

Justice for All: Effective Administration of Criminal Justice
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program BJA-2019-15252
NACDL Project Abstract

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The Sixth Amendment is the anchor of the American system of criminal justice, providing the protections which allow the adversarial process to achieve just outcomes, the tools that make it possible that an accused can meet the government's accusations, the timely disposition of cases, and a fair and impartial decision-maker. Meaningful access to these rights requires the participation of many stakeholders. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors must have time and resources to access, assess, and share information; the accused must be able to investigate, develop, and present their defense; and judges and court administrators must have the infrastructure to protect these rights.

Helping state and local governments effectuate the array of Sixth Amendment protections, requires a coalition of partners familiar with the specific needs of stakeholders, knowledgeable about legal issues and available resources, able to address the unique concerns of large urban centers and small rural communities, and having the capacity to deliver services quickly and reliably.

Awarded \$2,500,000 under Category 2, a partnership, led by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, with subgrantees the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, National Center for State Courts, and RTI, together will use their extensive experience and expertise to provide a holistic view of the issues, deliver of high-quality technical assistance, and produce informative, practical resources that can anchor systemic improvements. Focuses will include the rights to a speedy trial, impartial jury, access to evidence and witnesses, vanishing trials, and waivers of the right to counsel.

By providing on-demand technical and training assistance, curating an electronic library of current research and best practices, and creating webinars, e-learning modules, checklists, and model policies, the partnership will help professionals and the public understand and protect these critical rights.

Six jurisdictions will receive in-depth support to address specific challenges. The combination of criminal justice and research expertise of the proposed partnership will allow the assessment of a jurisdiction's overall functionality, the development and implementation of strategic plans to make needed changes, and the mechanisms to measure the efficacy of those changes. Utilizing action-research partnerships which engage a cross-section of stakeholders, these in-depth projects will create resources that can be used by other jurisdictions facing similar challenges.

The project will culminate with a national convening of a cross-section of system stakeholders to share the lessons learned and launch other efforts to ensure the core values of our adversarial system and the Sixth Amendment remain strong.