

Contact: Pam McKeown  
Telephone: (405) 522-5102  
ODMHSAS Office of Communications

Sept. 13, 2013

### **ODMHSAS Employees Named Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Fellows**

Two employees at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services have been selected as Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) Fellows.

Teresa Croom, state project director for Oklahoma Systems of Care, and Lorrie Byrum, senior data analyst, were selected based on a project called “The Oklahoma Bridge to Independence Network,” which is a joint project with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and the Office of Juvenile Affairs, designed to reduce the number of foster children who enter the juvenile and adult justice systems.

The three agencies plan to establish data-sharing agreements and implement data-sharing projects to improve programming at OJA and child welfare services. By sharing data, the agencies hope to determine what programs are most successful in diverting youth from the criminal justice system.

Other state agency employees selected as fellows for the project are John Ely, DHS assistant general counsel, and Connie Schlittler, director of the Office of Planning, Research and Statistics at DHS.

CJJR, based at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., advances a balanced, multi-systems approach to reducing juvenile delinquency that promotes positive child and youth development, while also holding youth accountable. The center works to focus the nation's juvenile justice and related systems of care on the key principles embodied in an evidence-based juvenile justice reform agenda, using a multi-systems approach.

The Oklahoma data-sharing project will be considered for the CJJR’s Capstone of the Year Award, which is given to the team that has made the most significant progress with youth in their communities.

###