MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than $24M Available to Fight Spread of COVID-19 in Prisons, Jails

Federal funding can help jurisdictions statewide reduce inmate populations during pandemic

LANSING, MI, April 16, 2020 – Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack today urged Michigan state and local government agencies to apply immediately for more than $24 million in emergency funding that has been made available to help with the criminal justice system's response to COVID-19 through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the resources can help minimize the impact of coronavirus within our state's prisons, jails and juvenile detention centers, including releases, diversion, electronic monitoring, and more.

"I commend local law enforcement for steps they have already taken to reduce jail populations, and this funding can help do even more to save lives," said Chief Justice McCormack, who co-chaired the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration "By taking advantage of this funding, we can save lives and keep our communities safe in both urban and rural areas."

"Using these funds to responsibly reduce the number of youth incarcerated in juvenile detention centers across the state will send a strong message that the criminal justice system in Michigan is taking common sense steps to safeguard them, as well as the professionals employed at these facilities," said Justice Elizabeth T. Clement, the MSC liaison on juvenile justice issues.

How much is available?
Cities, townships, and counties can apply for $8.4 million in funding (allocations range in size from $35,000 to $3,300,000, based on population). In addition, the state of Michigan is allocated just over $16 million for this purpose and would have to apply for the funding by May 29, 2020. The Michigan State Police is the entity that can draw down the state funds. For any localities that need assistance drawing down funds, the BJA offers a support hotline: 888-549-9901 (or GMS.HelpDesk@usdoj.gov). Find the application here.

What can the funding be used for?
Chief Justice McCormack said, "Because the spread of COVID-19 in a jail or juvenile detention setting is extremely difficult to manage, and places both officers and inmates at risk, we urge all agencies receiving these CARES Act funds to use a substantial portion to support home confinement, pretrial release, and other efforts to safely reduce jail populations."

The funds can be used for law enforcement and corrections to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. There are no specific prohibitions under the program and funds can be drawn down in advance or on a reimbursement basis.

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