



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present

Operation Helping Hand The Expansion to the Division of Criminal Justice

**October 5, 2023
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

**Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex
Advocacy Institute Conference Center
Fourth Floor, West Wing
25 Market Street, Trenton, New Jersey**

Program Summary

Operation Helping Hand (OHH), a grant funded initiative through the Office of Attorney General, is an innovative prosecutor-led program that connects individuals suffering from addiction with treatment, recovery and/or support services. OHH, which began in Bergen County as an arrest-based model, has expanded to include models that involve non-arrest outreach and connection to services, including the establishment of prosecutor-led Municipal Drug Court programs and law enforcement officers and peer recovery specialists, visiting individuals deemed most likely to overdose. In 2022, the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), with the support of State funds from NJ CARES, launched an OHH program that utilizes a mobile van to bring outreach services to opioid hotspots. A panel of experts will offer an overview of OHH, its expansion to DCJ, and best practices for law enforcement officers participating in OHH, including officer safety and interactions with individuals who are struggling with substance use disorders.

Eligibility

This program is open to attorneys, detectives, and administrative staff in the Division of Criminal Justice and county prosecutors' offices.

Faculty

DAG Kelly Levy is the Acting Director of the Office of the New Jersey Coordinator for Addiction Responses and Enforcement Strategies ("NJ CARES"). NJ CARES oversees addiction fighting efforts across the Department of Law & Public Safety and creates partnerships with other agencies

and groups that are committed to identifying and implementing solutions to the opioid crisis and drug addiction. DAG Levy joined NJ CARES shortly after its inception, and has worked on the administration and management of several law enforcement-led outreach efforts, including facilitating proactive collaboration between law enforcement officers and addiction professionals to link individuals suffering from substance use disorder with treatment services. She has also worked with the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to expand access to harm reduction services, including naloxone. Before joining NJ CARES, DAG Levy worked in the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor, where she investigated and prosecuted insurance fraud and other related offenses, and the Division of Law, where she represented the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in child abuse and neglect matters. She holds a B.A. from Hunter College and a J.D. from Rutgers-Newark School of Law.

Danielle LoRusso is the Statewide Chief Resiliency Officer. She oversees the resiliency program and provides training and resources to law enforcement officers who need assistance in coping with the daily stress of police work. Ms. LoRusso was also NJ CARES' first Operation Helping Hand Peer-to-Peer Learning Coordinator. She provided support to all New Jersey county OHH programs and trained law enforcement and OHH partners in understanding and addressing addiction and on best practices for implementing OHH. She began her employment with NJ CARES as a county coordinator for OHH, providing individualized assistance to county OHH programs throughout the State. Prior to joining NJ CARES, Ms. LoRusso was a Sergeant in the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office, where she developed the prosecutor's new Community Relations Unit and implemented and administered Operation Helping Hand as the unit's first supervisor. Before that, she worked in undercover narcotics, including assignment to the Camden Office of the DEA. She was also the Administrative Sergeant/Commander of the Gangs, Guns and Narcotics Task Force and a negotiator with the Gloucester County Special Weapons and Tactics Team. Ms. LoRusso holds an Associate's Degree from Gloucester County College.

Detective Cecil Boone is the Community Outreach Sergeant for the Division of Criminal Justice's newly formed Community Outreach Unit. He has over 25 years of law enforcement experience, which includes eight years as an undercover police officer for the Gun, Gangs and Drug Unit of the Division of Criminal Justice's Major Crimes Bureau. Throughout his career, Detective Boone has worked with law enforcement agencies to combat the effects of narcotics on New Jersey's communities. These agencies include Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the New Jersey State Police, the Social Security Administration and the United States Department of State. Detective Boone was previously assigned to the United States Customs Airport Narcotic Seizure Group, where he assisted in dismantling several high-profile international drug smuggling rings. Detective Boone earned his B.A. from Bucknell University and his Masters in Education from Seton Hall University.

Michele R. Schreffler-Perez, RCP is the Director of New Jersey State Police's Operation RISE (Recovery Initiative Support & Engagement). Operation RISE is a proactive deployment program that targets narcotics hot spot areas and at-risk individuals using the capabilities of the NJSP Drug Monitoring Initiative. Prior to developing this program, Director Schreffler-Perez served as a Recovery Coach Professional, Interventionist, Program Developer, and a Recovery Coach Trainer. In those roles, she created and implemented recovery support service programs in collaboration with law enforcement and other State agencies and institutions throughout New Jersey and across the nation. She began her executive management career in compounding pharmaceuticals specializing in chronic pain management delivery for patients dealing with pain and/or spasticity.

CLE Credit

NJ CLE Credit: This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 2.2 hours of total CLE credit.

PA CLE Credit: 1.5 Substantive Credits (\$3.00 mandatory registration fee required).

Registration

Those who are eligible to apply should use the registration link in the Program Announcement email.