



## Cornerstone for Justice:

# How Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island:

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.

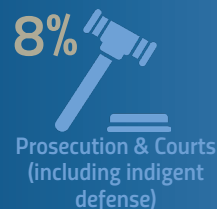
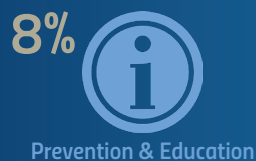
To date, eight states, including Rhode Island, have yet to accept their FY18 awards due to the ongoing litigation. The allocation figures and program examples below, therefore, summarize Rhode Island’s Byrne JAG investments in FY16.

In 2016, the Rhode Island Public Safety Grant Administration Office invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

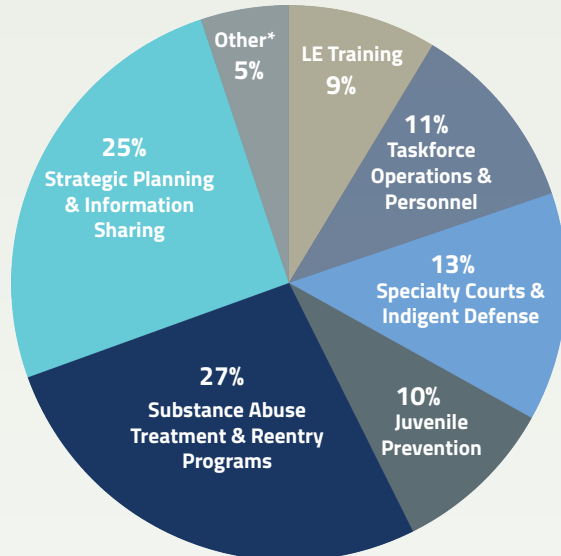
- The Defender Advocacy Project, through the RI Public Defender’s Office, provides representation to indigent individuals being held on bail or facing imminent incarceration. The program serves individuals facing incarceration for reasons that do not constitute direct criminal prosecution, (i.e. warrants, failure to provide restitution, violation of probation, etc.).
- The RI Department of Corrections’ Recidivism Reduction Project, proactively addresses the treatment needs of individuals battling mental illness who are at risk of re-offending. Using a multidisciplinary approach, behavioral health staff from the DOC work in coordination with probation and parole officers to deliver continued effective treatment intervention.
- The RI Family Reunification program through the Department of Corrections. This evidence-based program works to increase the ability of incarcerated parents to engage with their children and provides them with the skills necessary to deal with challenges upon release.
- Byrne JAG funds support the establishment of a Laboratory Information Management System: a secure website used by police departments to submit evidence to the University of Rhode Island Crime Laboratory.

### Rhode Island’s Investment By Purpose Area

Total Investment = \$793,549



## Rhode Island's Byrne JAG Investments by Project Type



\* Other includes: Forensic Services and Law Enforcement Personnel and Overtime.

- In conjunction with other federal and state funding, Byrne JAG funds support the Domestic Violence Unit in the data collection and entry of police arrest forms and the preparation and dissemination various domestic violence, sexual assault and child molestation reports to state, municipal and private victim service agencies.
- Byrne JAG funds support the RI Attorney Generals Drug Court Project. Funding is used to support a prosecutor for new and existing clients who are accepted into the Drug Court Program.
- Byrne JAG funds support the RI Family Court, Mental Health Clinic. The clinic provides juveniles with routine evaluations following referral and emergency same-day evaluations by an on-call clinician.
- Byrne JAG funds support the State Police Neighborhood Response Team. State police work in collaboration with the cities of Providence and Central Falls to patrol high crime areas and reduce the rate of gang activity, gun violence and drug trafficking.

## 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 a 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.

## 2016 Byrne JAG Spending Study:

Financial estimates and program examples were gathered as part of the 2016 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.

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