Cornerstone for Justice:

How Texas 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 Texas:

In 2018, the Texas Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

- Border security initiatives: The proximity of the Texas/Mexico international border has left many rural counties in Texas dealing with a large influx of human, drug, and sex trafficking crimes committed by large transnational criminal organizations. Texas seeks to support regional, multi-disciplinary approaches that coordinates law enforcement agencies to combat transnational organized crime activities.

- The expansion of reentry programs that include individu-alized treatment and coordinated case management ser-vices. Successful reintegration is costly and challenging as high-risk individuals attempting to reintegrate into the community continue to bounce back and forth between disconnected service providers, with little coordination, leading to an increased risk of reoffending.

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

Grants are awarded based on a strategic plan developed in conjunction with the state's system stakeholders.

Texas's Investment By Purpose Area

Total Investment = $13,133,590

70% Law Enforcement

7% Drug Treatment & Enforcement

1% Prevention & Education

7% Planning, Evaluation & Technology

10% Prosecution & Courts

5% Corrections, Community Corrections & Reentry

- Byrne JAG funds support training for law enforcement officers who are assigned the responsibility of processing crime scenes. These officers perform a critical role as their investigations are the underpinnings of criminal casework that determine verdicts of guilt or innocence.

  Funding helps to support a pilot program, started in partnership with Texas A&M University, which provides essential forensic investigation training to peace officers. The project has developed a comprehensive, forensic science training certification program which provides science-based, application intensive training to effectively identify, document, collect, and process evidence found at crime scenes.

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 nearly every city and town in America through projects funded and investments made in the state and local justice systems.

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