

Support Continued Funding for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act

Congress should continue funding for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) for FY 2009. Senators Domenici (R-NM) and Leahy (D-VT) and Representatives Delahunt (D-MA) and Ramstad (R-MN) are circulating appropriations support letters to ask for continued and hopefully increased funding for FY 2009.

MIOTCRA, passed unanimously by the U.S. House and Senate and signed into law by President Bush in 2004, authorized the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) grant. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a division of the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice, administers the program.

The grant program is designed to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems and to improve access to effective treatment for people with mental illnesses involved with the justice system.

Three types of grants are awarded through the JMHCP: planning grants with a maximum award of \$50,000 for 12 months, planning and implementation grants with a maximum award of \$250,000 for 30 months, and implementation and expansion grants with a maximum award of \$200,000 for 24 months.

All grants require a joint application from a mental health agency and unit of government responsible for criminal and/or juvenile justice activities. This stipulation underscores the collaborative nature of this grant, which is intended to bring the criminal justice and mental health systems together to improve outcomes for people with mental illnesses in the justice system.

MIOTCRA authorized \$50 million each for 2004 and 2005, plus funds as necessary for 2006-2009. The program received \$5 million in FY 2006 and FY 2007 and \$6.5 million for FY 2008.

February 2008