



Cornerstone for Justice: How New Jersey 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 New Jersey:

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 New Jersey, have yet to accept their FY18 awards due to the ongoing litigation. The allocation figures and program examples below, therefore, summarize New Jersey’s Byrne JAG investments in FY16.

In 2016, the New Jersey Attorney General Department of Law and Public Safety invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

- The Attorney General’s New Jersey State Police Organized Crime, Gang, Gun and Narcotics Task Force, built on three regional bureaus in the northern, central and southern areas of the state. The Task Force uses an intelligence-led policing model to target violent street gangs and narcotics traffickers.

- Byrne JAG funds support Criminal Justice Information System improvement projects including New Jersey’s Computerized Criminal History expunged record access and information upgrade. In New Jersey, new legislative mandates led to an increase in the number of Expunged Final Orders processed annually. Expunged criminal history record information will be available to New Jersey’s criminal justice agencies in real time.
- New Jersey’s 21 county prosecutor-led task forces combat crimes related to gangs, guns and narcotics. The task forces, each under the operational control of the county prosecutor, target drug and violent crimes within their jurisdictions.

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

New Jersey’s FY 16 Investment By Purpose Area

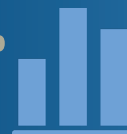
Total Investment = \$4,270,957

93%



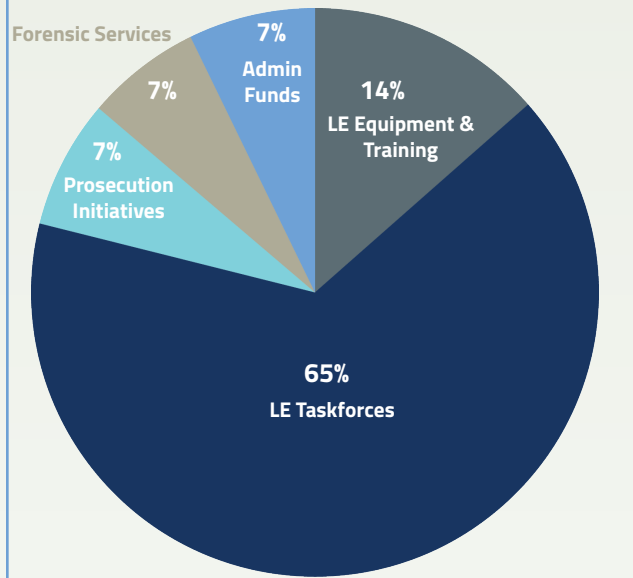
Law Enforcement

7%



Planning, Evaluation & Technology

New Jersey's Byrne JAG Investments by Project Type



- Byrne JAG funds support the Atlantic City Organized Crime Task Force, which directly supports and supplements local law enforcement activities within the Tourism District by focusing, through intelligence-led policing, on the interdiction, apprehension and prosecution of gang members, weapons traffickers and narcotics distributors.
- Support for law enforcement officers in municipal and county law enforcement agencies. Officers will be equipped with an additional 1,132 body worn cameras using Byrne JAG funding. Body worn cameras have been shown to be an effective tool to reduce the number of unwarranted civil complaints against police officers, increase law enforcement transparency, and as a tool for de-escalation between police and members of the community.
- Byrne JAG funds support the Division of State Police Ballistics Unit, which routinely serves agencies throughout the state by giving expert advice on firearms related evidence, preparing reports, offering courtroom testimony, providing lectures, and entering and correlating images in the NIBIN database.
- Byrne JAG funds support the Prosecutor's Supervision Training Initiative on investigating and prosecuting gang

and drug cases, facilitated through the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice. The initiative offers training to state, county and local law enforcement officers engaged in the investigation of gangs, drugs and related violent criminal activity.

- Byrne JAG funds support the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, Prosecutor's Supervision and Coordination Section, which is responsible for oversight concerning the implementation of Megan's Law, referred to as the Megan's Law Coordinator Program.

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.

This document was created with the support of Grant No. 2016-DP-BX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions are those of the authors.