



NEWS

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

CONTACT: Riley Matsen, Assistant Public Information Officer
(804) 625-3395 | riley.matsen@djj.virginia.gov

VIRGINIA ONE OF ONLY SIX STATES AWARDED JUVENILE REENTRY PLANNING GRANTS BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Richmond, VA, Aug.12 – The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) announced today that it was one of six states to receive a grant of \$60,546 from the Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to develop and finalize a comprehensive statewide juvenile reentry plan. DJJ is required to provide a one-to-one match for the funds received. Upon development of the reentry plan, DJJ will then be eligible to apply for a second, multi-year grant of up to \$2,000,000 to implement the plan.

Andy Block, Director of DJJ, said of the grant, “Virginia has never had a comprehensive, statewide approach to juvenile reentry. This grant will provide us with the opportunity to develop such an approach and change the outcomes for our youth and the communities they return to.”

DJJ will use the grant for two primary purposes:

- (1) To retain the services of an outside expert to assess the effectiveness of its current reentry services and recommend necessary changes; and
- (2) To convene a multi-agency taskforce to develop a comprehensive, statewide plan responsive to the expert recommendations.

The taskforce will include representatives from such agencies as the Departments of Criminal Justice Services, Education, Motor Vehicles, Social Services, Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and the Virginia Community College Systems, and local judicial districts. It will also include family representatives and stakeholders from various judicial districts.

According to DJJ’s Reentry Program Manager, Ashaki Mcneil, the composition of the taskforce reflects the need for a comprehensive approach to juvenile reentry. “Although DJJ is the sole agency responsible for secure commitment and parole services in Virginia,” said McNeil, “it is our community partners who help ensure public safety by providing young offenders with the support they require to lead productive lives once they return home. This multi-agency taskforce will make sure we can get this right for every young person in every community.”

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran said that DJJ’s approach to reentry planning is exactly the kind of multi-agency work that Governor McAuliffe envisioned when launching the recently announced Children’s Cabinet. Secretary Moran said, “The Governor recognizes the need for all agencies to pull together to create better outcomes for children and young adults. The various agencies and stakeholders involved in reentry planning will make sure we have more success for the young people returning home and safer communities across the Commonwealth.”

###