

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) 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 with JAG funds to prevent and reduce further involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice system and reduce violent crime. This strategy is informed by data and criminal justice and community input. Together with state, local, tribal, and community partners, OJP has successfully improved the state's criminal and juvenile justice systems with a focus on implementing programming reflective of best and promising practices. JAG funds enable Minnesota to enhance public safety throughout the state.

Description of Issue

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 JAG funds is still very critical as evident by the ongoing challenges within Minnesota's criminal justice system. These recent data reflect highlight areas that require attention and reform.

- **Racial Disparities:** A 2023 report found that Black Minnesotans are arrested at nearly six times the rate of white Minnesotans, with Black individuals making up about 34% of the state's prison population.
- **Mental Health:** A 2022 study indicated that approximately 35% of individuals in Minnesota jails have a mental health condition, with many lacking the access to appropriate treatment while incarcerated.
- **Overcrowding:** As of 2023, several correctional facilities in Minnesota reported operating at over 100% capacity, leading to increased challenges in providing adequate healthcare and rehabilitation services.
- **Recidivism Rates:** The Minnesota Department of Corrections reported a recidivism rate of 61% within three years for individuals released from prison in 2022, highlighting ongoing challenges in effective rehabilitation.
- **Victim Support Services:** A 2023 survey revealed that only 53% of crime victims felt that the support services they received were adequate, indicating a gap in necessary resources.
- **Community Trust:** A 2022 poll found that 68% of respondents from communities of color felt that the police do not treat people of their racial or ethnic group fairly.

Strategy and Funding Priorities/Programs to be Funded

OJP is currently conducting stakeholder engagement to update Minnesota's 5-year strategic plan for JAG funds. The updated strategic plan will inform funding priorities and the types of

STATE OF MINNESOTA - FFY 2024 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Program Narrative

programs to be funded. It is reasonable to expect that Minnesota's updated strategic plan will consider the following long-standing Minnesota priorities.

- **Supporting Emerging Needs.** Minnesota's Byrne JAG subawards have funded new or emerging programs that can turn into long-term programming. For instance, Minnesota used Byrne JAG funds for a grant to the Duluth Police Department for their crisis intervention/behavioral health unit. That program is now funded by the City of Duluth. Further, this initiative in the Duluth Police Department was one of the first crisis response/crisis intervention initiatives for a police department in Minnesota. Minnesota is now using lessons learned from Duluth to inform expansion of crisis intervention/behavioral health models with state funding and Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program funding.
- **Supporting LE while Supporting Emerging Needs.** OJP has used past Byrne JAG awards to continue longstanding support for law enforcement while supporting programs addressing emerging criminal and juvenile justice system needs.
- **Priorities.** Minnesota's Byrne JAG competitive funding opportunities have prioritized:
 - Programs with community and system partnerships.
 - Filling gaps in systems.
 - Programs that serve communities most impacted by violence and communities overrepresented in the criminal and juvenile justice systems: particularly Black and Indigenous Minnesotans.
 - Programs that reflect the ethnic, racial, economic, cultural, and geographic diversity of the state.
- **Types of Programs.** Minnesota has used Byrne JAG funds for initiatives such as:
 - Intervention programs with the goal to disrupt practices and further involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice systems
 - Restorative practices
 - Diversion options
 - Systems change work
 - Case management
 - Mental health
 - Pretrial services
 - Reentry services
 - Substance use disorder or behavioral health care
 - Recidivism Reduction
 - Violent crime investigation and prosecution

Timeline for FFY24 Subawards

- Early Fall 2024: OJP released stakeholder survey for updated strategic plan.
- Late Fall 2024: NCJA provides analysis of survey results for updated strategic plan.

STATE OF MINNESOTA - FFY 2024 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Program Narrative

- Winter 2024-2025: OJP develops updated strategic plan.
- Spring 2025: OJP submits updated strategic plan to BJA via GAM for approval.
- Late Summer 2025: Pending BJA approval of strategic plan, OJP releases a competitive RFP for JAG subawards.
- Fall 2025: OJP completes a community review of proposals, makes subaward decisions, and negotiates and executes grant agreements.
- Winter 2025-2026: Grant start for FFY 2024 JAG subawards.

Sub-Award Process

FFY 2024 JAG funds will be allocated through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. OJP plans to fund programs using evidence-based or promising 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.

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.

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

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 Minnesota 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 subrecipient's risk of non-compliance for purposes of monitoring. The pre-award financial review ensures 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.

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

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. Unfortunately, OJP has had reduced capacity to complete a strategic planning process that matches previous years' planning process standards due lack of Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) staff who are crucial to plan development.

2023 Strategic Planning Stakeholder Engagement

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 results from the 2023 survey 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, as was 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.

STATE OF MINNESOTA - FFY 2024 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Program Narrative

The most notable limitation in the 2023 stakeholder survey was a 60% decrease in survey responses from previous years. There was also a disproportionate number of responses from law enforcement and crime victim service providers compared to other stakeholders representing the other JAG program areas.

New Investments

Minnesota's Legislature made a historic investment in criminal justice and criminal justice adjacent initiatives for state fiscal years 2024-2025. Minnesota recently submitted the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program FFY 2022-2023 state plan to BJA for approval and will engage the Minnesota Byrne SCIP Advisory Board in the development of the FFY 2024 Byrne SCIP plan. Considering the impact of these investments is a critical piece of Minnesota's strategic planning for the Byrne JAG funds. It is important OJP understands where investments have been made and where gaps exist so funds can be coordinated across funding streams.

2024 Strategic Planning Stakeholder Engagement

OJP, in partnership with NCJA, is conducting a 2024 stakeholder survey to continue stakeholder engagement given the changes in investments, needs, and priorities throughout the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. OJP staff are distributing the survey in an intentional and targeted manner to ensure broad participation.

Minnesota will use the survey to draft an updated 5-year strategic plan for JAG funds.

Note: OJP did not complete strategic planning from the 2023 stakeholder survey for a few key reasons. First, OJP was unable to hire staff for the Statistical Analysis Center to assist in the efforts in the last year. Second, OJP did not want to create a strategic plan from the stakeholder survey alone because of the low response rate and lack of representation from all JAG program areas in the responses.

2024-2025 Strategic Planning Stakeholder Engagement

Minnesota is developing a comprehensive plan for long-term, ongoing stakeholder engagement and strategic planning.

Minnesota will build on lessons learned developing and supporting the Byrne SCIP Advisory Board. Minnesota does not have an existing Byrne JAG or Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission that many states have. Thus, Minnesota needed to create an Advisory Board for the purpose of Byrne SCIP. In an effort to engage individuals OJP had not worked with before, OJP conducted an open application process for individuals to express interest in joining the Advisory Board. OJP publicized the opportunity through a broadly distributed email announcement. OJP received 44 applications for 13 positions on the board. BJA required the following specific membership for the advisory board: representatives from law enforcement, the community, courts, prosecution, behavioral health providers, victim services, and legal

counsel. OJP staff ensured the membership reflected the ethnic, racial, economic, cultural, and geographic diversity of the state. OJP was pleased to select members for the advisory board who brought varied experiences and expertise such as a trauma and critical care surgeon at one of the Twin Cities' largest level 1 trauma centers and two members with behavioral health expertise.

OJP received investments from the Minnesota Legislature to employ community engagement staff in OJP who will be able to ensure we have meaningful participation from communities most impacted by violence and crime.

Capabilities and Competencies - Additional Planning and Coordination

Minnesota Office of Justice Programs houses the Minnesota Youth Justice Office, the Minnesota Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives, the Minnesota Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls, the (soon to be staffed) Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), the Office of Crime Victim Ombudsman, as well as the Minnesota Crime Victim Reimbursement Program and Board (VOCA Comp). 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 is the State Administering Agency for 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, community crime intervention and prevention programs, behavioral health crisis response programs, crime victim services, and others. 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. OJP will use 2024 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.

STATE OF MINNESOTA - FFY 2024 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Program Narrative

- 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.
- The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.
- The Criminal Justice Collaborative, originally formed as an advisory group for a VAWA Grants to Encourage Arrest project, includes representatives of the
- Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, the Minnesota Sheriff's Association, the County Attorneys Association, the Public Defenders Association, the Tribal Court Judges Association, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; Minnesota Department of Corrections; the Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office, and Minnesota's Crime Victims coalitions.
- 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 Chiefs of Police Association, the Minnesota Sheriff's Association, the County

Attorneys Association, the Public Defenders Association, and Crime Victims coalitions to seek input and ensure coordination of services.

OJP also works closely with the Minnesota 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

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 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.
- 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 compliant with federal financial and administrative requirements and achieving their stated program goals.