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Gov. Gregoire Announces Six Counties to Receive Juvenile Justice Reform Grants from MacArthur Foundation

Benton, Clark, Franklin, King, Pierce and Spokane counties to receive grants as part of a five-year, \$10 million investment in Washington by the Foundation

OLYMPIA – Governor Chris Gregoire today announced that six Washington counties will receive funding and technical support to improve juvenile justice systems, part of a five-year, \$10 million investment in the state under the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative. The six counties, which were selected in recognition of their innovative work in juvenile justice reform, are Benton, Clark, Franklin, King, Pierce and Spokane.

"Youth who end up in the juvenile justice system deserve opportunities for successful lives and a chance to succeed in the global economy. Models for Change will enable us to build on and accelerate the terrific work already underway in Washington," said Governor Gregoire. "We are one of only four states selected by the MacArthur Foundation to receive funding under this initiative and I am particularly proud that the Foundation is acknowledging work being done in both eastern and western Washington, in rural as well as urban counties."

Governor Gregoire was joined by Laurie R. Garduque, program director for the MacArthur Foundation, and Justice Bobbe Bridge, board president for the Center for Children & Youth Justice, the agency selected by the Foundation to coordinate the initiative in Washington.

"Few states can match Washington in terms of systematic commitment to improving juvenile justice," said Garduque. "MacArthur selected Washington because of its ongoing efforts and committed leadership at the state and local levels. Washington is a national leader in improving juvenile justice and we look forward to working with Governor Gregoire to realize lasting reform."

The counties were selected following a process that evaluated a number of criteria, including their commitment to juvenile justice reform, their record of collaborative relationships seeking policy change and improvement, the likelihood of achieving initiative goals and their potential as a bellwether for other parts of the state.

Reform efforts will focus on three areas:

- Reducing the disproportionate over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system;
- Reducing reliance on incarceration and increasing effective intervention options for youth engaging in problem behavior such as truancy, so that court intervention is truly the option of last resort; and
- Improving mental health screening, assessment and access to effective mental health services, to reduce the number of youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system because of untreated mental health needs.

Funding and technical assistance will also be used to help improve the quality of and access to public defense attorneys for juveniles; improve inter-system coordination and collaboration between the juvenile justice, child welfare and other related systems; and expand the number of juvenile courts using an approach known as ‘restorative justice’, where the community is involved in resolutions and there is an emphasis on accountability, competency development and individualized assessment.

MacArthur’s Models for Change initiative seeks to develop and support replicable, system-wide change that can serve as a model for other states to learn from and emulate. The four states selected are Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Washington. Fostering change in different states broadens understanding of success in different regions, making it easier to generalize the lessons learned and replicate progress nationwide. The initiative also provides grants to national organizations that together constitute a ‘national resource bank’ to provide selected sites with tools, training, technical and strategic assistance.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. Through the support it provides, the Foundation fosters the development of knowledge, nurtures individual creativity, strengthens institutions, helps improve public policy and provides information to the public, primarily through support for public interest media. With assets of over \$6 billion and grants totaling \$225 million annually, MacArthur is one of the nation’s largest private philanthropic foundations. For more information, please visit www.macfound.org.

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