



## Cornerstone for Justice: How West Virginia 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 West Virginia:

In 2016, the West Virginia Department of Justice & Community Services invested in numerous successful initiatives. Some examples include:

- Thirteen multi-jurisdictional task forces that have been a pioneering initiative in the battle against violent crime and drug abuse for several years. The organized task forces are funded in part by the Byrne JAG program.

The state currently has one statewide task force and several local task forces, spanning five counties. The task forces are made up of officers at the local, county, state, and federal levels, allowing for more effective coordination and use of combined resources and improving public safety in the fight drugs and violent crime.

- The Prevention Resource Officer (PRO) Program in West Virginia Schools. The PRO Program is a cooperative effort between schools and law enforcement to: improve student's attitudes and knowledge of criminal justice and law enforcement, to prevent kids from committing crimes, to mentor youth with law enforcement officers

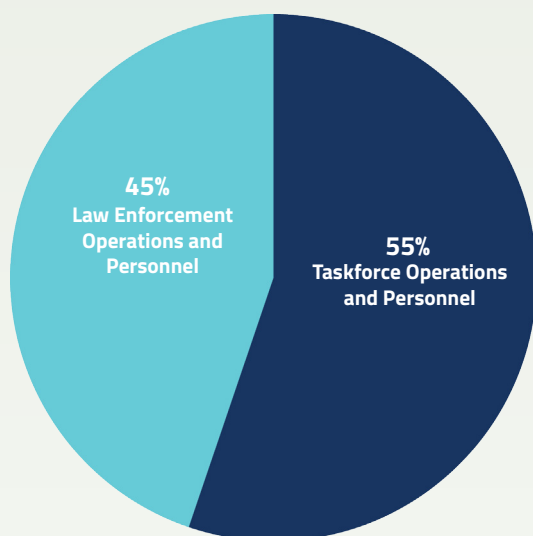
to provide a safer school environment and to combine safety and child advocacy assuring a better school experience for all West Virginia youth. PRO has three main goals:

- Prevention;
- Mentoring; and
- Safety.

Byrne JAG 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 equipped with the tools and skills they need to build productive lives.

### How West Virginia Invests Byrne JAG Funds

Total Investment = \$1,235,991



### 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.

### 2016 Byrne JAG Spending Study:

Financial estimates and program examples were gathered as part of the 2016 Byrne JAG Spending Study conducted by the National Criminal Justice Association. Financial data was submitted by and qualitative interviews were conducted with all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

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.

This funding touches nearly every city and town in America through projects funded and investments made in the state and local justice systems. These grants also are a catalyst for collaboration within communities and across states.

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