



ORLEANS PUBLIC DEFENDERS

2601 TULANE AVENUE – SUITE 700 • NEW ORLEANS, LA 70119
TELEPHONE: (504) 821-8101 • FAX: (504) 821-5285 • WWW.ORLEANSPUBLICDEFENDERS.ORG

News

January 6, 2011

Contact: Derwyn Bunton
(504) 224-0958

Against the odds, the Orleans Public Defenders Office is recognized for outstanding work in the criminal justice system

New Orleans - The Greater New Orleans Foundation recognized the Orleans Public Defenders (OPD) today for its work in the criminal justice system through a grant from its Transform New Orleans Fund. The Fund is a grant program from the Open Society Institute that comes through the Greater New Orleans Foundation. The award was given on the heels of announcements about cuts in services and staff at OPD because of budget shortfalls.

The Transform New Orleans Fund provided \$20,000 to OPD for its general operating budget. The Fund was created to support organizations working to: 1) ensure government transparency and accountability, 2) utilize arts and culture to advance social change, 3) secure a fair and effective criminal justice system, and 4) engage communities in the New Orleans rebirth. “OPD is honored to receive this award from the Transform New Orleans Fund,” says Chief District Defender, Derwyn Bunton. “We are grateful to know that our work is seen as important in this rebuilding process.”

This is the second award that the Orleans Public Defenders has received since the office opened in September of 2007. In 2009, the Southern Center for Human Rights gave OPD the Frederick Douglas Human Rights Award, calling the office an “inspiration to other public defender offices.” Both awards are unsolicited and awarded based on the reputation of the recipient without an application.

“This award recognizes the real impact and importance of the work of OPD. With the right support and resources we really can help transform criminal justice in New Orleans,” says Mr. Bunton. “It is our mission to provide quality service to the city of New Orleans. Despite the odds, we remain loyal to our mission, and striving for or being forced to do anything less only hurts our criminal justice system, public safety and the rebuilding of New Orleans.”

The office of the Orleans Public Defenders is an independent legal office and political subdivision of the state responsible for providing legal representation to indigent individuals charged with criminal offenses in Orleans Parish. The mission of the Orleans Public Defenders Office is to provide each eligible client with client-centered legal representation of the highest quality – zealous, conscientious, caring, professional, ethical and skilled – whether in criminal, juvenile or municipal/traffic court.