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Georgia Receives an NCJA Outstanding Program Award for the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program

ATLANTA (August 11, 2017) — The Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), is pleased to announce that Georgia has been awarded a National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) Outstanding Program Award for the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program (JJIG). On August 2, 2017, Georgia juvenile justice leaders accepted the award during the Criminal Justice Forum on behalf of Governor Nathan Deal. The JJIG is operated by CJCC and the JJIG Funding Committee, but derives its success from the many partnerships and the hard work of local governments, courts, service providers, the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform, and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

In 2012, Governor Nathan Deal charged Georgia's Council on Criminal Justice Reform to study Georgia's juvenile justice system. The ensuing report found approximately 95 percent of youth in Georgia's secure juvenile facilities were in long-term placements and nearly two-thirds of the budget for DJJ was used to operate out-of-home facilities, which can cost more than \$90,000 per bed per year. Despite these expenditures, more than half of the youth in the juvenile justice system were re-adjudicated delinquent or convicted of a criminal offense within three years of release. Per the recommendations of the report, following the 2013 legislative session, Governor Deal signed into law House Bill 242, landmark legislation that would improve Georgia's juvenile justice system. At that time, Governor Deal and the Georgia General Assembly appropriated resources to CJCC for the purpose of creating the JJIG.

The goal of the JJIG was to create effective community-based programs as alternatives to out-of-home placements for juvenile offenders. By reserving out-of-home placements for serious, high-risk offenders and reinvesting savings into community evidence-based programs (EBPs), Georgia is able to increase public safety, reduce recidivism and promote positive relationships between youth, their families and their community.

The JJIG was implemented in late 2013, and provided 29 juvenile courts spanning 49 counties with grants to implement EBPs. Today the Grant serves counties housing over 60 percent of the at-risk population, and all other Georgia counties are eligible for EBPs through DJJ.

Since the JJIG was implemented, Georgia has reduced out-of-home placements by over 50% in Incentive Grant recipient counties compared to the 2012 baseline. During the first year of the JJIG, 1,122 youth were served through EBPs, and by the third year, the number of youth served had increased to 1,723 youth, for a total of 4,511 youth served in those three years. In addition, the overall graduation rate for youth in the JJIG program was 62 percent, with some EBPs seeing rates up to 85 percent.

Governor Nathan Deal was pleased to learn Georgia had received the award. "Georgia has achieved monumental success in juvenile justice reform in recent years and continues to lead the nation with meaningful criminal justice reform," Deal said. "This national honor is a reflection of not only our efforts this far but our unwavering commitment to increasing public safety for our state and our citizens through a more effective justice system."

Because of the many partnerships that have gone into building the JJIG and youth who have been positively impacted, Georgia was both honored and proud to accept an Outstanding Program Award from the NCJA.

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About Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC)

Created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1981 as an Executive Branch agency, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) represents the culmination of many efforts to establish a statewide body that would build consensus and unity among the State's diverse and interdependent, criminal justice system components. For more information visit the CJCC website: <https://cjcc.georgia.gov/>.

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