

FOUR NEW PILOT TRAUMA RECOVERY CENTERS WILL FILL NEED IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Acting to fill a need for comprehensive crime victim services within historically difficult-to-reach victim populations, the Attorney General's Office recently awarded approximately \$6 million in funding to establish four new Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) in underserved areas of New Jersey.

The four entities chosen to receive the funding include: Care Plus NJ, Inc., Paramus; University Hospital, Newark; Newark Community Street Team, Newark, and Jersey City Medical Center, Jersey City. The grant dollars are drawn from Fiscal Year 2019 federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.

Each of the four entities submitted successful applications for the grant funding, which Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced as available in November 2019. The funding was earmarked specifically to establish demonstration sites for the New Jersey Trauma Recovery Program. The grants will help fund the four TRCs for a two-year period - from April 1, 2020 through March 30, 2022.

The funded TRCs will provide comprehensive mental health and support services to aid the recovery of crime victims within some of New Jersey's most vulnerable populations.

Now more than ever, crime victims need protection - particularly those crime victims who lack access to the services they need most. The emotional and physical harms suffered by crime victims run deep, and in many cases linger long after the original crime.

In the aftermath of their victimization, many crime victims feel angry, paralyzed with fear, hopeless and overwhelmed. Many also may need continued medical care, safer housing, access to social services, and help navigating the criminal justice process as a victim.

Each of the four TRCs will provide treatment and support services that address these needs and more, with the ultimate goal of helping victims to heal, recover and, hopefully, regain a measure of control in their lives.

Under the grant criteria, each TRC must use the proven University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Trauma Recovery Center model.

The Attorney General's Office has secured the services of the founder of that model, Dr. Alicia Boccellari, Ph.D, Director of Special Programs at the UC San Francisco Trauma Recovery Center. Dr. Boccellari will provide training and technical assistance to the four

selected grantees. (Grant proposals for the TRC funding were reviewed by a trained panel of three health care professionals, all with extensive experience with the UCSF model.)

The TRC model recognizes that many crime victims do not receive the kind of comprehensive post-trauma services needed to address the emotional and physical harms they have suffered. That is particularly true, the model recognizes, when victims are members of such vulnerable populations as the homeless, people living in poverty, members of immigrant and refugee groups, LGBTQ people, people of color, the chronically mentally ill and juvenile victims, including those who have had contact with the juvenile justice system.

Key factors that distinguished the four successful grant applicants included previous experience in delivering trauma-related mental health services to survivors of violent crime from underserved communities, and a willingness to provide flexible, client-centered, innovative and comprehensive care to survivors.

Under program criteria, the four grant awardees must provide a staff of clinicians, including a clinical director, at least one social worker, at least one licensed psychologist, and at least one licensed psychiatrist (on staff or contracted.) These multi-disciplinary teams will engage in aggressive outreach to offer crime victims comprehensive services, with case management coordinated through a single point of contact.

The TRC model emphasizes an attitude of “cultural humility” on the part of Trauma Recovery Center staff, as well as an awareness that a victim’s culture and identity may affect his or her views on being a victim and receiving mental health treatment.

The four grantees will use the UC San Francisco Trauma Recovery Center Manual, which outlines the following Core Elements of the TRC, among others:

- **Assertive Outreach and Engagement with Underserved Populations.** Trauma Recovery Centers conduct outreach and provide services to survivors of violent crime who typically are unable to access traditional services, including the vulnerable populations listed above.
- **Serving Survivors of All Types of Violent Crime.** Trauma Recovery Centers serve survivors of a range of violent crimes, including sexual assault; domestic violence; battery; crimes of violence (shootings, gang violence, and other forms of community violence); vehicular assault; and human trafficking. They also serve family members of homicide victims.

- **Comprehensive Mental Health and Support Services.** Trauma Recovery Centers provide a variety of structured and evidence-based mental health and support services including, but not limited to, crisis intervention, individual and group treatment, medication management, substance abuse treatment, and case management.
- **Multidisciplinary Team of Clinicians.**
- **Clinical Case Management.** Assertive case management includes -- among other things -- accompanying clients to court proceedings and medical appointments; assistance in the filing of applications to the Victims of Crime Compensation Board; the filing of police reports; assistance with obtaining safe housing and financial entitlements; linkages to medical care; providing assistance in securing employment, and acting as liaison to other community agencies, law enforcement, and support service providers.
- **Use of Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based Practices.** Approved practices include, but are not limited to, Motivational Interviewing, Seeking Safety, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and Cognitive Processing Therapy.

The four new VOCA-funded TRCs will complement Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs and other victim services programs already established or being launched in New Jersey.