



Community Service Board of
Middle Georgia

PRESS RELEASE

July 23, 2024

Community Service Board of Middle Georgia Awarded Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Byrne Discretionary Grant

July 23, 2024 — The Community Service Board of Middle Georgia (CSBMG) proudly announces that we have been awarded a substantial grant under the FY 2024 OJP Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program. This award of \$1.356 million is designated to support the ***"CSBMG Behavioral Health & Overdose Reduction Initiative"*** – a new initiative that will enhance the agency's efforts in providing comprehensive substance abuse and behavioral health services, with particular focus on reducing overdoses, across our 16-county rural service area.

The funding is authorized under the 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 118-42). CSBMG, in partnership with a research team from Georgia Southern University and the University of North Florida, was invited to apply for a Congressional Direct Spending award (commonly referred to as an "earmark") and ultimately referred for inclusion in the current federal budget as a line item in the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program. The US Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) released a solicitation for pre-awardees and worked with CSBMG to apply to receive the designated funds and deliver the project as a standard US Office of Justice Program grant – a detailed process that ensures BJA can issue the funding award agreement, marking the final step before the funds are officially allocated and services delivery begin.

Dr. J. Mitchell Miller, a Presidential Professor at the University of North Florida and Faculty Affiliate with the National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Research Center (NYARRC), was instrumental in negotiation with our sponsoring Georgia senators and development of our winning proposal. In collaboration with Georgia Southern University Criminal Justice & Criminology faculty and Co-Director of the NYARRC Dr. Chad Posick, and University of North Florida Criminology & Criminal Justice Department Chair Dr. Brenda Vose, he will be actively involved in the project's implementation. Their collaboration and insights have been invaluable in securing this funding, which should significantly bolster our ongoing work with individuals in need of behavioral health services and support, particularly those with substance use/misuse challenges including individuals who are incarcerated. Under the oversight of CSBMG CEO Denise Forbes, the project team is engaged in a six-month final planning phase to ensure effective implementation and services alignment across the sixteen counties with treatment delivery set to start in the early spring of 2025.

These dollars afford additional opportunities to assist with prescription needs for incarcerated individuals as well as funding to address the needs of purchasing vital records and help meet clothing requirements necessary for the employment of those previously incarcerated. Community and school-based educational events as well as public service announcements and awareness campaigns will also be rolled out as part of this project.

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Our project title, "***CSBMG Behavioral Health & Overdose Reduction Initiative,***" reflects our commitment to addressing critical health challenges within our community. We look forward to collaborating with our community partners, law enforcement, and other recovery organizations as we continue to advance our mission in providing quality behavioral health services to those in need.