



PRESS RELEASE

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PIMA COUNTY AWARDED GRANT TO ESTABLISH ARIZONA'S FIRST DRUG TREATMENT ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON PROGRAM

Pima County received a grant that will provide more than \$1 million over three years to establish the first *Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison (DTAP)* Program in Arizona, announced Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall this morning. The three-year *Drug Court Expansion and Enhancement Grant* is the first of its kind to be awarded jointly by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the Department of Justice. Pima County's grant is one of 28 in the nation and the only project of this type to be funded in Arizona.

"Prison is an appropriate sentence for most drug traffickers and repetitive offenders," explains LaWall. "It takes them off the streets and protects society. But prison is counterproductive for some drug-addicted offenders," she continued, "especially those who are motivated to get clean and sober, overcome their addiction but simply don't have the means to do so. These individuals need the opportunity for residential substance abuse treatment. Unfortunately, the State's current correction- funding priorities leave prosecutors and judges with no other sentencing option besides prison for repetitive drug possession offenders. There has been no funding for residential, in-patient treatment in lieu of prison, even for non-violent, non-dangerous drug addicts."

To tackle this issue head-on, LaWall convened a DTAP Task Force in October 2009. Comprised of representatives from the criminal justice and corrections communities, along with drug treatment providers and social service agencies, the Task Force explored the possibility of adding a DTAP component to the Pima County Drug Court and obtaining the funding for it.

Historically, well-managed prison-alternative drug treatment programs have proven to be both cost-effective and successful in reducing recidivism. These programs target non-violent offenders who – if not for their addiction – would most likely lead crime-free lives. In lieu of incarceration, they are offered a 36-month program that includes evidence-based residential drug rehabilitation, wraparound recovery support services based on their individual criminogenic factors, and enhanced supervision by a Drug Court judge and a probation officer.

The Task Force concluded that a DTAP program, based on the prosecutor-driven model first used in Kings County, Brooklyn, New York, would be a valuable enhancement of the Pima County Drug Court. The Pima County Attorney's Office applied for the funding, which was approved on October 1, 2010, by two federal agencies, the Department of Health & Human Services – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The funding will allow for a total of 80 defendants over three years who are repetitive drug possession offenders being convicted for the third or subsequent time to be afforded in-patient drug treatment in lieu of prison. In addition, it will provide wraparound recovery support services to those 80 defendants plus augment and enhance existing recovery support services for 300 other Drug Court participants who are on probation for first and second time drug possession offenses.

“The Pima County Drug Court has played a critically important role in the criminal justice system since its inception in 1998,” says LaWall. “DTAP has added another valuable tool to its toolbox, one that will benefit all involved. I am honored to be working with the fine members of the DTAP Task Force and thank them for their hard work and dedication.”

Acknowledgement and thanks go to the many other people and organizations that supported The Pima County Attorney's efforts to secure this grant:

- Dennis Burke, United States Attorney for the District of Arizona
- Raúl Grijalva, member U.S. House of Representatives
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- Supreme Court of the state of Arizona
- Arizona, Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families
- Arizona Department of Corrections
- Pima County Superior Court
- Pima County Probation Department
- Pima County Sheriff's Department
- C.H. Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator
- Pima County Public Defender
- Pima County ONESTOP Career Center
- The Haven Drug Treatment Center
- Compass Behavioral Health Care
- Primavera Foundation

- Child and Family Resources, Inc.
- Jewish Family & Children's Services of So. Arizona, Inc.
- Literacy Volunteers of Tucson
- MindPlay, Inc.
- Project LEARN

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