



**Law Offices of the
Shelby County Public Defender**

Stephen Bush, Chief Public Defender

"Justice doesn't start in the courtroom. It starts in the community."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Shelby County's Jericho Project Wins
National Innovations in Criminal Justice Award**



The **JERICHO PROJECT**

Bringing Down Barriers to Recovery

Memphis, TN, 2/20/2015 - The Shelby County Jericho Project has been chosen as [one of eight programs](#) across the country approaching criminal justice challenges in new and effective ways. The recipients of the 2015 "Innovations in Justice Award" were selected by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Center for Court Innovation.

"I am delighted that we can bring together a multidisciplinary group of criminal justice leaders to discuss initiatives that are examples of a more efficient and effective justice system," said BJA's Director Denise O'Donnell. "The program highlights the most innovative criminal justice programs across the nation, but also provides summit participants with the requisite knowledge and skills necessary to implement or replicate these practices in their own jurisdictions."

[The Jericho Project](#) was launched more than a decade ago by the Shelby County Public Defender's Office to better serve people living with serious mental illness and substance use disorders who were cycling through the criminal justice system.

The main architect of the Jericho Project is Shelby County Chief Public Defender, Stephen Bush. He developed the initiative while an Assistant Public Defender, a position he held for almost 20 years before being appointed Shelby County's 10th Public Defender in 2010.

"The Jericho Project has helped break down barriers to recovery for hundreds of people since it launched more than a decade ago," said Bush. "We are honored that a program developed in Shelby County is being recognized as a national model. And particularly so, that this recognition comes from leading national prosecutors. Supporting people who live with addiction and mental illness as they transition from jail to our community is vital work, and we hope this award helps other communities develop better ways of doing it."

Nearly 60% of those participating in Jericho have successfully completed their recovery plans and also avoided further contact with the criminal justice system. By building linkage plans to community treatment and services tailored to client needs, this comprehensive approach has cut in half the recidivism rate typically found among those with serious mental illness.

The Jericho Project will be recognized at the “Innovations in Criminal Justice Summit III” April 20-21, 2015 in Los Angeles.

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