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ANNOUNCEMENT

HIGHLIGHTING THE FIRST COHORT OF RJC INNOVATION SITES

The Rural Justice Collaborative (RJC) was honored to collaborate with the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center at the SMU Dedman School of Law to highlight the first cohort of RJC Innovation Sites. The innovation sites profiled in [this report](#) reflect proven rural justice programs that increase access to justice, improve family outcomes, and reduce reoffending rates. Most importantly, these programs are replicable in other rural communities that face similar challenges in ensuring equitable justice.

FUNDING

INVESTMENTS SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS IN RECOVERY ECOSYSTEMS (INSPIRE) INITIATIVE

The **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**, a federal-state partnership working to strengthen economic growth and community development in 13 Appalachian states, has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for its Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. Awards issued through the INSPIRE Initiative will support a wide variety of projects on the post-treatment to employment continuum, including investments in healthcare networks to better meet the needs of SUD recovery professionals, recovery-focused job and workforce training programs, expanded recovery support networks,



RURAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Rural communities face unique challenges that impact their ability to deliver fair and equitable justice. Despite these challenges, rural communities rely on their many strengths to address the needs of their residents.

The National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Rulo Strategies, launched the [Rural Justice Collaborative \(RJC\)](#) to showcase the strengths of rural communities and highlight the cross-sector collaboration that is a hallmark of rural justice systems.

The work under the RJC is supported by a cross-sector advisory council composed of rural judges along with additional stakeholders in the justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. The advisory council guides and identifies innovative programs and practices.

training and certification of recovery specialists, and more. Successful INSPIRE grant applications will demonstrate the potential for individuals in recovery to obtain and maintain stable employment, focusing on contributing to and expanding a strong recovery ecosystem of support services and training opportunities that lead to successful entry and re-entry into the workforce. Letters of Intent (LOI) for implementation grants up to \$500,000 and planning grants up to \$50,000 under INSPIRE are due **February 21, 2023**. The deadline for final applications is March 17, 2023.

For more information on this initiative and how to apply, [click here](#).

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

TRUCKERS AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Truckers Against Trafficking recognizes that members of the trucking, bus, and energy industries are invaluable in the fight against Human Trafficking. As the eyes and ears of our nation's highways, truckers are uniquely positioned to make a difference and close loopholes to traffickers who seek to exploit our transportation system for personal gain. This site has been created to inform members of the trucking, bus, and energy industries and other travelers of the primary issues involved in human trafficking and a summary of ways to help. To watch the Truckers Against Trafficking Training Video (24 min), click [here](#).

RURAL OPIOID INITIATIVE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

To address the opioid crisis in rural America, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded what is collectively known as the Rural Opioid Initiative (ROI) Research Consortium. ROI consists of eight research teams centrally located in rural areas whose overarching aim is to help communities develop comprehensive approaches to prevent and treat outcomes related to substance use.



WEBINAR

RURAL JUSTICE AND REMOTE PROCEEDINGS

When used strategically, remote proceedings can help improve access to justice in rural communities, including reducing geographic barriers to attending court and improving access to attorneys. In this National Center for State Courts webinar moderated by Mark C. Palmer, Chief Counsel for the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, panelists discuss how courts are leveraging remote proceedings in rural areas.

RESEARCH & REPORTS

GREENING CRIMINAL LEGAL DESERTS IN RURAL TEXAS

Texas' rural communities urgently need more prosecutors and public defense providers. On average, Texas' most urban areas have 28 lawyers for every 100 criminal cases, but rural areas only have five. Many rural prosecutor's offices cannot recruit and retain enough staff. This policy brief from the [Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center](#) outlines three solutions to recruit more criminal lawyers to serve rural Texans: Educational pipelines, financial incentives, and rural public defender offices. Rural Texans deserve the same constitutional protections as their urban and suburban counterparts. With strong recruitment strategies, targeted incentive programs, and new rural defender offices, Texas can green its criminal law deserts.

RURAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

This [chapter](#) from *Transforming Criminal Justice* describes how geographic isolation, small scale, and professional scarcity ripple across rural criminal justice systems and reach far beyond any courthouse door. The authors call upon funders to invest in rural justice research, create stable and secure rural justice funding, and guarantee the availability of rural criminal lawyers and judges.

MOBILE RV CLINIC SUCCESSFULLY TREATS OPIOID USE DISORDER IN RURAL AREAS

For the study, researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine reconfigured an RV into a traveling treatment center for opioid use disorder. The RV could treat people on a walk-in basis or through a prescheduled appointment. After a person completed the initial evaluation, they received a prescription for naloxone or buprenorphine sent directly to their local pharmacy. The mobile telemedicine center staff also helped coordinate the patients' follow-up visits, which could take place on the RV. The study found this innovative approach was as successful as conventional treatment clinics. The full study can be found [here](#).

TELEHEALTH FOR THE TREATMENT OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

This guide from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reviews ways that telehealth modalities can be used to provide treatment for serious mental illness and substance use disorders among adults, distills the research into recommendations for practice, and provides examples of how these recommendations can be implemented.

STRATEGIES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES FOR ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE MISUSE AMONG FAMILIES INVOLVED WITH THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

This report from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) describes nine programs and highlights ways they have addressed challenges to serving child welfare-involved parents with substance use issues, with a particular focus on rural communities. Programs offered various types of services, including parent mentoring, case management, home visiting, treatment for opioid use disorders, and an array of substance use disorder treatment and family services. Program leaders offer several considerations for expanding or replicating programs in rural communities.

RURAL RESOURCE GUIDE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND RECOVERY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

This resource guide developed by the Housing Assistance Council is designed to assist housing practitioners seeking to provide homes to those affected by substance use and opioid use disorders. The guide provides a clear and specific overview of the federal regulations related to housing people with substance use disorders. An overview of the resource guide and a discussion of the intersection of affordable housing and recovery can be watched online [here](#).