



KELLER J. BLACKBURN
Athens County Prosecuting Attorney

ACPO PRESS RELEASE

From: Keller J. Blackburn, Athens County Prosecuting Attorney

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**Athens County Prosecutor's Office Seeks Grant
for Expanded Drug Treatment Program at Local Jail**

Keller J. Blackburn, Athens County Prosecutor, with the assistance of Dr. Joe Gay of Health Recovery Services, has sought a grant for a drug treatment program. This grant would help with treatment for drug offenders incarcerated at the jail as well as the help with the cost of incarceration.

Keller J. Blackburn states that "While this is merely an application for funds, I am hopeful that we will be successful and that we will be able to do more to treat those addicted to drugs, thus reducing the number of repeat offenders. The grant was submitted on December 31, 2013 and we are awaiting a response."

The Athens County Prosecutor's Office under Prosecutor Blackburn currently runs a drug diversion program which partners with Health Recovery Services and other drug treatment agencies to help those that are addicted to drugs.

Dr. Joe Gay, Executive Director of Health Recovery Services commented, "H.R.S. is very excited about Mr. Blackburn's proposal. It is our experience that one of the best times to intervene in a drug problem is when the person is in a crisis. Having been charged with a felony definitely qualifies as a crisis in most people's lives. Having the option of holding the person in jail, isolated from ready access to drugs and drug using peers is another big plus. Ever since taking office, the Prosecutor has been very proactive in seeking effective interventions for those who can benefit for treatment of their drug addiction."

Commissioner Charlie Adkins remarked that "I am encouraged with the efforts being made by the Prosecutor's Office and look forward to working closely with all of those involved in this endeavor. The benefits to the citizens of Athens County, not only to provide help to those that are struggling with a drug addiction problem, but also the saving this will provide in incarceration fees are both something I feel very strongly about. This issue is especially important to me as I have had multiple people close to me struggle with addiction."

The Athens County Prosecutor's Office would like to recognize the following cooperating agencies: Health Recovery Services, Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail, Athens County Court of Common Pleas, the Adult Parole Authority and the Public Defender's Office.