

# Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)

## Introduction

America's substance abuse crisis is a public safety and public health emergency that threatens the well-being of individuals who abuse drugs as well as their families, communities, and, ultimately, the nation. It impacts first responders, the criminal justice system, child welfare and foster care, behavioral health systems, and victim service providers. Supporting the field in addressing this epidemic is one of the U.S. Department of Justice's top priorities and, at the center of this response, is the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) **Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)**.

Originally developed as the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program (COAP) as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, the program's inaugural purpose was to provide financial and technical assistance to states, units of local government, and Indian tribal governments to plan, develop, and implement comprehensive efforts to identify, respond to, treat, and support those impacted by the opioid epidemic. In 2020, responding to upward trends in the abuse of other drugs and to advance efforts by the field in addressing the range of illicit substances (as well as opioids), BJA expanded and evolved COAP to **COSSAP**. This increased scope assists jurisdictions across the nation battling the persistence or reemergence of stimulants and other substances while keeping the cornerstone of the initiative the same: an emphasis on the force-multiplying power of partnership and collaboration across the public health, behavioral health, and public safety sectors. COSSAP reflects the tenets that a cross-system problem requires a cross-system strategy, and that these solutions are more likely to succeed when they are guided by communities themselves. A key resource for those communities—grantees and non-grantees alike—is the COSSAP Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program.

Since 2017, through its leadership of COAP/COSSAP, BJA has supported innovative work—from coast to coast, in large cities and rural America, in tribal lands and United States territories—by almost 300 site-based projects and demonstration sites. An additional cohort of over 100 site-based grants are expected to be awarded by early fall 2020.



## About COSSAP

### The goals of COSSAP are to:

- Promote public safety and support access to treatment and recovery services in the criminal justice system.
- Strengthen the collection and sharing of data across systems to understand and address the impact of illicit substance use and misuse.
- Align and maximize resources across systems and leverage diverse program funding.
- Prevent illicit substance use and misuse.

### COSSAP supports activities that:

- Divert nonviolent drug offenders from prosecution and connect individuals to substance abuse treatment services.
- Invest in a range of programs that involve partnerships between community-based behavioral health and the justice systems in lieu of jail.
- Provide access to evidence-based treatment in jails and prisons and support services upon reentry.
- Enhance peer recovery support services delivered by trained individuals with lived experience and expand access to recovery housing.
- Ensure that at-risk populations, as well as law enforcement and first responders, have access to naloxone.
- Support access to timely and accurate information about the drug environment and increase the capacity of communities to develop effective responses based on the data.
- Increase the use of linked data sets to improve knowledge of trends, respond rapidly to emerging drug trends, and focus resources on high-risk populations.
- Support action research within the COSSAP grant program and disseminate research findings to inform policy.
- Support collaboration and alignment between public health, public safety, and behavioral health systems to support effective responses to substance abuse and drug overdoses.
- Integrate the child welfare, public safety, and behavioral health system to facilitate access to effective services for children and families impacted by the substance abuse epidemic.
- Develop models to address the complex and variable nature of rural and tribal substance use and increasing treatment capacity.

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- Strengthen prescriber and dispenser utilization of PDMPs through outreach and training to understand the value and application of PDMP data, supporting data integration, and implementing procedures to increase the accuracy and timeliness of data.
- Implement education programs for prescribers on the risks of overprescribing, alternatives to opioids for acute pain, and recognizing the signs of addiction.
- Increase the capacity of law enforcement and other first responders, criminal justice professionals, and behavioral health providers to identify and effectively respond to individuals with substance use disorders.
- Support media campaigns to increase knowledge about opioids, stimulants, and other substances and the associated use and abuse risks.
- Integrate routine screening for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders into key points in the criminal justice system.

## In FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 combined:

- 136** grant awards supported increased access to naloxone.
- 146** grant awards established or expanded pre-arrest or post-arrest diversion programs for individuals who commit low level, nonviolent offenses. This includes establishing a coordinated multidisciplinary response team that includes law enforcement and other first responders, treatment providers, and/or peer recovery specialists.
- 161** grant awards established or expanded court-based or prosecutor-based programs for low-level, nonviolent offenders.
- 93** grant awards implemented or expanded evidence-based treatment in jails and prisons and support services upon reentry.
- 43** grant awards expanded models of public health, behavioral health, and public safety information sharing and collaboration at the state and local levels.
- 9** grant awards, cofunded by BJA and the Office for Victims of Crime, provided support for children impacted by the opioid epidemic to help children cope with trauma and build resiliency.

Building the evidence base for effective opioid, stimulant and other substance abuse interventions is a top priority for BJA. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of all COAP grantees in FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 included a research partner in their projects.

## Explore the COSSAP Resource Center

Visit the COSSAP Resource Center at [www.cossapresources.org](http://www.cossapresources.org) and check back often for updates! Access and explore:

- Profiles of COSSAP sites across the nation.
- Data visualization of grantees allowing exploration of projects by state, jurisdiction type, activity, partner, and area of focus.
- Descriptions of COSSAP demonstration projects, which strengthen our understanding of effective community responses to illicit substance use and misuse, expand adoption of effective practices and support innovation, and build capacity in those communities most impacted by substance use disorder.
- Information on peer-to-peer learning opportunities, including the COSSAP Peer Recovery Support Services Mentoring Initiative and the COSSAP Law Enforcement/First Responder Diversion and Referral Mentoring Initiative.
- Funding and TTA opportunities, including an online TTA request form and overviews of COSSAP TTA providers.
- Educational COSSAP materials, including newsletters, no-cost webinars, podcasts, printable fact sheets, and complementary resources from federal agencies and stakeholder partners.

## How to Request COSSAP TTA

The COSSAP TTA Program offers a centralized online system for requesting all forms of TTA (by grantees and non-grantees alike) through the completion of a brief online application form (<https://www.cossapresources.org/Program/TTA>). BJA reviews each submission to match the request with the COSSAP TTA provider (or team of providers) with the appropriate expertise. The process is provided to requestors free-of-charge.

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## About BJA

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) provides leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support local, state, and tribal law enforcement in achieving safer communities. To learn more about BJA, visit [www.bja.gov](http://www.bja.gov) and follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/DOJBJA](http://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA)) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.