



Colorado Judicial Branch
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**Three Colorado judicial districts to implement problem solving court model
for truancy dockets**
1st, 16th and 18th Judicial Districts receive grant funding for programs

DENVER – The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice and Colorado Judicial Branch recently awarded grant funds to three Colorado judicial districts to implement problem-solving court models for local truancy programs.

The initiative is tied to passage of HB 13-1021, which urges school districts to implement proven strategies to reduce truancy and keep students from facing court sanctions for missing school. The grants will fund year-long projects beginning May 1, 2014.

“Instead of punishing youth who become truant, we are encouraging communities to assess the youth’s and family’s needs and to involve community-based partner agencies to prevent future truancy,” said Jeanne Smith, Director of the Division of Criminal Justice.

Colorado recorded 346 truant youths who wound up in court-ordered detention during 2012, the most recent figure available.

“The Court is frequently seen as the last line of defense when it comes to re-engaging families and students to work together to ensure students remain in school,” said Jefferson County Magistrate Jamin Alabiso. “These grants will help bring additional resources to the table to help keep students in school and out of the courtroom.”

Grants were awarded to Colorado's 1st, 16th and 18th Judicial Districts. (Gilpin and Jefferson counties make up the 1st Judicial District; the 16th comprises Bent, Crowley and Otero counties; the 18th covers Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln counties.) Each grant provides up to \$70,000 in funding for each of two years.

The grants will allow each district to devise, implement and evaluate a problem-solving truancy court whose goals are to improve school attendance, improve academic performance and maintain improved attendance, behavior and academic performance.

In each project, individual students will receive personalized help and support. The programs will be based on problem-solving court models in which participants receive integrated and collaborative support while being supervised by the courts and held accountable for their actions.

Earlier this year, the Department of Criminal Justice funded two similar projects for schools in Pueblo and Durango. The Pueblo and Durango projects are designed to prevent truant youth from becoming involved in the court system. The new grants are designed to address issues among truant youth who have already become involved in the court system.

Colorado is home to 78 problem-solving courts operating in 20 of the state's 22 judicial districts. Such courts include adult and juvenile drug courts, family/dependency and neglect courts, DUI courts, adult and juvenile mental health courts and veteran trauma courts.