

A PRIMER ON THE BYRNE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is the cornerstone federal crime-fighting program, enabling communities to target resources to their most pressing local needs.

Byrne JAG was created by the 2005 merger of the Edward Byrne Memorial Grant Program and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant programs. Sixty percent passes through the states to local governments and non-profit service providers; the remaining 40 percent goes directly to local law enforcement based on FBI crime rates. Funding is authorized at \$1.1 billion annually, but funding has historically hovered around \$500 million annually. In FY08, funding was cut by 67%, from \$520 million in FY07 to \$170 million in FY08. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$2 billion and the FY09 omnibus bill provided \$512 million (after carve-outs).

Byrne JAG can be used broadly for law enforcement needs, as well as prosecution and courts, prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning, evaluation and technology, and crime victim and witness programs. It is flexible money that can be deployed quickly to urgent and changing challenges.

States and local communities have used JAG funds to test and improve innovative criminal justice practices that are now replicated nationwide, such as drug courts, methamphetamine lab reduction, anti-gang strategies, reentry programs and information sharing protocols.

Fully 75 percent of the Byrne JAG funding to states in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will be used to create and sustain a wide variety of jobs across the entire criminal justice system, according to a recent survey of state agencies. These are family-supporting jobs in the public, private and non-profit sectors in both urban and rural areas, including:

Victim service providers, juvenile and adult probation officers, drug and alcohol counselors, law enforcement officers and other staff, IT personnel, prosecutors, forensic criminalists and forensic scientists, judges, public defenders, administrative clerks, drug and gang investigators, K-9 Officers, criminalists, research analysts, child abuse investigators, court administrators, school resource officers, DARE Officers, Special Victims Unit investigators, victims' advocates, prisons and jail personnel, domestic violence investigators and prosecutors, support staff, computer crime analysts, and DNA lab specialists.

Byrne JAG funded initiatives work to prevent and fight crime. Thirty-four state criminal justice agencies responding to a survey found:

- 457 multi-jurisdictional task forces supported
- 113,834 arrests made;
- 6.5 million pounds of drugs seized worth over \$10 billion;
- 2,445 meth labs dismantled;
- 128 specialty and drug courts funded which served 5,865 offenders;
- 596 prevention programs funded which served over 102,036 youth; and
- 236 victim services programs funded which helped 184,068 victims.