director of CJI. Ms. Bond will focus on statistical analysis, grant writing, and community partnerships. As a program manager, she will be a resource to CJI's providers, providing both day-to-day management and strategic support. In her most recent role, she managed the Women Entrepreneurs NYC program ("WE NYC") of the NYC Department of Small Business Services and worked with many nonprofits like Alpha Project and Urban Corps. Previously, she was a civil litigator in private practice.

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Weekly News: "Success in Prosecuting Drugged Driving Cases Leads California Office of Traffic Safety to Renew Grant" [READ MORE](#)

FY '15 SITES

SAN FRANCISCO

PROJECT: CASE STRATEGIES UNIT (CSU)

The office's Case Strategies Unit investigated and charged 16 people with robbery, grand theft, commercial burglary and conspiracy. The charges stem from an organized high-end retail theft operation linked to burglaries and robberies in more than half a dozen cities, dating back to April 2015. It is estimated that the defendants allegedly stole \$225,000 in high-end luxury goods from various retailers.

The SFDA will host the West Coast Intelligence Driven Prosecution (IDP) Conference March 9-10, 2017.

Weekly News: "16 Charged In Alleged 'Rainbow Crew' Retail Theft Ring" [READ MORE](#)

"San Francisco Prosecutors Announce Charges Against 16 Defendants in Alleged Retail Theft Ring" [READ MORE](#)

HARRIS COUNTY (HOUSTON)

PROJECT: SAFE COURT (SURVIVORS ACQUIRING FREEDOM AND EMPOWERMENT)

On October 20-21, Harris County SAFE Court stakeholders attended a Peer-to-Peer site visit to Queens Human Trafficking Diversion Court and Bronx Criminal Court. Stakeholders observed and then discussed their respective prostitution diversion initiatives. The site visit was coordinated by Site Champion Danielle Malangone at the Center for Court Innovation (CCI). Roundtable discussion topics led by Ms. Malangone and Miriam Goodman of CCI included trauma-informed care and procedural justice.

SAFE Court stakeholders attending the site visit included: Ann Johnson, Human Trafficking Section Chief, Harris County District Attorney's Office and Project Lead, Honorable Pam Derbyshire, Presiding Justice for SAFE Court, The County Courts at Law, Honorable William Boyce, Justice, Fourteenth Court of Appeals, Community Supervision and Corrections Department Case Manager, Rita Blackwell, Dionne Press Esquire, Defense Counsel, and Research Partner, Dr. Lisa Muftic.

Weekly News: "Including Adolescents in Two-Generation Human Service Approaches" [READ MORE](#)

"Movie About Human Trafficking Brings Stars to Houston" [READ MORE](#)

LOS ANGELES

PROJECT: INTRODUCING NEW TOOLS USING EVIDENCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT TO CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY FOR PROSECUTION TREATMENT (INTERCEPT)

From July 1, 2015 to October 26, 2016, in Hollywood (a Project INTERCEPT site), 274 cases were referred, 183 cases initiated, and 131 cases completed. Two participants recidivated in a 6-month period, and four participants recidivated within 12 months. During this timeframe, 183 Risk Assessments were performed and all participants were categorized as minimal risk.

From July 1, 2015 to October 27, 2016, in the Southwest, Southeast and the 77th (Project INTERCEPT sites), 180 cases were referred, 115 cases initiated, and 66 cases completed. No participants recidivated in either the 6-month or 12-month timeframe. During this timeframe, 180 Risk Assessments were performed and all participants were categorized as minimal risk.

Weekly News: "Proposition HHH Would Raise Funds to Build Homeless Housing in L.A." [READ MORE](#)

"Historic Juvenile Justice Reform" [READ MORE](#)

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