

Memo to the Grants Committee

Date: April 15, 2026

From: Liz Blackwell-Moore, Public Health Director

Subject: BJA COSSUP FY 2025 Grant Application — Due May 11, 2026

Overview

The U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has released the FY 2025 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with applications due May 11, 2026. The NOFO was released on a compressed timeline. Cumberland County Public Health (CCPH) is seeking Grants Committee endorsement and Board of Commissioners authorization to submit an application for \$1,300,000 over a 36-month project period (June 1, 2026–May 31, 2029).

Note on timing: While the official project period begins June 1, 2026, we anticipate the actual start date will be considerably later — likely Spring 2027 — consistent with typical BJA award timelines. This would align closely with the anticipated end of the County's current FY 2023 COSSUP award, allowing for a seamless continuation of this work.

Background

Cumberland County has been a COSSUP recipient since FY 2020, and the current grant remains active with a full evaluation underway. The program addresses a well-documented problem: drug-related arrests are the highest driver of recidivism and associated jail costs in Cumberland County. A recent recidivism analysis of Cumberland County Jail (CCJ) confirms that people who engage with services are significantly less likely to reoffend.

The current project created a Reentry Coordinator position to identify high-risk individuals at booking, track them through their jail stay, and connect them with services. What we learned is that managing this coordination across multiple agencies — jail medical, peer navigators, case managers, MOUD providers, and community reentry programs — is itself a full-time undertaking, separate from the work of designing and sustaining the underlying systems. Without investing in durable coordination infrastructure, the risk is that services will continue to fall short for the people who need them most.

Recent Accomplishments (Jan 1 – Jun 30, 2025)

Even while the full evaluation is still underway, the current COSSUP project achieved the following in just the first half of 2025:

- Hired a Reentry Coordinator
- Screened 1,493 individuals at jail booking for suspected SUD
- Linked 394 individuals to recovery support services in the jail (case management, peer support, peer navigation, or medications for opioid use disorder/MOUD)
- 56 individuals received case management services in the community post-release
- 33 individuals received peer navigation services in the community post-release
- 34 individuals received 1:1 peer recovery coaching in the community post-release

Proposed Project: COSSUP FY 2025 (2026–2029)

The overall goal of the project is to reduce overdoses and recidivism among people with SUD and co-occurring disorders at CCJ through coordinated screenings, assessments, and linkages to evidence-based care in the jail and community. This is a continuation of the current project with targeted quality improvements in two areas:

1. Full-Time Project Coordinator

The most significant addition in this grant cycle is a dedicated, full-time Project Coordinator housed at CCPH. The Reentry Coordinator position (created under the current grant) has demonstrated the high value of this coordination work — and also the limitation of a single role being responsible for both direct service coordination and systems-building simultaneously. The Project Coordinator will:

- Design, implement, and manage durable tools, protocols, and systems for cross-agency coordination serving people with SUD at CCJ
- Support the Reentry Coordinator so they can focus on direct service coordination with high-risk individuals
- Provide ongoing technical assistance to grant partners, including training, connections to resources, and professional development
- Lead all grant reporting, including data collection tool development, cross-agency data integration, and direct reporting to BJA — reducing this burden from partner agencies

2. Strengthened Coordination with Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Liaisons

A key quality improvement in this grant cycle is formalizing and deepening coordination between jail-based services and behavioral health liaisons embedded within local law enforcement agencies. These liaisons represent a critical bridge between initial law enforcement contact, diversion opportunities, and downstream jail and community services. The project will establish clear referral pathways, shared protocols, and regular coordination touchpoints between these liaisons and the CCPH-led reentry infrastructure.

Coordination Model

The project operates through the Cumberland County Behavioral Health and Justice Coalition, which convenes key stakeholders across the Sequential Intercept Model — from first responder deflection through reentry. Within CCJ, the model relies on systematic booking screening to identify individuals with suspected SUD, followed by warm referral and connection to in-jail services (MOUD, peer support, case management). Prior to and following release, peer navigators and reentry case managers bridge individuals to community-based treatment, housing, and recovery supports.

Funding

Total Request: \$1,300,000

Project Period: June 1, 2026 – May 31, 2029 (36 months; actual start anticipated Spring 2027)

Matching Funds: None required

Additional County Funding: None required

Application Deadline: May 11, 2026

This grant represents a significant opportunity to sustain and deepen life-saving work that is already producing meaningful results for Cumberland County residents and the County Jail system. CCPH recommends approval to proceed.