

"[DPA] Social Workers provide much needed support and expertise to judges, attorneys, the defendants and their families."

The Drug Factor - Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet's Office of Drug Control Policy newsletter



Left to Right: Becky Gary (Hopkinsville), Kita Clement (Bowling Green), Sarah Johnson (Morehead), Heather Bartley (Pikeville), Jessica Dial (Columbia), LeAnne Garland (Paducah), Rena Richardson (Madisonville), Joanne Sizemore (London). Not pictured: Abena Amoah (Covington)

Social Workers

DPA's Alternative Sentencing Social Worker Program Receives National Award



Ed Monahan accepts the National Criminal Justice Association's 2011 Criminal Justice Program Award for the Southern Region from Kristen Mahoney, President of the National Criminal Justice Association.

The National Criminal Justice Association honored the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy Alternative Sentencing Social Worker Program with its 2011 Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award for the Southern Region. The NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards are given out annually at the National Forum on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Secretary of the KY Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, J. Michael Brown praised the program, "the DPA Alternative Sentencing Social Worker Program has shown itself to be an important tool for the criminal justice system, by guiding offenders into effective treatment programs, and ultimately reducing recidivism and decreasing incarceration costs."

Social Workers Offer Sentencing Courts Options

DPA social workers develop and present evidence-based, individualized, alternative sentencing plans to the court as options to avoid incarceration. Persons who would normally be jailed or imprisoned instead serve their sentence in treatment in the community with more effective and less costly outcomes. DPA represents the vast majority of criminal defendants in the state and is particularly well suited to lead a collaborative effort to create plans for adults and juveniles with mental illness or substance abuse problems.

DPA social workers do what others cannot do:

- Use motivational interviewing within the attorney-client privilege, increasing changed client behavior
- Improve coordination and cooperation among criminal justice agencies and treatment providers
- Intervene early for a more efficient resolution that increases the likelihood of pretrial release or probation
- Understand substance abuse, mental illness, and the undeveloped minds of juveniles

Judges and prosecutors support this program because:

- Sentencing options are provided
- Plans address underlying causes of the criminal behavior
- Clients' motivation for compliance with treatment plans increase

Jail and prison costs are saved:

Each social worker has saved 10,000 days of incarceration and more than \$100,000 in jail and prison costs according to an independent study done by the University Of Louisville Kent School Of Social Work.

The Council of State Governments Recognized DPA's Social Worker Program:

Kentucky's use of federal funding for the DPA social worker program to create evidence-based sentencing options was noted as an innovative way to use USDOJ money in the Council of State Government's July/August 2010 Capitol Ideas publication.

Office	# of Clients referred	# of Alternative plans presented to Judge	# of Alternative plans accepted by Judge
Hopkinsville	59	59	52
Pikeville	102	81	68
Covington	74	52	41
Columbia	48	43	27
London	96	38	20
Bowling Green	135	90	80
Owensboro	181	79	68
Madisonville	95	7	5
Morehead	96	96	76
Paducah	209	77	33

More Savings are Possible

An additional \$3.8 million investment over the biennium in DPA's alternative sentencing social workers will pay for itself and conservatively produce an additional \$5.3 million over the biennium in jail and prison savings.

For more information, see dpa.ky.gov/sw.htm for a video of two clients who have benefited from this program and hear what a judge, prosecutor, and probation and parole officer have to say about it.

