



Byrne JAG: Cornerstone for Justice

How the State Byrne JAG Program Improves State & Local Justice Systems

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is the nation's cornerstone justice assistance grant program, supporting the federal government's crucial role in spurring innovation and testing and replicating evidence-based practices in crime control and prevention nationwide. States and local communities invest Byrne JAG funds to address needs and fill gaps across the justice system. In this way, Byrne JAG-funded investments touch counties, cities and townships across rural and urban America. With Byrne JAG funds, state and local governments have made remarkable strides in advancing data-driven practice in criminal justice.

Byrne JAG's hallmark is its flexibility. States, localities and tribal nations are able to deploy Byrne JAG funds against their most pressing public safety chal-

lenges. It allows communities to design complete programs or fill gaps, leverage other resources, break down silos, and work across jurisdictional lines. In nearly every state, Byrne JAG funds are invested broadly for prevention, diversion, enforcement, courts, prosecution and defense, corrections, victim assistance, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and other community-based supports to improve the administration of justice, reduce incarceration, enhance fairness, improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals, and save taxpayer money. The statute describes the justice system in eight Purpose Areas. Nearly every SAA invests in at least three program areas, and half invest in four or more (see chart below).

The Role of the SAA

The State Administering Agency (SAA) is the entity designated by each governor

to oversee Byrne JAG. The SAAs conduct cross-system strategic planning, design and implement programs, award sub-grants to local governments and non-profit service providers, evaluate program effectiveness, and ensure the full accountability of all federal funds. With a structure and process that varies by state, the strategic planning process analyzes crime trends, provides a forum for eliciting the policy priorities of the various sectors of the justice system, and establishes a plan for the use of the grant funds.

Funding & Community Support

Byrne JAG funds flow by formula to all states and over 1,000 localities. Funding is authorized at \$1.1 billion but annual appropriations have never reached that level. For many years, funding was steady at about \$510 million. With the lowering of the caps on discretionary spending under the Budget Control Act of 2011, funding for Byrne JAG and most of the justice assistance grant programs dropped by about one-third and have never recovered. Throughout the program's history, a large and broad coalition representing all segments of the criminal justice system has consistently supported robust and steady funding for the Byrne JAG program.

Learn More

For more information about how states invest Byrne JAG funds visit [NCJA's website](#) or contact [Elizabeth Pyke](#), NCJA Director of Government Affairs.

States Invest Byrne JAG Across the Justice System

Percent of States Investing Funds Across Multiple Purpose Areas

n=41

