



Cornerstone for Justice:

How Tennessee 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 Tennessee:

In 2018, the Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs invested in numerous successful initiatives. Examples include:

- Statewide trainings to improve the criminal justice response to violent crime. Trainings have included: forensic training in death investigation for both sworn investigators and state medical examiner personnel; executive leadership training for local law enforcement agencies and professional development of state investigators; correctional staff training to properly identify gang members; and training for judicial staff and law enforcement entities on topics including body cameras, IT system constraints and bystander privacy.
- The social and economic conditions of distressed rural counties make it difficult for incarcerated individuals to successfully re-enter society and to break the cycle of recidivism. As a part of its statewide goal of providing greater access to re-entry services Tennessee utilizes its JAG funds to provide staff for a re-entry program in Grundy County. The primary mission of this program is to reduce the recidivism rate within Grundy County by establishing a web of support and continuum of care to offenders both during incarceration and after release. Project staff have formed relationships with community partners to provide educational, training, and employment opportunities to program participants with a goal of beginning these services to everyone who is in need at least 60 days ahead of release.
- The TN Bureau of Investigation, in collaboration with the TN Association of Chiefs of Police and the TN Sheriffs’ Association, and the Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services of Tennessee provides officers involved in a shooting with trauma debriefing and counseling to help them work through any residual trauma or post-traumatic stress associated with the shooting.
- 18 Multi-Jurisdictional Drug and Violent Crime Task Forces that target gangs, drugs and violent crime in 70 counties. The Task Forces bolster methamphetamine and prescription drug enforcement efforts and support community collaboration by bringing together local resources.

Tennessee’s Investment By Purpose Area

Total Investment = \$5,380,848

39%



Law Enforcement

19%



Drug Treatment & Enforcement

16%



Prevention & Education

12%



Corrections, Community Corrections & Reentry

8%



Prosecution & Courts (including indigent defense)

3%



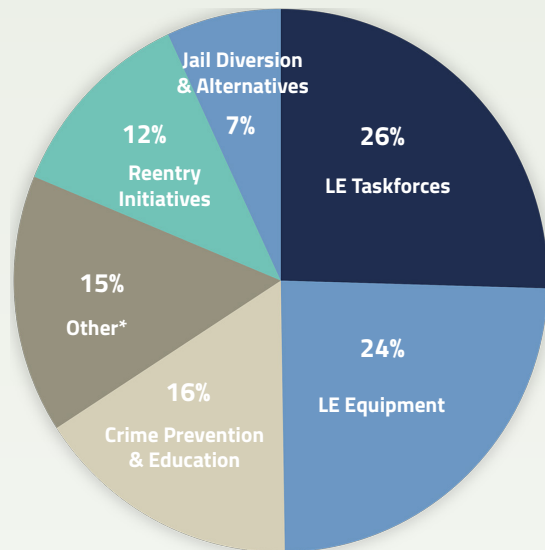
Planning, Evaluation & Technology

3%



Crime Victim & Witness

Tennessee's Byrne JAG Investments by Project Type



*Other includes: LE Training, DV & SA Prevention, Adult Victim Services, Human Trafficking, Forensic Science.

- Equipment purchases for local and state agencies, including the TN Bureau of Investigation's Forensic Science Division, the City of Memphis Internet Crimes Against Children Division, enhancing the Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN) system to notify victims of offender status changes via text, the development of a web application that allows local law enforcement and victim service agencies to better share information and coordinate a response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and facility audio-visual updates to improve the TN Law Enforcement Training Academy's ability to deliver training to thousands of law enforcement personnel per year.
- The TN Department of Corrections project to provide temporary transportation services to assist with access to critical reentry services for probationers and parolees with revoked licenses for up to 30 days. Services are intended to reduce recidivism by assisting individuals travel to meetings, work or treatment services that are required as a condition of their release.
- In the City of Jackson, Byrne JAG funds supported the implementation of the gang resistance and prevention Phoenix Curriculum for students in school, after school, and during the summer in order to teach them alterna-

tives to gang membership and violence in a social learning atmosphere that stresses non-violent coping skills. This program includes parental involvement and is utilized by Juvenile Court when individuals are assessed as needing gang intervention and education.

- Planning and implementation to expand Family Justice Centers (FJs) in 5 new communities (Nashville, Chattanooga, Cookeville, Johnson City, and the City of Jackson). FJs serve as a comprehensive support center by co-locating services for victims of crime. Typical services include those provided by law enforcement, prosecutors, court, civil legal services and social service professionals. These sites were further supported through a training and technical assistance Byrne JAG grant to the Knoxville FJC.
- Tennessee has implemented a pilot pre-trial assessment project in Nashville and Knoxville. The project seeks to enhance public safety and improve criminal justice efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating the unnecessary use of pre-trial detention. The pilot sites will determine which charges will qualify for consideration in this project, and then an assessment will be chosen and tested.

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.

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