



Cornerstone for Justice: How West Virginia 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 West Virginia:

In 2018, the West Virginia Department of Justice & Community Services invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

- Thirteen multi-jurisdictional task forces that have been a pioneering initiative in the battle against violent crime and drug abuse for several years. The organized task forces are funded in part by the Byrne JAG program.

The state currently has one statewide task force and several local task forces, spanning five counties. The task forces are made up of officers at the local, county, state, and federal levels, allowing for more effective coordination and use of combined resources and improving public safety in the fight drugs and violent crime.

- The Prevention Resource Officer (PRO) Program in West Virginia Schools. The PRO Program is a cooperative effort between schools and law enforcement to: improve student's attitudes and knowledge of criminal justice and law enforcement, to prevent kids from

committing crimes, to mentor youth with law enforcement officers to provide a safer school environment and to combine safety and child advocacy assuring a better school experience for all West Virginia youth. PRO has three main goals:

- Prevention;
- Mentoring; and
- Safety.

With Byrne JAG funds, state and local governments have made remarkable strides in advancing data-driven practices in criminal justice.

West Virginia's Byrne JAG Investment

100%



Law Enforcement
Task Forces

Total Investment = \$551,744

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.

2018 Byrne JAG Spending Study:

Financial estimates and program examples were gathered as part of the 2018 Byrne JAG Spending Study conducted by the National Criminal Justice Association. Financial data was submitted by and qualitative interviews were conducted with all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

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.

This funding touches hundreds of cities and towns across America through projects funded and investments made in state and local justice systems.

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