

COVER STORY

Helping **SHERIFFS** help **INMATES**



AG's grant program seeks to curb addiction in Ohio's jails

As bad as the problem of drug abuse and addiction is among the general population, its effects are even more concentrated in the nation's jails.

Because Ohio is in the same predicament, Attorney General Dave Yost has made \$20 million in Opioid Remediation Grants available annually for up to three years — \$60 million in all — to help counties prioritize addiction treatment in jails, reduce the number of fatal overdoses, and break the debilitating and often-fatal cycle of addiction and incarceration.

Through the first quarter of 2025, proposals from sheriff's offices in eight counties — Ashland, Erie, Medina, Richland, Summit, Trumbull, Washington and Wyandot — have been approved for funding, with grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

"What's going on inside our jails reflects what's going on outside them," Yost said. "We have a moral obligation to help those affected by the opioid crisis, no matter where they are."

Since 2020, at least 70 deaths in Ohio jails have been attributed to overdoses, according to a recent USA Today report. In fact, drugs account for 30 percent of deaths in Ohio jails, about the same percentage as natural causes and suicides, the three leading causes.

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My office is here to serve law enforcement by helping agencies across the state do the hard work of safeguarding our communities.

For this reason, I often refer to the Ohio Attorney General's Office as a force multiplier — a resource that expands the abilities and increases the effectiveness of departments that all too often are limited by bare-bones budgets.

Some of what my office makes available is widely known — the comprehensive services of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, for example — but some of it is not, like the \$60 million in Opioid Remediation Grants that we are offering to help Ohio's sheriffs combat substance abuse in their jails.

The grant money — \$20 million a year for 2025 and the next two years — comes from settlements negotiated by my office with opioid manufacturers and pharmacies. The money is intended to help sheriffs pay for an addiction services coordinator and for medications and supplies for inmates experiencing opioid withdrawal.

Proposals from eight sheriff's departments — those in Ashland, Erie, Medina, Richland, Summit, Trumbull, Washington and Wyandot counties — were approved for first-quarter 2025 funding, with grant amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

Drug abuse is a big problem in jails — not only in Ohio but across the nation.

Studies indicate that at least two-thirds of jail inmates in the United States have a substance-use disorder. That often means an opioid addiction, a reflection of the broader drug epidemic plaguing our country. And because of their addictions, these inmates often find themselves in and out of jail repeatedly.

Compounding the problem is the fact that many of these same people also have mental disorders.

For the corrections deputies staffing Ohio jails, that makes a difficult job even more taxing. These men and women are guards, not health-care professionals, yet they regularly deal with stressful drug-related incidents and attend to inmates who have overdosed.

The day-to-day danger that corrections deputies



face should be substantially reduced with the addition of an addiction-services coordinator to their jail as well as sufficient medication.

At the same time, of course, inmates will benefit.

Research has shown that substance-use treatment provided to inmates — both while in jail and after release — can reduce drug use and crime after an inmate returns to the community.

And that's the point of the Opioid Remediation Grants — to not only enhance the safety of our jails but also help inmates break the cycle of addiction and incarceration, and, ultimately, return to productive lives.

I urge Ohio's sheriffs to take advantage of these grants — for the sake of your staffs, your

inmates, and your communities. The application window for this year runs through Dec. 1, 2025, with three more rounds of grant funding set to be issued — in June, September and December.

It's just one more way we can help law enforcement fulfill its vital mission.

Yours,

Dave Yost
Ohio Attorney General

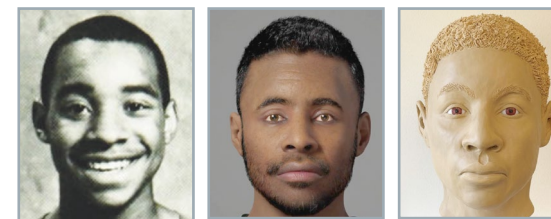
Investigators ID another John Doe found in Stark County

For the second time in seven months, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Stark County Sheriff's Office, the Stark County Coroner's Office and the DNA Doe Project have identified the skeletal remains of a man who for years had remained anonymous.

In mid-March, Attorney General Dave Yost and Stark County Sheriff Eric Weisburn announced that remains found more than 23 years ago in Stark County were those of 24-year-old Anthony Bernard Gulley. He was reported missing in Pontiac, Michigan, on Sept. 11, 1994.

"The answer to this mystery may have remained lost in time if not for the tenacity of investigators and the groundbreaking power of genetic genealogy," Yost said.

Police thought that a Michigan man with childhood ties to Akron — a suspect in two rapes and an



Anthony Gulley at age 24, in a digital reconstruction and in a clay reconstruction

armed robbery — was connected to Gulley's disappearance and might have returned to the area to dispose of his body. On Sept. 30, 1994, as Akron police attempted to arrest the man, he killed himself.

Skeletal remains were found in Canton seven years later, in December 2001, but decades passed and investigators were still unable to identify the victim.

In September 2023, BCI and the Stark County Sheriff's Office released a clay facial

reconstruction and digital images, seeking the public's help in identifying the John Doe. BCI's forensic scientists, meanwhile, were able to develop a DNA profile from the remains, but it didn't match any identities in the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, commonly called CODIS.

Investigators then turned to the DNA Doe Project, a nonprofit that identifies remains using genetic genealogy, a process through which Gulley was eventually identified.

Seven months earlier, in July 2024, a similar identification success story played out.

The same investigative partners using the same process identified the remains of Michael Leach, found in March 2020 in rural Canton. Leach was thought to have died in 2018, at age 62.

Like Gulley's, Leach's case is being treated as an unsolved homicide.

Continued from Page 1

Summit County Sheriff Kandy Fatheree said Ohio's jails have become de facto mental-health hospitals and drug-treatment facilities. At her jail, which can house 791 inmates, roughly three-fourths of the population have substance-abuse disorders, she said.

"If we don't start doing something, it's just going to continue," she said. "The same people are going to keep coming to the jail."

Fatheree was among the first to apply for and receive an Opioid Remediation Grant — \$187,000 to contract with VitalCore Health Strategies for an advanced-practice registered nurse to serve as the jail's addiction-services coordinator.

As part of a larger plan to provide evidence-based care above the minimum jail standards, Fatheree will designate an entire unit solely for inmates needing medical, mental-health, detox and other specialized care.

"So many inmates are being booked and face the immediate prospect of detox and withdrawal, which can be a dangerous time not only for them but for my deputies," she said. "These individuals need care from a professional who specializes in these issues."

Ashland County Sheriff Kurt Schneider, whose office was awarded \$114,788, echoed Fatheree's concern, adding that the grant will help inmates not only when they're in jail but also when they get out.

"All too often, our inmates are left standing at the exit doors wondering how, where and when they will continue getting help, and now we can assist them by coordinating a plan prior to their release from jail," he said.

Erie County Sheriff Paul Sigsworth said his office will use its \$177,516 grant to contract with Bayshore Counseling Services to provide additional treatment services. "Inmates who are able to overcome their addiction issues with the assistance of treatment services funded by this grant will — hopefully — not commit future criminal offenses," he said.

In the case of Summit County, the addiction-services coordinator hired through the AGO grant will ensure that inmates are not only screened and assessed but also receive, if needed, medication-assisted treatment — a combination of drugs and therapy to reduce cravings. Until now, the jail typically used MAT only to detox pregnant women.

The coordinator also will ensure that individuals seeking medication-assisted



Ashland County Sheriff Kurt Schneider said the \$114,788 grant provided by Attorney General Dave Yost will help inmates not only when they're in jail but also when they get out.

How to apply for a grant

Opioid Remediation Grants are funded with money from opioid settlements negotiated by the Attorney General's Office.

County jails can apply for grants of \$150,000 to \$200,000 for calendar year 2025 to hire a full-time addiction-services coordinator or a contractor providing similar services. Grant amounts are based on county population. (These grants cannot be used to replace existing spending on addiction services for inmates.)

In addition, any county that operates a jail can apply for a \$50,000 grant to help pay for medications and supplies for inmates experiencing opioid withdrawal.

This year's application window runs through Dec. 1. Grant payments will be disbursed quarterly, with the next round in June. Sheriffs can request an application by emailing JailGrants@OhioAGO.gov.

treatment are identified for referral to special-docket treatment courts. And when an inmate with a drug history is released, the coordinator will collaborate with community providers to ensure continuing care.

"Many of these individuals have the desire and the inner strength that it takes to stay sober," Fatheree said. "But they need that initial helping hand to pull them up."



ON THE JOB
CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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37th Ohio Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony

11 a.m. Thursday, May 8 | Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, London, Ohio
Honoring four officers who died in the line of duty in recent years

In remembrance, now and always



Deputy Rex A. Emrick | Pickaway County Sheriff's Office | EOW: Jan. 26, 2021

Deputy Emrick devoted nearly 47 years to law enforcement — all but the first 18 months with the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office. Along the way, law enforcement organizations and civic groups formally recognized his numerous accomplishments with awards and citations. True to form, though, Deputy Emrick, who most recently worked as a detective for the sheriff's office, always deflected attention away from himself and toward his law enforcement colleagues: "In a small department, it takes everyone to make successful arrests."

Deputy Emrick died of complications from COVID-19 in January 2021, five weeks shy of his 70th birthday.

Lt. David W. Reynolds | Butler County Sheriff's Office | EOW: Sept. 30, 2021

When Corrections Lt. Reynolds said he was "living a dream" — and he said it often — his words reflected the gratitude of a man who counted his blessings.

Chief among those blessings was his family, and those who knew Lt. Reynolds even marginally soon realized how devoted he was to his wife, three sons and grandkids. Reynolds joined the Butler County Sheriff's Office in 2001 as a corrections officer and rose through the ranks. In addition, he was a former member of the Hanover Township Fire Department and an ordained minister.

Lt. Reynolds, 58, died in September 2021 of complications from COVID-19.



Officer Jacob Derbin | Euclid Police Department | EOW: May 11, 2024

Officer Derbin's family has a long tradition of public service, and he knew from a young age that he would answer the call. He idolized his grandfather, who served for 27 years with the Brooklyn Heights Police Department and helped raise him. Officer Derbin now lies next to his grandfather in St. Mary's Cemetery in Cuyahoga Heights. During his brief time with the Euclid Police Department, he "led with integrity and strength, showing us the power of selfless service," Chief Scott Meyer said.

Just 10 months into his tenure with the Euclid PD, Officer Derbin was fatally shot in an ambush after answering a 911 call from a woman who said that her ex-boyfriend was lurking outside the house and texting that he was going to kill her. Officer Derbin was 23.

Officer Jamieson R. Ritter | Cleveland Division of Police | EOW: July 4, 2024

In April 2024, Officer Ritter and his partner saved a man who had jumped into the Cuyahoga River. A month later, they saved a man who had been shot multiple times by an unknown assailant. His acts of heroism typified the character he brought to the job during his 3½ years with the department. "His compassion for those in need and his relentless pursuit of justice were evident in every action he took," Police Chief Dorothy "Annie" Todd said. "He was a guardian of our community, a beacon of hope and a symbol of strength."

Officer Ritter was killed July 4 when he and several other officers went to a home to serve an arrest warrant. While attempting to flee on a bike, the suspect fired four shots, one of which struck Officer Ritter. He was 27.



NEWS & NOTES



May 19-20, 2025

Hilton Columbus Downtown

The May 20 plenary session will feature, top to bottom: Gallia County Prosecutor Jason Holdren, Dr. Amy Sisson and Gallia County Sheriff Matt Champlin



Monday's keynote session
Teresa Stafford-Wright
Survivor and Chief Executive Officer, Hope & Healing Survivor Resource Center

Confronting the unthinkable

Two Days in May panel will examine community's resilience in face of day-care sex abuse

The depravity of the crime goes beyond anything adjectives can describe. Evil. Heinous. Incomprehensible. The words merely hint at the hell Matthew Case inflicted on seven little girls, their families and the Rio Grande community.

Now serving a 180-year prison sentence, Case pleaded guilty to raping the girls in 2016 and 2017 while they attended an in-home day care operated by his wife.

The girls ranged in age from 3 to 7 years old. Gallia County Prosecutor Jason D. Holdren, who had been in office just four months when the accusations surfaced and began snowballing, said some of the children were so young that they couldn't truly voice what they had experienced.

Holdren, Gallia County Sheriff Matt Champlin, and Dr. Amy Sisson, a clinical counselor in the survivors services section of the Prosecutor's Office, will lead a plenary session at the 33rd annual Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance titled "From Tragedy to Triumph: A Rural Community's Resilience in the Face of Unthinkable Crime."

They will discuss how, with limited resources, they developed a plan and assembled a multidisciplinary team of law enforcement, prosecution and mental-health professionals to get justice for the victims and help the children and their parents recover from the trauma. Through it all, they said, the assistance of the Ohio Attorney General's Office — including its Crime Victims Services Section and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation — proved indispensable.

BCI's Crimes Against Children Unit, the Gallia County Sheriff's Office, and the FBI Columbus Child Exploitation Task Force arrested Case in April 2017 after two victims confided in an adult about the abuse. An ensuing investigation revealed five additional victims.

At the time of his arrest, Case was a volunteer firefighter. He pleaded guilty in May 2017 to 10 counts of first-degree rape and six counts of

third-degree sexual imposition. His wife was not charged.

The day care was not required to be licensed by the state because it cared for fewer than six children at a time. As stunned as community members were, they also wondered whether the revelations were the tip of the iceberg, whether the abuse had been going on for years but went undetected.

"I was bombarded with calls from families that had sent their children to the day care in years past — They'd ask, 'How do I know if my kid was hurt?'" Sisson said. "Everybody was freaking out. It was very far-reaching in the community, so that was another component of the case we had to deal with."

Thankfully, investigators found no evidence of additional abuse.

The theme of this year's conference — "Every Step Is a Victory" — reinforces the importance of crime survivors celebrating step-by-step progress in the healing and recovery process.

In addition to the plenary session, the conference — organized and presented by Ohio Attorney General's Office — will feature opening remarks from Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, followed by a keynote presentation from Teresa Stafford-Wright, CEO of the Hope & Healing Survivor Resource Center in northeastern Ohio. She will share an inspiring story of resilience, healing and post-traumatic growth as a sexual-abuse survivor who entered the criminal-justice system at 14 years old.

Thirty-five workshops will be presented over the two-day event, offering professional development opportunities for victim advocates, social workers, health-care professionals, law enforcement officers and others serving the criminal-justice system.



FROM LEFT: Sara Sefried, Director of Strategic Partnerships for TAT; Attorney General Dave Yost; Charles Bernsen, Site Manager of Petro393, TravelCenters of America; Debi Boffa, CEO of TravelCenters of America

Suspect human trafficking?
844-END-OHHT

EYES ON THE ROAD

AG Yost partners with trucking industry to battle human trafficking in Ohio

Law enforcement officers in Ohio have two new important allies in their fight against human trafficking.

As part of his ongoing efforts to increase awareness of the problem, Attorney General Dave Yost and his Human Trafficking Initiative have teamed with Ohio-based TravelCenters of America — one of America’s largest truck-stop chains — and the nonprofit group Truckers Against Trafficking.

The collaboration is aimed at encouraging the public to report tips to the new Ohio-specific human trafficking hotline: 844-END-OHHT. For its part, Truckers Against Trafficking will distribute hotline bumper stickers to the big-rig truckers who drive Ohio routes, and TravelCenters of America will display the number on digital screens in its Ohio stores.

“Under this new partnership, truck drivers and other motorists will be educated and reminded to report human trafficking to law enforcement — if you see something, say something,” Yost said at the news conference announcing the partnership. “Their awareness on the road can save a life.”

Human trafficking — the illegal

“Trafficking is happening all across our country. But truckers are everywhere, too. They are in places that law enforcement is not and are uniquely positioned to see potential victims and to be a point of safety and recovery for victims of human trafficking.”

Esther Goetsch

Executive Director of Truckers Against Trafficking

trade of people for sex or labor — has been described as modern-day slavery. Since taking office in 2019, Yost has made the fight to eliminate the crime a top priority. He created the Human Trafficking Initiative within his office to empower Ohioans to take action in their communities, to strengthen victim services throughout the state, and to ensure that traffickers and “johns” are brought to justice.

But building public awareness is a vital first step, because victims rarely report the abuse themselves. Victims are usually vulnerable in some way — poor, homeless, drug-addicted. Often, they know their traffickers and depend on them for support, even as they fear them. What’s more, victims often see themselves as the guilty ones, especially in sex-trafficking cases.

For all these reasons, human trafficking is a crime that thrives in the shadows, and eradicating it requires the help of citizens who know what to look for and are willing to act.

Because traffickers use the same roads and travel facilities as everyone else, people in the transportation industry are an especially important source of information about suspicious behavior.

“Trafficking is happening all across our country,” said Esther Goetsch, executive director of Truckers Against Trafficking. “But truckers are everywhere, too. They are in places that law enforcement is not and are uniquely positioned to see potential victims and to be a point of safety and recovery for victims of human trafficking.”

When truckers are trained to recognize the signs of human trafficking, she said, “they can be change-makers; they can be heroes in the course of their everyday job.”

Truckers Against Trafficking has trained more than 1.9 million people since 2015. Its courses are free, online and self-paced. All 18,000 employees of TravelCenters of America take the training annually.

“As large travel centers located along the nation’s highways, we are in a unique position,” said Debi Boffa, CEO of TravelCenters of America. “Our team members are the eyes and ears of our highways.”

Four ways to share a tip



CALL 844-END-OHHT



TEXT “ENDOHHT” TO 847411



USE THE APP



FILL IN THE FORM

Ohio’s hotline now even easier to use

The new statewide Human Trafficking Hotline established by the office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost can now be accessed in four convenient ways, making it easy for the public to report information about suspected human trafficking.

“We need every Ohioan to be our eyes and ears,” AG Yost said, “because one tip can save a life, one tip can help us free someone who desperately needs our help.”

Since the hotline went live in the fall, Ohioans have been able to call the number — (844) END-OHHT — to share tips. Since then, Yost’s team has also worked to expand the options for reporting such information.

If calling isn’t the most practical option, the public can instead opt to:

- Text “ENDOHHT” to 847411.
- Use our new END OHHT app, which can be downloaded on Apple or Android devices.
- Or submit an online form at OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/ENDOHHT.

The Ohio-specific hotline streamlines the process for reaching professionals who are trained in investigating human trafficking.

Tips coming into the hotline, which is operated 24/7 by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, are assessed by criminal intelligence analysts, who forward relevant information to the appropriate local law enforcement agency or, for social services, a victim-advocacy center.



“By raising awareness and empowering drivers to recognize and report human trafficking, we are driving real change and actively disrupting human trafficking.”

Sara Sefried

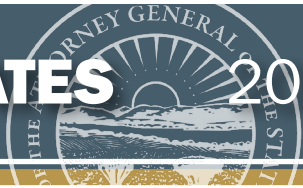
Director of Strategic Partnerships for TAT

The issue is one that the company doesn’t take lightly, she added.

“We are committed to helping combat this crime and thank the Attorney General’s Office and Truckers Against Trafficking for allowing us to be part of this important campaign.”

Sara Sefried, director of strategic partnerships for Truckers Against Trafficking, said collaboration is the key to eliminating the problem.

“We know we cannot do this work alone,” she said. “The Ohio Attorney General’s Office and TravelCenters of America have been vital partners in creating safer communities. By raising awareness and empowering drivers to recognize and report human trafficking, we are driving real change and actively disrupting human trafficking.”



Mark Your Calendar

Looking Ahead



Law Enforcement Training Symposium

Upcoming AGO conferences

- ✓ The 2025 Human Trafficking Summit will be July 30 at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.
- ✓ The 2025 Law Enforcement Training Symposium (LETS), presented by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, is set for Sept. 28-30 at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions in Sandusky.



Check www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov regularly for updates on both conferences.

ON THE JOB

CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL