



## Cornerstone for Justice:

# How the District of Columbia 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 the District of Columbia:

In 2018, the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants invested in numerous successful initiatives. Examples include:

- The Reentry Action Network is a collaborative effort with community-based partners in case management, workforce development, job training, mental health, vital records, etc. There are 30-40 organizations within the District that make up the network. The network strives to assess and address the urgent needs of returning citizens by working with partners across the city. For example, Community Family Life Services works with the federal Bureau of Prisons to conduct needs assessments and release planning in the three months prior to release in better effectuate a coordinated release. Also, peer navigator programs connect a person with lived experience to provide extra support for returning citizens.
- The REDY center (Resources to Empower and Develop You) is a new program serving as a one-stop shop for individuals leaving the jail; helping them access services within the community. Examples of available services include behavioral health, housing, license/identification

and workforce services. The process starts with DOC staff in custody and then continues at and after release. Byrne JAG dollars fund a dedicated position whose primary focus is on referrals with government agencies and community partners to allow for consistent care.

- Access Youth’s Restorative Justice in Schools Program, which provides early intervention and support to 75 DC Public High School DCPS students at risk of suspension, arrest, and court referral, with the goal of improving their engagement in school, and reducing the likelihood of delinquency and justice system involvement. Program activities include direct services to youth as well as program supervision and support such as managing intake from schools, conducting mediation and restorative conferences, and providing training/life skills sessions.

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

## DC’s Investment By Purpose Area

16%



Prevention & Education

21%



Planning, Evaluation & Technology

53%



Corrections, Community Corrections & Reentry

10%



Mental & Behavioral Health

Total Investment = \$947,790

- Community Family Life Services (CFLS), which provides housing and case management services for successful reunification of families from the District of Columbia who are housed at DC Correctional Treatment Facility as well as U.S. Bureau of Prisons facilities. CFLS offers services for female returning citizens who are victims of trauma and/or who have co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders.
- Byrne JAG funds support the Building Capacity for Performance Measurement and Evaluation (BCPME) Project. The Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) was funded to build the BCPME project with multiple-years of Byrne JAG funding.

The BCPME project provides process evaluation services to District of Columbia Reentry Coalition (DCRC) grantees, and builds out a web-based, case management system (Efforts to Outcomes-ETO) for reentry grantees to be able to serve specific target populations. Based on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Self-sufficiency Matrix domains, JRSA helped grantees to: maximize collaboration among providers, share data in order to address service gaps, and serve clients holistically while maintaining the individual strengths of a diverse set of partners.

## 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.

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

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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