



Cornerstone for Justice: How Nebraska Uses Byrne JAG Funding to Protect Public Safety and Prevent Crime

The cornerstone of federal support for state and local justice systems, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is a federal-state-local partnership enabling communities to target resources to their most pressing local needs.

Byrne JAG is used broadly for law enforcement, prosecution, indigent defense, courts, prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning evaluation and technology, mental health services, and crime victim and witness programs. This breadth and flexibility means states and local communities can use Byrne JAG to balance resources and address problems across the entire criminal justice system, and to react quickly to urgent challenges and changing circumstances. Many innovative criminal justice practices demonstrated using Byrne JAG funds have been replicated nationwide, such as drug courts, opioid prevention and addiction response, methamphetamine lab reduction, anti-gang strategies, reentry programs and information sharing protocols.

Byrne JAG in Nebraska:

In 2016, the Nebraska Crime Commission invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

- In consultation with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, the Lincoln Police Department launched a “community cleanup” project in several Lincoln neighborhoods to improve community policing and decrease crime and violent crime. The goal of this intervention is to make residents aware of the police presence, clean up disorderly properties and promote a sense that the police are protecting community interests. Several activities make up the police intervention including: 1) engaging the residents in “knock and talk” discussions, 2) warning property owners about problem properties including writing Disorderly House letters when necessary, 3) holding community meetings to discuss the neighborhood, 4) holding community picnics and social gatherings, 5) enforcing current property and housing laws, and 6) mapping the intervention areas and saturating them with police officers.
- Byrne JAG funds support the Sarpy County Mental Health Program which offers intensive case management to

clients with mental health problems modelled after problem solving courts. The program attempts to help individuals improve their living skills, manage mental health needs and reduce additional contacts with the criminal justice system. The purpose of the program is to reduce recidivism through intensive case management services.

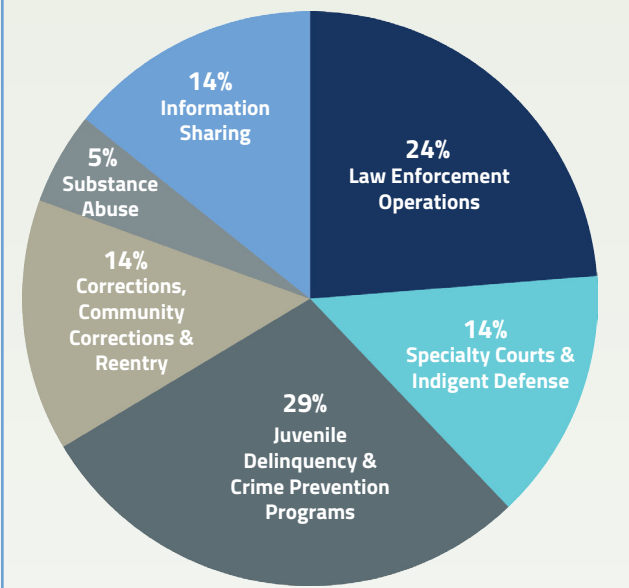
Byrne JAG funding keeps citizens safe, prevents crime and victimization, and provides services to individuals in the justice system so when they return to their communities they are better equipped with the tools and skills they need to build productive lives.

Nebraska’s Investment By Purpose Area

Total Investment = \$860,000



How Nebraska Invests Byrne JAG Funds



Additional Examples:

- Support for the Nebraska Department of Corrections in launching its second year of providing housing vouchers to parolees leaving the institution so that they can obtain appropriate and stable housing to assist them in transition from prison back into the community.
- The African Aid Initiative (AAI) is a non-profit agency that acts as an agent of change to educate, empower, and engage the war-ravaged refugee youth population from Africa. One of the AAI central goals is to reduce the rate of criminal activity among the refugee youth. AAI strives to strengthen families, encourage parental involvement in school and offer youth programming. With the assistance of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln AAI succeeded in these efforts during the last year by developing a state-of-the-art mentoring program that currently involves 40 refugee youth. The program is under development and moving toward an evidence based practice standard.
- Funding supports the Omaha Police Department (OPD), in collaboration with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, to modify the Police Athletics for Community Engagement program (PACE) to focus more attention on youth currently in probation. Funds support home checks, conducted

jointly by the OPD and Nebraska Probation Officers, which include communications with the youth, communications with the parents, checks for contraband, education about the court order, penalties, and incentives, and an invitation to join the PACE project. The PACE project involves officers acting as sports coaches to engage the youth in sports activities (soccer, baseball, football, CrossFit and basketball) while developing meaningful relationships. The goal of this intervention is to develop strong positive relationships between the youth on probation and the officers in the service of ultimately reducing crime and violent crime in the communities involved.

How Byrne JAG Funding is Awarded:

Sixty percent of the overall Byrne JAG grant is awarded to the state criminal justice planning agency (known as the State Administrating Agency or SAA), which, in turn, awards the funding, to local governments and non-profit service providers; the remaining 40 percent goes directly from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to local communities based on population and crime data.

Funding is authorized at \$1.1 billion annually. At its peak in FY02, Congress appropriated \$830 million. In subsequent years, funding held steady at about \$500 million. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in FY09 provided a one-time boost of \$2 billion. Since FY10, funding has dropped by about one-third. In FY17 the program was funded at \$335 million.

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.

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