



## JUSTICE PROGRAMS OFFICE SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November 2017



### Right to Counsel National Consortium Third Annual Meeting

On November 2, criminal justice experts, practitioners, and advocates joined the Justice Programs Office (JPO) at the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs for the third annual meeting of the Right to Counsel (R2C) National Consortium. The meeting's purpose was to celebrate R2C consortium member successes and think collectively about how to overcome the challenges preventing the Sixth Amendment right to counsel from being upheld.

The day began with [keynote remarks](#) from Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein who stated, "Protecting the right to counsel is a fundamental component of preserving the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice," and went on to reflect that, "Being a criminal defender can be a thankless job [...] It means struggling to mount the best defense possible in the face of great adversity. But, as our nation's founders knew, this role is essential to safeguarding justice."

Following the Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein, the R2C National Consortium shared highlights of the work done on behalf of the R2C National Campaign since the last meeting, and consortium members gave panel presentations on state and local accomplishments in Contra Costa, California, and Tennessee.

With the intention of further raising awareness about the unique role each stakeholder in addition to public defenders can play in securing the right to counsel, there followed

fireside chats with law enforcement, prosecutors, cross-discipline actors, and an impacted community member, who shared a harrowing, inspirational, and deeply personal story of how the justice system failed her before a well-trained and well-resourced public defender helped her turn everything around.

After the fireside chats, meeting participants broke into cross-disciplinary teams for a facilitated workshop. This breakout session provided an opportunity for groups that rarely engage with each other to take part in robust conversations and share their perspectives on how they individually can safeguard the constitutional right to counsel and reform public defense systems.

The day concluded with participants sharing their groups' perspectives on how court systems are operating in ways that are inconsistent with or fall short of what justice demands, what the pressures and external influences are that cause this, what the criminal justice system would be like if it lived up to our core values, and, finally, what they as stakeholders can do to chip away at these obstacles.

The meeting concluded with a representative from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) introducing new BJA tools to assist the field in carrying out the work of the R2C National Campaign and sharing a new initiative to support strategic planning and technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions to ensure the obligations of the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

When the meeting adjourned, the consensus was clear – it had been an informative, inspiring, and productive day with every speaker and participant making a fresh personal commitment to continue working toward our common goal: ensuring that the Sixth Amendment right to effective counsel is meaningfully carried out. We each have a role to play in achieving the change the criminal justice system needs.

**We at JPO would like to take this opportunity to thank all speakers, participants, and those who followed along with #Right2Counsel for a successful meeting and a great day!**



*Maha Jweied, Acting Director, Office for Access to Justice, U.S. Department of Justice; Priya Sarathy-Jones, Policy Advisor, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice; Genevieve Citrin Ray, Senior Program Associate and Project Director, Justice Programs Office, American University; Zoë Root, Senior Policy Counsel, Justice Programs Office, American University*

## **New Episode of *On the Docket with the NDCRC***

The final episode of [\*On the Docket with the National Drug Court Resource Center\*](#)'s three-part series on family treatment courts is now available! In it we sit

down with Teresa Anderson-Harper, a graduate of the King County Family Treatment Court, to get the participant perspective on these programs.

Download it now to hear what it was like to go through the process of a family treatment court and learn about the different supports that both the court and personal networks provided Teresa. Teresa also shares with us her advice to practitioners working in the family treatment court setting and to families looking for help.

On the latest episode of  
*On the Docket with NDCRC*

**"We don't heal on timelines.  
We heal when we feel safe so  
that we can open up and do  
the work."**

Teresa Anderson-Harper  
Family Treatment Court graduate

National Drug Court  
Resource Center

Episodes are available in the [iTunes Podcast Store](#). For more information, visit the [NDCRC website](#).

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## Catching Up with JDTC TTA

As part of the [Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Training and Technical Assistance](#) (JDTC TTA) [Initiative](#)'s mission to provide technical assistance to juvenile drug court practitioners, JDTC TTA staff members attend professional conferences to educate and engage with the juvenile justice field. Last month **Anna Koozmin** and **Zoë Root** presented at the [Ohio Annual Specialized Dockets Conference](#) in Columbus, Ohio, and the [Washington State Juvenile Drug Court Conference](#) in Seattle, respectively.

Anna's presentation on behalf of JDTC TTA induced a lively and interactive discussion with Ohio JDTCs about the new [JDTC Guidelines](#). Teams discussed goals and action steps they could take to implement each guideline. Zoë also led a reflection on each set of *Guidelines*, grouped by objective, with the JDTC teams in Washington.

Catch Anna at the next presentation for the JDTC TTA Initiative in Lansing, Michigan, on November 28!

Visit [the JDTC TTA website](#) to learn more.

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## Supporting State Efforts to Reduce Violent Crime

JPO will hold meetings in Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Newark this coming December and January to assist state and local stakeholders in coordinating their efforts to reduce violent crime.

JPO staff will provide training and technical assistance (TTA) to representatives from each locality, including state and local police, state administering agencies, representatives from governors' offices, state corrections departments, and the U.S. Department of Justice's National Public Safety Partnership. This TTA ranges from helping them coordinate grant application efforts and share data for better support of policing efforts to assisting them in developing strong local stakeholder partnerships.

These TTA roundtables will be led by **Director Kim Ball**, **Senior Program Associate Genevieve Citrin Ray**, **JPO Practitioner in Residence and Director of The Justice in Government Project Karen Lash**, and **Associate Director Tracy Velázquez** in Newark, New Orleans, Compton, and Milwaukee respectively.

JPO's work on supporting violence reduction began with a group of eleven cities from across the country meeting in Long Beach, California, on August 2. After the meeting, Newark, New Orleans, and Milwaukee applied for the additional assistance from JPO.

This work is funded by a Bureau of Justice Assistance State Administering Agencies Technical Assistance Project grant, which allows JPO to provide training and technical support to state administering agencies to increase their knowledge and capacity to administer federal grant money.

To learn more about JPO's work with state administering agencies or to request training and technical assistance from JPO, [visit our website](#).



## First OSF African Symposium on Legal Empowerment

The UN estimates that up to four billion people globally live outside the protection of the law. This lack of access to law disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable. That's why in 2016, the Open Society Foundations (OSF) launched an 11 country initiative, [the Legal Empowerment Shared Framework](#), to develop, institutionalize, and implement policy frameworks that respond to the unmet justice needs of the poor and marginalized by scaling community-based justice services to a sustainable, national level.

Between October 29-November 2, **Karen Lash, JPO Practitioner-in-Residence and Director of [The Justice in Government Project](#)** (JGP),

and OSF grantee, attended the first OSF Africa Symposium on Legal Empowerment in Johannesburg, South Africa. She joined representatives from Indonesia, Kenya, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ukraine, and the United States, to discuss institutionalization of community justice services, including success and challenges, technology for scale and advocacy, and innovative sustainability models based on experiences across the African continent.

Karen presented about JGP's efforts to partner with government policymakers to identify those anti-poverty programs that could be more effective, efficient, and produce better results by including civil legal services and self-help tools among the services provided.

To learn more about The Justice in Government Project, [visit our website](#).

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*The Justice Programs Office (JPO), under the School of Public Affairs at American University, is pleased to present its monthly newsletter. Our current initiatives include the National Drug Court Resource, Policy, and Evidence-Based Practice Center, the Right to Counsel (R2C) National Campaign, the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Training and Technical Assistance Initiative, and Training and Technical Assistance for State Administering Agencies. Please forward this newsletter to your colleagues and partners in the field. If you have been forwarded this email but would like to receive it directly, email [justice@american.edu](mailto:justice@american.edu).*

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