

STATE OF MINNESOTA- FY 2023 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Program Narrative

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is the State Administering Agency for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. Over the last twenty-five years, OJP has implemented a multi-faceted strategy, informed by data and criminal justice and community input, to prevent and reduce further involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice system as well as reduced violent crime with JAG funds. Together with state, local, and tribal partners, OJP has successfully improved the state's criminal and juvenile justice systems with a focus on implementing best practice programming. JAG funds have enabled Minnesota to enhance public safety throughout the state.

Description of Issue/s:

Minnesota's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has distributed JAG funding across all JAG purpose areas, allowing the state to test innovative criminal justice practices and implement effective programming. The need for these JAG funds is still very evident looking at violent crime statistics. After declining in 2018 and 2019, violent crime in Minnesota increased 17.2% in 2020 and 21.6% in 2021, according to Minnesota Department of Public Safety's 2021 statewide crime report. Data for 2022 is not yet available. The goal of the Minnesota 2023 JAG Program is to improve public safety by leveraging JAG funds for the maximum impact of local and federal funds. OJP needs additional information that will be collected through the execution of local and federal grant programs to determine the JAG program area(s) OJP will focus JAG funds on. See separate strategic plan attachment for details.

Sub-Grant Award Process

FFY 2023 JAG funds will be allocated through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. OJP plans to fund programs using evidence-based practices. OJP also recognizes the challenges of funding grants that are strictly implementing evidence-based programs, so OJP will support programs that are incorporating features of programs that research shows are highly effective. The RFP will list the following resources on evidence-based and best practices:

- National Institute of Justice
 - [Crime Solutions](#)
 - [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#)
- [National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#)
- [Models for Change Evidence-based Practices](#)
- [Oregon Knowledge Bank](#)
- [Bureau of Justice Assistance, Justice Reinvestment Initiative](#)
- [National Institute of Corrections](#)
- [Center for Court Innovation](#)
- SAMHSA
 - [Screening and Assessment](#)
 - [Evidence-Based Practices Web Guide](#)
- [Transition from Jail to Community](#)

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- [Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy](#)
- [BJA Smart Suite or Programs](#)

Additionally, to build capacity of potential applicants to develop successful proposals, OJP will offer RFP information sessions to provide additional training on the use of best and promising practices.

The RFP will be published in the Minnesota State Register, posted on the OJP website, and sent out to the agency's extensive contact list. A Frequently Asked Questions webpage will be updated weekly. All applications will be submitted via the OJP web-based grants management system (e-grants).

Applications will be reviewed and scored according to a standardized scoring process by external reviewers with expertise and interest in the program area. They will be scored on the following areas:

- Organizational Overview
- Planning Process
- Project Description
- Evaluation
- Work plan/Outcomes
- Budget

Conflict of interest statements will be reviewed and signed by each reviewer and staff involved in the review processes. Review groups, having read and scored the same proposals, will meet to discuss each application and develop funding priorities. Reviewers and OJP staff will use the applications, past performance, CrimeSolutions.gov and other best practices and/or research resources to guide funding recommendations. Funding recommendations will be submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety for final approval.

Agencies recommended for funding undergo a pre-award risk assessment prior to final grant execution. This ensures compliance with MN Office of Grants Management and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Grant Guidance (200.331(b)) policies which require a pre-award financial review and evaluation of each sub recipient's risk of non-compliance for purposes of monitoring. The pre-award financial review will ensure the fiscal control and accounting procedures are sufficient to prepare required reports and allow for tracking of funds that ensures funds have been used in conformance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Sub recipients will then attend a mandatory grantee orientation. This covers general grants administration including highlights of Federal Financial Guide and the MN OJP Grant Manual, sub recipient monitoring and reporting, and program evaluation and data collection.

Timeline

- Early 2024- Grants for the state funds will be executed.
- Spring 2024-the JAG SCIP funding priorities will be determined.
- Spring 2024- Statistical Analysis Center Staff will be hired.
- Late Spring 2024- OJP will determine the best strategy for determining gaps and areas to coordinate efforts between the already funded local and state grants and the FY 2023 JAG grants.

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- Summer 2024- OJP will submit a GAM to BJA to approve the updated strategic plan
- Late Summer 2024- After BJA approval, OJP will release the competitive JAG RFP
- Early fall 2024- OJP will complete a community review of the proposals and make award decisions.
- January 1, 2025- Will be the tentative start date FY 2023 JAG subawards.

Project Design and Implementation - State Strategic Planning Process

Minnesota has implemented very robust strategic planning processes in previous JAG application years. These processes included multiple stakeholder surveys with over 900 responses, convening stakeholders to review data, and having targeted discussions regarding funding priorities. OJP has had diminished capacity to complete a strategic planning process that matches previous years' planning process standards due to staff turnover, lack of Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) staff who will be crucial to plan development.

Because of these challenges, OJP partnered with the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) to develop and distribute a stakeholder engagement survey in Spring 2023 to inform the state's JAG priorities. NCJA and OJP collaborated to create and distribute a logic-based survey to a broad spectrum of criminal justice system partners to inform statewide criminal justice priorities. The survey sought input from stakeholders on criminal justice challenges and priority project types and initiatives within JAG purpose areas.

The survey results showed that stakeholders identified the following needs:

- More treatment options, programming, services, and resources for those struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- More diversion programs, including specialty courts and juvenile-specific programming.
- An increased need for reentry programs and services, including those offering behavioral health services as well as those addressing basic human needs such as housing.
- Programs aimed at preventing mental health issues/substance use disorders, including for youth.

The survey highlighted the need for a holistic approach to addressing behavioral health issues, noting the ways in which behavioral health needs touch all aspects of the criminal justice system. A large need for culturally specific programming was identified, and a pressing need for housing, specifically sober and transitional housing options. Staffing within and across criminal justice system agencies was identified as a major challenge throughout this survey. Although there were some noted limitations such as a 60% decrease in survey responses from previous years and a disproportionate number of responses from law enforcement and crime victim service providers versus other stakeholders representing the other JAG program areas; the survey results aligned with what the Minnesota Legislature saw as areas of need.

During the period that the strategic planning survey was being implemented, Minnesota's Legislature made an historic investment of over a billion dollars in criminal justice and criminal

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justice adjacent initiatives. Please see the separate 2023 Minnesota JAG Strategic Plan for more information. Because of this local investment and concurrent federal grant programs such as Project Safe Neighborhoods and Byrne State Crisis Intervention and Prevention; MN OJP saw an opportunity to use these JAG funds to maximize the impact of these other local and state initiatives.

Capabilities and Competencies - Additional Planning and Coordination

Minnesota Office of Justice Programs currently houses the Justice and Crime Victim Grants Division, Youth Justice Office, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office, Missing and Murder Black Women's Office, the (soon to be fully staffed) Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), the Office of Crime Victim Ombudsman, as well as the MN Crime Victim Reimbursement Board. This structure has provided opportunities to streamline grant processes, conduct joint planning and training, and coordination of resources and efforts to reduce crime and assist victims.

OJP administers federal grant funds including JAG, JAG PREA, JAG SORNA, JAG SCIP, Project Safe Neighborhoods, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Title II, Coverdell, Violence against Women STOP, Sexual Assault Services Program, Family Violence Prevention Services, Victims of Crime Act Compensation and Direct Services and State Automated Victim Information Systems. OJP also administers state grant programs including funds for multi-jurisdictional law enforcement efforts, sex trafficking investigations task forces, youth and community prevention and intervention and crime victim services as well as many more grant programs that were enacted in the 2023 state legislative session. OJP works to coordinate grant making across these funding areas and with other federal, state, and local entities dedicated to preventing crime, improving the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and serving victims of crime.

OJP staff historically have sought input from stakeholders around the state to inform and coordinate activities to ensure that criminal and juvenile justice related planning outcomes are coordinated, complementary and non-duplicative. The plan for the 2023 JAG funds is to amplify these coordinated efforts. In addition to enhancing current initiatives, a goal would be to build structured collaborative efforts between state entities as well as local units of government moving forward.

While Minnesota does not have an overall criminal justice governing board, OJP directly supports several multi-disciplinary justice related planning and policy groups.

1. The Violent Crime Coordinating Committee, comprised of state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, corrections, and community members, charged with developing a statewide law enforcement strategy to combat violent crime.
2. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

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3. The Criminal Justice Collaborative, originally formed as an advisory group for a VAWA Grants to Encourage Arrest project, includes representatives of the MN Coalition for Battered Women, MN County Attorney's Association, MN Sheriff's Association, MN Chiefs of Police Association; Tribal Court Judges Association, MN Indian Affairs Council, MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; MN Dept. of Corrections MN; State Court Administrator's Office, and the MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault.
4. Victim Notification Advisory Board convened to assist in the further development of Minnesota's notification systems, VINE, and CHOICE.

In addition, OJP staff serve on a significant number of criminal and juvenile justice, crime victim, and community groups that meet regularly to plan and coordinate activities and to gather information on emerging needs and gaps. These groups include but are not limited to:

- The statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, Safe Harbor, tasked with developing model protocols for serving victims of trafficking with an emphasis on juveniles
- The Treatment Court Initiative Advisory Committee, this multi-disciplinary, cross-branch committee oversees and advises policy formulation and implementation as well as funding distribution for treatment court approaches in Minnesota.
- State Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Statewide Advisory Board
- Minnesota Interagency Council to End Homelessness
- United Way committee on Stabilizing Families
- Department of Corrections (DOC) MN Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction Plan Executive Planning Team
- DOC State-Interstate Compact Committee
- DOC State-Interstate Juvenile Compact Committee
- DOC Transition/Reentry Initiative
- DOC Chemical Dependency Treatment Certification Team
- Statewide Substance Abuse Strategy Team
- Strengthening Families Affected by Incarceration
- Northside Funders Group
- Statewide Homeland Security Advisory Committee

OJP staff meet regularly with representatives of professional associations including the Minnesota Chief's and Sheriff's Associations, the County Attorney's Association, the Public Defenders Association, Minnesota Battered Women's, Minnesota Sexual Assault and Minnesota General Crime Coalitions to seek input and ensure coordination of services.

OJP also works closely with the the MN Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Tribal Liaison. The tribal liaison provides training and consultation to OJP and DPS staff and works to ensure that tribal public safety needs are taken into consideration in all OJP's work.

Plan for Collecting Required Data for Performance Measurement

All OJP grantees are required to attend an annual training to review the OJP Grant Manual, program evaluation requirements and performance reporting protocols. OJP has a sophisticated web-based grants management system, e-grants, to assist in the administration and monitoring of grants from application to close out. Grantees are required to submit a request for reimbursement and a performance report via e-grants on a quarterly basis. Grants management staff work closely with grantees to ensure that data is submitted in a complete and timely manner. OJP staff ensures the submission of sub-grantee performance measurement data to the Bureau of Justice Assistance PMT system as required, either through staff submission of information provided in grantee reports to OJP or through direct submission by grantees into the federal system. Grants staff also provides monitoring services including site visits, phone monitoring, financial reconciliation reviews, training, and technical assistance.

OJP uses the following PMT verification process:

- Subgrantee enters data directly into the PMT website.
- Subgrantee verifies their PMT report is completed in the e-grants quarterly report.
- Grant managers review PMT report by
 - Verifying information with what was planned for in their original workplan,
 - Comparing it to the last quarters' PMT report, looking for outliers of information, and
 - Checking for continuity in the narrative progress report that is submitted for the same quarter.
- Grant manager then approves the report in e-grants.
- If the PMT report needs to be revised, the grant manager opens the PMT report on the BJA site and the subgrantee makes revisions and resubmits report into e-grants.
- After all PMT reports are submitted and reviewed, OJP submits all reports in the PMT website.

OJP staff complete the Deaths in Custody Report Act (DCRA) reporting requirement in the PMT system. This process is detailed in the accompanying DCRA State Implementation Plan.

OJP is committed to working in partnership with all grantees and the Bureau of Justice Assistance to ensure that grantees are in compliance with federal financial and administrative requirements and achieving their stated program goals.