

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
PENNSYLVANIA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2021

The Honorable Kristen Mahoney
Acting Director; Deputy Director for Programs
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531

Dear Acting Director Mahoney,

I write in support of the application by the Washington County, Pennsylvania, District Attorney's Office for the Bureau of Justice Assistance Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-Based Program. I urge you to give this proposal full and fair consideration.

It is my understanding that Washington County has one of the highest opioid overdose death rates in the country at 36 deaths per 100,000, and the majority (89.33%) are linked to fentanyl in the illicit drug supply. I am informed that the Washington County District Attorney's office has a partnership with University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) and an Overdoses Fatality Review Team (OFRT) to evaluate each death and its contributing factors. Findings indicate that the earliest point of intervention for individuals was their contact with the criminal justice system at the time of their first DUI, and a significant number of overdose deaths were individuals with one DUI. Simultaneously, drug related DUIs are rapidly increasing in the county. There is significant evidence to prove that improving the offender's access to and connection with treatment resources is known to reduce overdose rates, through strategically implemented law enforcement-involved diversion programs.

Washington County is seeking \$900,000 through Category 1b of the BJA FY21 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program. As it appears, this funding will support its multi-partners program to target low level DUI drug offenders by providing intense follow-up, assessment and treatment services, including blood-testing and drug-trend data analyses, and staff training that will benefit the work of our law enforcement community. The applicants state that the overall goal of this proposal is to reduce opioid use and supply, overdose deaths, and improve the public health of Washington County through a non-conviction diversionary program that involves law enforcement assistance to identify and help those who need treatment.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, I also

respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6581.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator