Request for Proposals

Training and Technical Assistance Opportunity for Tribal, State, and Local Governments to Develop a Collaborative Joint Jurisdictional Court Initiative

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Proposals Due: December 20, 2013 by 5:00 p.m. PT
Selection Announcement: January 31, 2014
Project Period: February 2014 through September 2014

Eligibility: Applications must be jointly submitted by a representative from both a federally-recognized Indian Tribe and a local or state government authority

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2012-IC-BX-K003 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.
PURPOSE

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Court and the Cass and Itasca County District Courts in Minnesota have successfully operated joint-jurisdiction Wellness Courts for the past seven years. Not only have the courts reduced recidivism by chronic alcohol and drug offenders and thus improved public safety, the courts have contributed to generally improved relationships between the Indian tribe and local governments. The purpose of this initiative is to help another community create a successful joint-jurisdiction, justice-related collaboration between a tribal and local government. The goal is to improve client outcomes, make more effective use of resources, and build a long-term sustainable relationship between tribal and other government authorities. The Together Everybody Achieves More (TEAM) Project staff will draw on their experience with the successful Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe-Cass and Itasca County, Minnesota programs to help one site develop and implement a joint-jurisdiction court or justice initiative.

BACKGROUND

Tribal governments and state and local governments share common problems and there has been much discussion of the benefits of working together to address difficult issues. Walking on Common Ground has spent 20 years developing resources and materials for cooperative projects and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), have supported cooperation as well, through the provision of training, technical assistance, and grant-funded opportunities. Despite this support, the challenges of jurisdictional complexity, lack of cultural understanding, and a history of historical trauma, discrimination, and distrust have prevented many partnerships from getting off the ground.

The TEAM Project has been funded by BJA to assist a federally-recognized Indian tribe and a state or local government partner with developing a joint-jurisdiction collaborative initiative in the courts or criminal justice system. The TEAM Project will use the partnership between the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the Cass County and Itasca County, Minnesota court systems as a model.

In 2006, Judge John Smith of Cass County and Judge Korey Wahwassuck from Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe joined together to combat impaired driving and substance-use related crime in their community by creating a joint-jurisdiction Wellness Court. The court was successful in reducing recidivism and improving public safety, and has also contributed to improved relations between the Tribe and the local communities. Other justice-related collaborations have since been formed, such as a juvenile reentry program. The Cass County-Leech Lake Wellness Court has won several national and international awards (Harvard University Honoring Nations Award; National Association of Drug Court Professionals Award; and National Criminal Justice
Association Award, among others), and both Judge Smith and Judge Wahwassuck are frequently asked to consult on the creation of joint-jurisdiction projects.

Judges Wahwassuck and Smith are members of the TEAM Project and are joined by Jennifer Fahey, JD, a former prosecutor with experience creating a joint tribal-local court sentencing circle collaboration; Scott Warnick, JD, Deputy Director at the Center for Evidence-based Policy (CEbP); and Allison Leof, PhD, a senior policy analyst and project manager who will be coordinating the project through the CEbP at Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU). Full biographies of the Project TEAM staff can be found on the project website.

**GOAL**

The goal of the TEAM Project is to create and implement a program that will improve client outcomes, build relationships between tribal and state and local governments, and make more effective use of resources. In the first stage of the project, one site will be selected to receive onsite assistance from TEAM members in their community during three separate site visits. TEAM members will provide a collaboration manual and will work with tribal and local government partners to design and develop a specific program.

Tribal and state or local government agencies that are interested in building a joint-jurisdiction, justice-related project are encouraged to apply. Eligible projects include:

- Wellness courts, mental health courts, veterans court, or other diversion programs
- Alternative sentencing models including sentencing circles
- Juvenile justice reform programs
- Collaborative supervision/reentry programs

Other projects that involve creating a joint-jurisdiction court or justice program involving both tribal and other governments will be considered.

**PROJECT DETAILS**

One site will be selected to receive the TEAM Project services through a competitive process. Applicants will be asked to submit a written application responding to five questions. Applicants who meet the basic minimum requirements (score 50 points out of 70 possible points; see below for details) will proceed to the semifinalist stage. Semifinalists will complete a 15-minute email survey assessing readiness for collaboration and participate in a phone interview with TEAM staff worth a total of 30 points. Details on the application process are provided below. Applications are due December 20, 2013. Final selection will take place by January 31, 2014 and planning will begin immediately.
The project will involve three onsite, facilitated two-to-three day meetings in May, July, and September 2014. The first meeting will focus on building relationships, identifying and prioritizing goals and challenges, and developing a sense of shared values and mission. The second meeting will focus on the development of a structure for how to work together, including formal agreements, role clarification, and resource commitment. During the third meeting, participants will finalize details for achieving their goals, including work and communication plans, and measurable performance objectives and data collection.

**ELIGIBILITY**

The proposed collaboration must be between a federally recognized Indian tribe and a state or local government agency. Although one goal of the initiative is to develop new relationships, it is expected that applicants will have a specific project in mind and have identified leaders from both the tribe and local governments. Both parties must demonstrate a willingness to work together to develop a joint-jurisdiction partnership and must have approval from appropriate authorities to pursue the project.

**FUNDING**

This is a training and technical assistance opportunity and does not come with direct funding for the site selected. TEAM staff anticipates, however, that the work completed through the project will provide recipients with a strong strategy, program implementation tools, and a sustainability plan. These resources could then be used to develop grant applications for funding.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS**

To apply, applicants must submit an application via email attachment. The application must include the following information:

- Designated leaders for both the tribal and state or local government bodies. Examples of designated leaders can include judges, elected/appointed officials, or department heads. Please include a name and full contact information for the tribal and local government designated leaders. The TEAM Project staff will contact these leaders during the interview process to confirm their commitment to the project, if the application proceeds to the semifinalist stage.
- A statement from both leaders explaining their commitment to the project.
- A description of the problem the partners seek to solve through a joint-jurisdiction partnership.
- A description of the proposed joint-jurisdiction project.
● A list of proposed participants to participate in facilitated onsite meetings by name or role (e.g., parole officers, the court clerk, etc.). Applicants are expected to show widespread support for the proposed project and a willingness or ability of participants to participate in the onsite meetings.
● Background on any previous collaboration between tribe and local authority and general discussion of the relationship between tribe and local government partners.

The application form is available on the TEAM Project website. Applications may be prepared in Microsoft Word® or .pdf format and should be submitted via email attachment to leof@ohsu.edu. Applications may be no more than seven pages in length and should be in 12-point font.

**SELECTION CRITERIA and PROCESS**

Applications are due on December 20, 2013 and TEAM staff will begin the review process immediately, beginning with an initial screening of applications and a full review of the applications followed by a final conference call with semifinalist applicants. Application will be evaluated based on the response to the following criteria:

1. Identification of leaders from both tribal and state or local jurisdiction and statement of commitment from leaders—20 points out of 100

   Success of this project will be determined at least in part by the strength of leadership and the degree of commitment from these leaders. Applications must identify a leader from both the tribe and local government. Examples of designated leaders can include judges, elected/appointed officials, or department heads. Please include a name and full contact information for the designated tribal and local government leaders.

   Leaders must also submit a statement of commitment where they describe their role in the project and describe the resources and abilities they will bring to the collaboration. Leaders must specifically state their willingness to commit time and staff to the three onsite meetings in May, July, and September 2014.

2. Description of the problem—10 points out of 100

   The description includes: A) a clear and compelling description of the problem faced by the community; and B) how it affects both the tribal and non-tribal population.

3. A description of the proposed joint collaboration—20 points out of 100

   A clear outline of what the proposed collaboration will look like, what the goals and objectives of the project are, and what roles participants will play. Include information
on what factors will encourage project success and what potential barriers or challenges to implementation exist.

4. A list of proposed participants—10 points out of 100

Collaborations do better when support is broadly based and widespread and we will be looking for balanced participation from both tribal and local jurisdiction representative to the degree possible. Where possible, please identify participants by name and provide contact information. If recruitment is ongoing, projected participants may be identified by role (e.g., parole officer).

5. Background on the existing tribal—local community relationship as well as information on any existing or past collaborations—10 points out of 100.

Please include a general discussion of the tribal and local community relationship and how the state of the relationship may affect the project or be affected by it. Describe any existing or past collaborative efforts and what happened during those projects.

6. The interview and assessment portion of the selection process will be worth 30 points out of 100.

The two-step review process of applications includes:

1) Initial Review of Applications

After the applications are received, an initial screening of these applications will be conducted using the above criteria. If an application scores above 50 points out of 70 based on the first five criteria above, the application will be forwarded for full TEAM Project staff review.

2) Secondary Review of Applications Followed by Conference Call with Semifinalists

The applications will then be reviewed by the full TEAM Project staff using the first five criteria above. The five top-scoring applications will be designated semifinalists. TEAM staff will contact the designated tribal and local leaders from the semifinalist applications for a phone interview and evaluation process. Designated leaders from semifinalist applications will be asked to complete the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (a 15-minute survey) to assess the available resources and challenges for collaboration. During the phone interview, TEAM staff will measure commitment and availability of resources for success. The interview and assessment portion of the selection process will be worth 30 points out of 100. Phone interviews will take place during the week of January 20-24, 2014.
All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the concept paper review process by January 31, 2014.

**HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION**

Applications are available on the TEAM Project [website](#). Applications should be submitted in Microsoft Word® or .pdf format to leof@ohsu.edu. Applications are due on December 20, 2013 by 5:00 p.m. PT. Only one application per project will be accepted.

**CONTACT**

For further information, please contact Allison Leof at leof@ohsu.edu or (503) 494-3805.