



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Implementation Phase of the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program Grant (BCJI) – through the Federal Department of Justice.

ERIE, PA (May 19, 2016)

The Sisters of Saint Joseph Neighborhood Network along with the City of Erie are excited to announce the implementation phase of the Byrne Grant. The total amount of the grant award is **\$598,447**.

The goal of the Byrne Program is to improve community safety by designing and implementing effective, comprehensive approaches to addressing crime within a targeted neighborhood as part of a broader strategy to advance neighborhood revitalization through cross-sector community-based partnerships.

Many have been involved in the Planning phase; SSJNN, Little Italy Neighborhood Watch, GECAC, Bethesda Trinity Center, City of Erie (Police Department, Code Enforcement, Fire Department, Department of Economic and Community Development), Erie Redevelopment Authority and Mercyhurst University our Research Partner and Executive Pulse – Database Developer.

During the planning phase of BCJI three ongoing committees have been established; Community, Law Enforcement and Problem Properties. These committees will continue to meet during the active stage of the grant which is April 21, 2016 – March 31, 2018.

One of the innovative strengths of this program is relying on data driven information in an effort to reduce crime and increase neighborhood capacity.

Some of the goals of the program are to increase visibility of Police presence to be pro-active with neighborhood interaction and re-active with concerns of the residents with regard to crime and prevention, create youth programing and mentoring for the neighborhood children, connect young adults with job training and soft skills training leading to employment, reduce the number of problem properties and improve neighborhood appearance and encourage resident involvement in neighborhood clean-up and surveillance efforts.

The Historic Little Italy neighborhood was selected for the grant because they have created an environment for ongoing, positive change. They are a state designated Elm Street, have created the Historic Little Italy Revitalization plan, and look to outside sources and opportunities for funding. SSJNN has utilized the State Neighborhood Assistance Program and the Neighborhood Partnership program to infuse the neighborhood with corporate dollars to initiate the improvements already begun. **To date, they have received \$ 1.15 million in contributions from the private sector.**