

Addressing Your Priorities

Priorities and concerns discussed at 2008 National Forum serve as guide for NCJA's work throughout the year

At the 2008 National Forum on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, criminal justice policy makers and practitioners from across the country gathered in regional caucuses to discuss what they considered the most pressing issues facing the criminal justice community in their respective regions (Northeastern, Southern, Midwestern and Western). The priorities drafted in these sessions guided the work of the NCJA Advisory Council and staff over the course of the year.

In 2008 the top issues cited by Forum participants included: federal assistance for criminal justice programming; gangs, gun violence and the culture of urban crime; recidivism reduction and offender reentry policies; information sharing; the development and evaluation of evidence-based policy; general crime prevention; and juvenile justice.

Throughout the year, all of these issues were highlighted in the NCJA *Justice Bulletin* and *InfoLetter*. The Justice Bulletin newsletter provides weekly in-depth coverage of developments affecting state and local criminal justice. Features include congressional updates, research findings, and state and local program implementation and evaluation. The *InfoLetter* covers U.S. Congressional and other federal government activities and tracks legislation and other issues of importance to criminal justice practitioners. NCJA staff also provided training and technical assistance and participated in work groups, committees, seminars, and special sessions on emerging issues and promising practices. A summary of NCJA's accomplishments specific to each priority is provided below:

Federal Assistance for Criminal Justice Programming

Federal funding, particularly concern about current appropriation levels for priority criminal justice assistance programs, were the top concern in all four regions. As such, ensuring the restoration of and continued funding for vital criminal justice assistance programs was a top priority for NCJA staff over the last 12 months.

- NCJA led a broad coalition of criminal justice stakeholder organizations seeking to restore funding to the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program after the 67 percent cut in FY08. The coalition engaged grassroots stakeholders across the nation at critical points in the legislative process, hosted congressional briefings, prepared background materials and testimony, gathered and disseminated educational materials on the Byrne JAG

program and its uses in the states, published extensive information on the NCJA website (www.ncja.org), responded to requests for information by news media outlets, sponsored several coalition advocacy letters, convened strategy sessions, and organized meetings with congressional members and staff. In February, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) passed with \$2 billion included for the Byrne JAG formula program.

- Similarly, NCJA helped direct the coalition's activities in support of Byrne JAG and other justice assistance funding in the regular FY09 and FY10 appropriations bills. Both the FY09 and the pending FY10 bills restore Byrne JAG to level funding and provide level or slightly increased funding for the other priority justice assistance programs.

- Published extensive information on the NCJA website (www.ncja.org) and hosted a series of webinars designed to help potential grantees

learn about the criminal justice funding contained in the Recovery Act.

- Participated in a number of panels and forums educating stakeholder groups on how to access Recovery Act Byrne JAG funding.

- Reached out, and responded, to news media outlets who were seeking information about the Byrne JAG program and implementation of Recovery Act funding in the states.

- Submitted comments to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Recovery Act Reporting Requirements.

- Submitted language which was accepted by the House appropriations subcommittee to restore a statewide planning process for the use of the FY10 Byrne JAG funds.

- Drafted and distributed a priorities document for the new Congress and Administration on NCJA's priorities for the 111th Congress.

- Submitted recommendations to Office of Management and Budget on implementing the Government Transparency Act.
- NCJA's Executive Director represented NCJA at a meeting of the Department of Justice Transition Team seeking input into criminal justice policy and funding issues.
- NCJA staff participated with several state agency administrators at a Bureau of Justice Assistance working group on the development of performance measures for the Byrne JAG program.
- Joined with other groups on a letter to President Obama urging that the FY10 budget request an increase in the cap for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund. The FY10 request includes an increased cap of \$65 million.
- Worked with staff from The Constitution Project and the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association to increase awareness among public defenders about the process for applying for Byrne JAG awards in their states.
- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director addressed the summer meeting of the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association and the American Council of Chief Defenders regarding justice assistance funding to the states, the role of the State Administering Agencies, and the opportunities for the defense bar to interact with other components of the justice system.
- Held strategy meetings on adjusting the Byrne JAG formula for the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands so each of the territories and commonwealths will be treated equally under the distribution.

- Submitted applications for funding to provide training and technical assistance to state administering agencies on strategic planning and resource management.

Gangs, Gun Violence, and the Culture of Urban Crime

Issues related to gangs, gun violence, and the culture of urban violent crime were identified by multiple regions as a continuing priority across the country. Similar issues were also identified as top concerns in 2007.

- Convened several discussions of stakeholder organizations and congressional staff to discuss the competing bills in Congress intended to address gang violence.
- At the invitation of the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA), NCJA's Deputy Executive Director participated in the 2009 World Gang Summit where she gave an overview of congressional activity, a summary of current appropriations, and explained the federal process and timing for legislation and appropriations.
- Reported in the *Justice Bulletin* and the *InfoLetter* on numerous hearings and forums on the causes and successful strategies for dealing with gang violence, many intended to build support for passage of the Youth PROMISE Act.
- Through the NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards, recognized a model program that has shown demonstrated success in reducing gun violence.

Recidivism Reduction and Offender Reentry Policies

The successful reentry of incarcerated persons back into the community continues to be a top criminal justice priority in 2008, with the reentry and recidivism by juvenile offenders of specific concern.

- NCJA Executive Director joined with 16 members of the NCJA Advisory Council in the Symposium on Post Conviction DNA convened by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ).
- Represented NCJA at a stakeholders organization meeting with the Bureau of Justice Assistance on implementation of the Second Chance Act.
- Continued to participate in the Second Chance coalition working on implementation of the Second Chance Act and the next generation of reentry legislation.
- Joined several members of the NCJA Advisory Council at policy institutes on reentry and corrections policies for governors' criminal justice policy advisors sponsored by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.
- Through NCJA's Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards, recognized two model reentry programs that have shown demonstrated success and are programs that can be easily replicated by other jurisdictions.
- Highlighted articles about different community court programs and state and local reentry programs that are considered promising practices in the *Justice Bulletin*.

Information Sharing

Improvements to the quality of criminal history records, staff shortages, and the implementation of the Law Enforcement National Data Exchange are also of concern.

- Represented NCJA on the Department of Justice's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative including on the Global Advisory Committee, Global Privacy and Information Quality Working Group, and the Global Outreach Working Group.
- Continued to support the Justice Information Sharing Practitioner's Network (JISP). Participated in information sharing conferences and hosted monthly webinars on such topics as national standards, privacy, and funding for JISP.
- NCJA's Executive Director made presentations at the SunGard Corporation's 2009 Local Government National Users Group Conference.
- NCJA's *Justice Bulletin* included articles on information sharing programs that are considered promising practices.

Development and Evaluation of Evidence-Based Policy

Participants said criminal justice policy must be evidence-based, drawn on evaluation and careful data collection, experimentation, and quantitative and qualitative analyses.

- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director conducted two strategic planning workshops at the annual conference

of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.

- NCJA's Executive Director participated in the Institute for Governors' Criminal Justice Policy Advisors presented by the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices.
- NCJA Vice President Roland Mena and NCJA staff met with stakeholder organizations and congressional staffers regarding the proposed National Criminal Justice Commission Act.
- NCJA convened two conference calls of State Administering Agencies and a meeting of the Executive Directors Roundtable to develop recommendations on the National Criminal Justice Commission Act.

General Crime Prevention

To prevent crime effectively, solutions must be community-based. The community must play an active role in crime prevention. Programs must be tailored to that community's needs, and the community must know the goals and expectations.

- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director helped lead and facilitate a working group meeting held by the National Center for State Courts with state, tribal and local justice and court practitioners on progress toward adoption of the uniform first page for protective orders in domestic violence cases.
- NCJA's Executive Director participated on a panel at the 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Public Policy Forum sponsored by

the U.S. Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus.

- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director spoke at the 2009 National Workshop and Symposium on Sex Offender Management and Accountability on promising practices in state and tribal collaboration.
- NCJA's Director of Government Affairs participated on a panel convened by the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine to discuss trends in funding for drug control, prevention and treatment programs.
- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director spoke at a conference hosted by the SMART Office on Adam Walsh Act implementation.
- NCJA's Deputy Executive Director assisted in establishing a group of stakeholder organizations interested in reforming the Adam Walsh Act and led a two-day workshop of representatives of the groups to help define goals and set priorities.
- Established a separate working group of state and local organizations on issues surrounding implementation of the Adam Walsh Act.
- Provided a legal analysis memo and had subsequent meetings with Office of Justice Programs staff regarding SORNA implementation.
- Held several meetings with House and Senate Judiciary Committee staff on the challenges states are facing with implementation of the Adam Walsh Act.
- Led a group of tribal representatives and SAAs to identify best practices in state and tribal collaboration for justice issues. Followed up with a working group to develop a toolkit to replicate promising practices to

assist tribal nations and state agencies to collaborate and work together towards improved criminal and juvenile justice initiatives. NCJA's Deputy Executive Director worked collaboratively with staff of the National Congress of American Indians to identify existing research and resources to facilitate and enhance state and tribal collaboration.

- NCJA Vice President Roland Mena met with the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Gil Kerlikowske, about collaboration on issues of substance abuse treatment, prevention, and enforcement.

- NCJA Vice President Roland Mena met with the Department of Justice's Office of Tribal Justice to discuss collaborating on issues of common interest.

- Created a stronger coalition between NCJA and National Association of State Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD).

- Offered suggested changes, which were subsequently approved, to the National Governors Association on their policy statement concerning public safety.

- Convened a working group of state agency administrators on changes NCJA would like to propose to the Byrne JAG statute in the next comprehensive reauthorization bill. The group's comments were compiled into a document that will be used in the reauthorization process.

- Applied for numerous federal grants that support crime prevention efforts, including Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN), Indian Country Data Collection, and Using Web 2.0 Technology to Prevent and Respond to Campus Crime.

- Solicited applications and selected the 2009 NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award

winners to be honored at the National Forum. The four recognized programs effectively address important criminal justice issues and needs that can be easily replicated in other jurisdictions.

Juvenile Justice

A wide range of juvenile justice issues were highlighted, including compliance with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's regulations and the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A).

- As part of its spring Board of Directors meeting, NCJA members had an opportunity to hear from senior staff on the House and Senate Judiciary Committees about the committees' priorities for the coming year, including passage of the Youth PROMISE Act and the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

- Attended numerous stakeholder meetings on the Youth PROMISE Act as well as regular meetings of the coalition of juvenile justice stakeholder groups.

- NCJA's Director of Government Affairs spoke on a panel at the International Community Corrections Association's annual meeting about federal funding for juvenile justice, accessing Byrne JAG funding, and current legislation.

- As part of the larger agenda on Adam Walsh implementation, NCJA's Deputy Executive Director, along with representatives of the National Conference of State Legislatures, met with staff from the Office of Justice Programs to discuss the requirement for public registration of some juvenile offenders, a requirement which some states oppose.

2009 Regional Caucus Meetings

Please join us for this year's Regional Caucus meetings.

The sessions will take place on Monday morning August 10 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Northeast Region Grand Ballroom I

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont

Western Region Grand Ballroom J

Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming

Southern Region Grand Ballroom K

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands and West Virginia

Midwestern Region Maple Room

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin



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