

McLean County awarded U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance – Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant

Earlier this year, consistent with McLean County's participation in the White House-National Association of Counties(NACO) Data Driven Justice Initiative and with the support of the McLean County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the McLean County Behavioral Health Coordinating Council and community partners including the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, McLean County applied for a Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice-Bureau of Justice Assistance.

McLean County has been notified that it has been awarded a grant totaling \$215,596 to build upon previous community work in developing an integrated comprehensive approach to improving community response to behavioral health issues. The overarching goal of the project is to decrease criminal justice involvement of those with mental health disorders by providing additional training to first responders and related service providers in McLean County over a 36-month grant. McLean County will work with local justice and health partners to create and implement strategic policies/protocols to improve systemic and individual responses to mental health crisis situations so that justice involvement is decreased. This project hopes to:

Improve understanding of the existing intersection of the criminal justice and behavioral health systems in McLean County, and each agency's responsibility in improving the systemic response to mental health crises.

Improve response to justice involved persons with mental health disorders through evidence-based training of law enforcement first responders, emergency responders, correctional staff, and other crisis related staff.

Improve behavioral health and criminal justice collaborations through data driven solutions.

In 2013, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) studied McLean County's criminal justice and behavioral health systems. They noted a direct connection between deficiencies in the coordination of behavioral health system and the increase in jail detainees with behavioral health issues. Since then, McLean County has worked to address provisions for post-arrest mentally ill offenders and identify avenues to decrease the number of mentally ill who enter the criminal justice system. By utilizing practices developed in concert with the Data Driven Justice Initiative, this project strives to intercept

individuals at the earliest point possible and directing them toward community treatment rather than incarceration

For Additional information, Contact:

McLean County Administrator's Office

Government Center, RM 401

115 E. Washington St.

Bloomington, IL 61701

PH (309) 888-5110