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**GLENN A. GRANT, J.A.D.**  
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts

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April 17, 2015

David J. Rosen  
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer  
Office of Legislative Services  
State House Annex  
P.O. Box 068  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0068

Subj: Responses to Follow-up Questions from April 9, 2015 Senate Budget  
and Appropriations Committee Meeting

Dear Mr. Rosen:

Please accept this letter in response to the April 10, 2015 letter from Senator Sarlo, Chair of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, following-up on the Judiciary's April 9, 2015 hearing before the Committee. The Judiciary's responses to the questions posed by Senator Barnes and Senator VanDrew are enclosed. Please contact me if the Committee would like any additional information on these or other subjects.

Sincerely,

  
Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.

Enclosures

Cc: Hon. Paul A. Sarlo, Committee Chair  
Catherine Z. Brennan, Office of Legislative Services  
Christopher Emigholz, Senate Republican Office  
George J. LeBlanc, Senate Democratic Office  
Steven D. Bonville, AOC Chief of Staff  
Deirdre M. Naughton, AOC Director  
Anne Raughley, Office of Legislative Services  
Howard K. Rotblat, Office of Legislative Services  
Amanda Von Leer, Senate Republican Office

**Questions Posed by Senator Barnes:**

**1. What is the annual savings for each inmate who is diverted from prison into the drug court program?**

**Response:** The annual saving for each inmate who is diverted from prison into the drug court program is approximately \$16,500. The total annual savings resulting from diverting defendants from prison into the drug court program was \$34,353,528 last year.

**2. Since the advent of the change from voluntary to mandatory drug court, has there been a change in the number of prosecutorial arguments against someone being entered into the drug court program? If so, have these arguments increased or decreased? By how much?**

**Response:** The majority of counties in which the mandatory drug court program is currently operating report no significant change in the number of prosecutorial arguments against an eligible-defendant being entered into the drug court program.

**Request Posed by Senator Van Drew:**

**Please provide information on how other jurisdictions beyond New Jersey are providing needed services such as housing assistance, mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment for veteran offenders. Please provide information on federal funding which may be available for veterans' programs in New Jersey.**

**Response:** The first "veteran's court" opened in Buffalo, New York in 2008. The veteran's court model is treatment based; substance abuse and/or mental health treatment is offered as an alternative to incarceration. There are typically four main aspects to the veteran's court model: (1) eligible veteran-defendants with clinically identified substance dependency and/or mental illness are identified by the prosecutor and agree to referral to the program, (2) specialized supervision caseloads are used to monitor the veteran-defendants compliance with treatment, (3) case management and treatment is provided by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs ("VA"), the state veterans' services department, and community-based treatment providers, and (4) veteran mentors who know and understand the unique culture, experiences, and needs of the veteran-defendants provide critical guidance and support.

In 2012, the Department of Veteran's Affairs conducted a survey, which revealed that veteran's treatment programs predominantly operate at the county or city jurisdictional level and rely heavily on available VA services. The VA does not fund or operate these programs, but without VA involvement, it is unlikely that these courts would continue to function. The survey also found that VA Veteran Justice Outreach Specialists were active in all of the identified programs. The VA Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists (VJOs) organize and operationalize the VA's effort. McGuire, J. Clark, S., Blue-Howells, J. Coe, C. – "An Inventory of VA involvement in Veterans Courts, Dockets and Tracks" (February 2013). According to the Department of Human Services, there are only two (2) VJOs available to cover New Jersey and surrounding states.

Funding for veteran's courts varies depending upon the population it serves, the specific design and components of the court, and the resources already available. The State's drug court program is successful because it is supported by a \$50 million annual appropriation for supervision, case management and treatment. The AOC supports additional funding for the Department of Human Services to expand existing community-based case management and treatment resources to promote early diversion of vulnerable justice-involved persons by law enforcement and courts, whether the subject persons are veterans, substance addicted, or suffer from mental illness.

In 2013, \$4 million in federal funding for veteran's treatment courts was included in the federal government funding legislation. This was the first time federal funding passed by Congress went to fund local veteran treatment courts. While grant funding opportunities occasionally become available, they are not solicited on a consistent basis. The Judiciary is not aware of any open grant solicitations but will continue to look for opportunities. The AOC suggests that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs may wish to seek information about grant opportunities. The Judiciary hopes to continue the discussion with all interested parties on this important initiative to find solutions for justice-involved veterans compromised by service-related health issues.