



Cornerstone for Justice: How California Uses Byrne JAG Funding to Protect Public Safety, Prevent Crime and Reduce Recidivism

The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is the nation’s cornerstone justice assistance grant program, supporting the federal government’s crucial role in improving state and local justice systems by spurring innovation and by testing and replicating evidence-based practices in crime control and prevention. States, localities and tribal nations are able to deploy Byrne JAG funding against their most pressing public safety challenges, to design complete programs or fill gaps, to leverage other resources and to work across city, county and state lines.

Byrne JAG funds may be invested across the criminal justice system for prevention, diversion, enforcement, courts, prosecution and defense, corrections, victim assistance, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and other community-based support. Byrne JAG improves the administration of justice, reduces incarceration, enhances fairness, improves outcomes for the justice-involved and saves taxpayer money.

Byrne JAG in California:

Beginning in FY17, the Trump Administration required all Byrne JAG grantees to certify compliance with certain immigration-related provisions in federal law in order to draw down their awards. A number of states and localities challenged the new conditions in court.

To date, eight states, including California, have yet to accept their FY18 awards due to the ongoing litigation. The allocation figures and program examples below, therefore, summarize California’s Byrne JAG investments in FY16.

From 2015 through 2017, the California Board of State and Community Corrections invested in 33 initiatives. Of those programs, 18 were granted no-cost extensions through 2018. Examples of programs currently operating in California include:

- Support for seven Law Enforcement Task Force Supervisors to seven Task Forces operating throughout the state from the California Department of Justice. These Task Force Supervisors have command and control of their assigned Task Force with oversight by local JAG Steering Committees and Executive Boards.
- The Yuba County Early Intervention & Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Project. In Yuba County, the school district and probation department identify at-risk elementary age children and provide targeted education and family-based services toward prevention of truancy, future delinquency, gang involvement, substance abuse and violent behaviors.
- The San Benito County Strengthening Families Program enhances its task force model for enforcement while implementing the evidence-based “Strengthening Families” program in order to make an impact on the illegal and illicit drug trade that is often carried out by local criminal street gangs. The goal is to interrupt the drug and arms trafficking which will make the community safer.
- Mariposa County’s Project School Climate, focuses on prevention and education to reduce behavioral misconduct in schools. The county’s drug task force combats street and mid-level

California’s FY16 Investment By Purpose Area

Total Investment = \$30,249,312



Law Enforcement



Prosecution & Courts
including indigent defense



Crime Prevention
& Education

drug related crimes involving adults and juveniles who are suspected of selling, manufacturing and/or distributing illegal drugs.

- Lassen County established a multi-agency, county-wide youth crime reduction program. The target population is youth ages 12-25. Delivery is through coordination with area schools and other youth organizations. Services include a three year diversionary program with evaluations/modifications taking place during years two and three.
- The Imperial County LEAD (Local Enrichment and Decision-Making) Program coordinates a law-related teaching program and implemented a Truancy Mediation Program to address juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and school violence. Imperial County District Attorney's Office is collaborating with the Imperial County Office of Education to coordinate two separate teaching programs for students in Imperial County.
- The Humboldt County Sheriff's Marijuana Enforcement Team's, primary function is the eradication and investigation of mid- to major-level illegal marijuana grows. The unit focuses on eradication and the development of cases for successful prosecution, seizing illegally gained assets, and assisting natural resource agencies with identifying environmental damages caused by this illegal activity.
- Tulare County's Closing the Circle program, is an education-based strategy, that provides evidence-based instruction to at-risk students at selected middle schools and court and community schools to reduce gang affiliation, low academic achievement, drug abuse, and other problem behavior associated with delinquency and crime. The suppression component focuses on juvenile and young adult offenders, and refers appropriate youth to the educational component for relevant programs.
- Yolo County's Neighborhood Court, is an adult criminal diversion program based on restorative justice that addresses criminal violations that impact the quality of life in the community. Restorative justice is accomplished by involving the victim, the offender and community members. The Yolo County Program will expand to the jurisdictions of West County, Woodland and a new target population of homeless offenders in the county.

- The Placer County Sheriff's Office Trauma-Informed Response (TIR) project that unites first responders with multi-agency collaborative systems (System of Care). TIR incorporates five major initiatives to close the gaps in the current system and address the growing epidemic of substance abuse, mental health and trauma that lead children down a path to prison.

How Byrne JAG Funding is Awarded:

Byrne JAG funds are awarded by a formula based on each state's population and crime rate. Sixty percent of a state's allocation is awarded to the state criminal justice planning agency (known as the State Administering Agency, or SAA) which, in turn, makes the funding available to local governments and non-profit service providers. The remaining 40 percent of the state's allocation is awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) directly to a number of local communities based on crime data.

Funding is authorized by Congress at \$1.1 billion, though annual funding has never reached that level. At its peak in FY02, Congress appropriated \$830 million. Until FY10 funding held steady at about \$500 million annually but has since dropped by about one-third. In FY18, the program was funded at \$340 million.

Byrne JAG supports the federal government's crucial role in spurring innovation and testing and replicating evidence-based practices nationwide.

States and local communities use Byrne JAG funds to address needs and fill gaps across the entire justice system.

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