



NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

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NDAA Launches Community Engagement Initiative to Enhance Prosecutor-Led Programming and Trust Building

ARLINGTON, VA – Recognizing the leadership role prosecutors play in their communities and the decades of effort and resources invested into diversion, alternate disposition and rehabilitative programming and community engagement, today, the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) launched a Community Engagement Initiative to promote and assist jurisdictions in the replication of positive interactions between prosecutors and the communities they serve, while also enhancing community trust with law enforcement. The initiative will highlight successful prosecutor-led programs in communities across the country while fostering innovative practices, resource development and strategies to address barriers to successful relationship development. The launch aims to fulfill a key priority announced by newly sworn in NDAA President and Cumberland County (NC) District Attorney Billy West.

In Cumberland County, prosecutors, law enforcement and others in the court system have partnered on initiatives such as the Nation's second Human Trafficking Court, the Southeast's first Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program, North Carolina's first Veterans Court, the Gun Violence Task Force, Drug Court, Sobriety Court, an annual Expungement Clinic, and a Driver's License Restoration Program. These programs are just a sampling of programming led by a prosecutor's office and are a microcosm of networks of programming being led by prosecutors' offices of all sizes around the country.

"NDAA believes that America's prosecutors have led the development of partnerships with their community stakeholders to address upticks in violent crime while also advancing diversion programs, treatment courts, and alternative dispositions. Prosecutors believe that community engagement initiatives that provide a second chance and treatment for substance use and mental illness are an integral part of the role of the prosecutor in a modern criminal justice system and lead to a safer and healthier hometown," said West.

The Community Engagement Initiative will be led by New Hanover and Pender County (NC) District Attorney, Ben David, an experienced prosecutor with an extensive background in community engagement programming and efforts to bring together law enforcement and stakeholders in his community to solve challenges in a collaborative and effective manner. Through programming in his district, David has developed strong relationships that enhance trust within the community and ultimately support the equitable, efficient and fair administration of justice.

On the nexus between crime and community engagement David said, "The best way to fight crime is to build community. The NDAA is committed to the ideal that prosecutors are most effective when we work with others inside and outside the courtroom to achieve justice."

Formed in 1950, NDAA is the oldest and largest national organization representing state and local prosecutors in the country. The Association is a non-partisan, non-profit membership association that provides training, technical assistance and resources to prosecutors across the country. With more than 5,000 members, NDAA is recognized

as the leading source of national expertise on the prosecution function and is a valuable resource for the media, academia, government, and community leaders. NDAA's mission is to provide state and local prosecutors with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to ensure that justice is done and that public safety rights are protected.

Contact: Nelson Bunn, Executive Director, National District Attorneys Association (703) 519-1666

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