



News for Immediate Release

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Federal Recovery Act Funds Available to Train Professionals on Mental Health Procedures Act

Effort to Provide Uniform Guidelines, Systematic Training Statewide

Harrisburg – Approximately \$500,000 is available in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to support a specialized training curriculum on the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976 for judges, law enforcement, psychologists, social workers and other professionals in the criminal justice system.

The law was enacted to protect an individual's right to freedom from unnecessary institutionalization, ensure that mental health treatment is provided in the least restrictive environment possible, and to facilitate an individual's timely movement through the legal system.

The funding, announced by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, will be awarded on a competitive basis to an eligible applicant to provide training under the act's provisions.

The curriculum must include specific procedures and evidence-based practices for special populations, such as minor children and individuals who may have a brain injury or intellectual disability, and it must include alternatives to court-ordered treatment. It must also contain provisions that guarantee an individual's rights, including the right to legal representation.

Systematic and statewide training on the Mental Health Procedures Act has not been available for many years in Pennsylvania, and no uniform guidelines or specialty training requirements have been established. This has led to a lack of uniformity across the state in interpreting and enforcing its provisions.

More information on how to apply, including eligibility requirements and special conditions, is available at www.pccd.state.pa.us by clicking "Grant Opportunities," then, "Funding." Applications must be received through PCCD's Egrants system by Monday, July 19.

As the state's lead agency for criminal justice policy issues, PCCD works to prevent and reduce crime and respond to the needs of victims. PCCD collaborates with state and local agencies and officials, victim service providers, juvenile and criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations and others to achieve those goals.

More information about how Recovery Act funds are being used to benefit people, businesses and communities across the state is available online at:
www.recovery.state.pa.us.

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