

► External Funding Support to Lead Change

Every Court Leader Should Know

For many State and Local Courts, pursuit of external funding is not a core disciplinary competency and may feel overwhelming. If unsure where or how to start, draw upon existing relationships with governmental, university, or not-for-profit allies as willing partners, equally invested in thriving communities, and often willing to share their knowledge and expertise. Drawing from our [Building Relationships to Lead Change Leadership](#) brief, “as we seek to improve our court and community response to mental health and co-occurring disorders, we will draw motivation, strengthen partnerships, and achieve goals through our relationships and engaging our resources.”

PURPOSE (THEORY OF CHANGE)

Seeking external funding to support Leading Change efforts is a focused opportunity to promote court driven solutions to complex social issues. Regardless of success in securing external funding support, convening justice partners around a shared goal and interest is a valuable process that strengthens justice partner relationships.

APPLICATION

External funding support for Leading Change efforts may be found at local, state, and/or federal levels. No matter the funder, the search for external funding support starts with developing a compelling impact statement with stakeholders and then conceptualizing what will be needed to make the program/project successful. Having these conversations and program/project development prior to identifying funding sources is crucial to develop what your court and community needs and not just developing a program because it fits a grant application.



Local, State and Federal Funding Opportunities

- ▶ Non-traditional Funding Partners
- ▶ Local Mental Health Authorities
- ▶ Community Foundations
- ▶ Private Foundations
- ▶ State Agencies
- ▶ State Medicaid Authorities
- ▶ Office of Justice Programs
- ▶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

EXAMPLE: Sample Program/Project is a cost-effective solution resulting in reduced recidivism and increased public safety.

The ability to articulate beneficial systemic and community impact will help expand funding possibilities beyond traditional sources of criminal justice support. When identifying resources as potential local funding partners, banks, businesses, hospitals, foundations, and mental health authorities should be considered. For instance, a bank or business may provide in kind support from a community development perspective. A foundation may be interested in supporting programs that increase public health. A hospital system might fund substance use prevention and treatment efforts. Perhaps there is a local mental health authority established to support public health initiatives. While exploring these possibilities, networking, and cultivating relationships along the way helps you promote the court’s desire to produce positive change.

LEADING CHANGE TIP

Most State and Federal Funding Agencies provide opportunities to sign up for communications when new funding opportunities are made available.

State funding varies dramatically across the country, and some states may be more involved than others in funding behavioral health programs and projects. However, Mandated by Congress, block grants are noncompetitive grants that provide funding for substance abuse and mental health services to all 50 states. Grantees use the block grant programs for prevention, treatment, recovery support, and other services to supplement Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance services.

Notably, all states also offer funding for behavioral health services through the Medicaid program, in conjunction with the federal government. Efforts to address behavioral health issues have been a focus in Medicaid in recent years. Federal law mandates Medicaid coverage of many behavioral health benefits and states may also cover additional optional behavioral health benefits. Even if Medicaid benefits do not fund specific justice related programs and projects, Medicaid can be leveraged as a payer of behavioral health services for eligible beneficiaries.

EXAMPLE: Many probation offices are now screening all probation clients for Medicaid with the goal of having as many people as possible receiving health insurance benefits.

Federal recognition of the court's role in improving public health and safety is expressed through numerous dedicated funding sources and opportunities. Federal funding outlets make funding available through competitive grant opportunities, allowing courts flexibility to collaborate with multiple criminal justice system components and community treatment and recovery providers.



LEADING CHANGE TIP

When possible, avoid the short-term funding trap. The goal is to make better use of existing resources and use any new resources to leverage better performance of all resources, rather than primarily focusing energy on a grant that might create a small program to serve a limited number of people.

Importance to Leading Change

External funding support allows courts to expand existing programs and/or create new projects to better serve justice-involved individuals with mental health and co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. The process of seeking and obtaining external funding support interlaces Leading Change guidance through building relationships, identifying, and collecting data, strategic planning, and promoting the change mentality to initiate solutions.

RESOURCES

DOJ: [DOJ Grants](#)

SAMHSA: [SAMHSA Grants](#)

OJP: [The Federal Funding Process: The First Steps to Applying, How to Prepare Now, & Other Considerations](#)

OJP: [Grants 101](#)

GRANTS.GOV: [Grantor Tools & Tips](#)

SJI: [SJI Grants](#)

