

# Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards

## *Informational Webinar: Tips and Tricks for Success*

### **TRANSCRIPT**

National Criminal Justice Association, 2016

Cabell Cropper: Good afternoon everyone. I'm Cabell Cropper. I'm the Executive Director of the National Criminal Justice Association. I really appreciate your interest in our Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards. I'm here to provide you some information, as it says, tips and tricks for success. I'm not so sure there are any tricks involved here. It's pretty straightforward with it. I will spend some time explaining our criteria for identifying and making the awards for an outstanding criminal justice program.

If you're looking at the screen with the title, you have logged in successfully. All of you have been muted. Move the slide. There we go. We are audio casting this webinar via the speakers on your computer, or if you like to listen by phone, the call in number can be found in the confirmation email you received, as well as up here on the screen, or up at the top of your screen to the left. There's an event info tab which has the phone numbers as well. Since we have you muted, if you'd like to ask a question, please use the chat feature down at the lower right hand corner to communicate with us. Please remember to select host and presenter. I will respond to the question either as we get them or at the end of the presentation.

The agenda for the call for the webinar is to give you an idea about why we do this. Why does NCJA recognize outstanding criminal justice programs? And then, What is an outstanding criminal justice program? What do we consider to be outstanding? Then, what are the essential elements of a competitive application? I'll give you an idea of how we evaluate applications. Then we'll talk about when and how award winners are recognized.

I'm sure most of you are familiar with NCJA. To give an idea of what our mission is ... Our mission is to promote the development of justice systems and programs that deliver effective justice to our nation's communities. You can see all the words up there, but essentially what we're all about is good criminal justice practice and policy. We're also ... One of our major areas of focus is program planning, implementation, evaluation and funding.

Our constituency are the state, local and tribal criminal justice decision makers and practitioners. We really support and try to provide resources and assistance to criminal justice decision makers and practitioners. Our core constituency are the state agencies that are designated by governors to administer and manage criminal justice funding, particularly the Byrne JAG program. Our members also administer a number of other funding streams, including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Offices On Violence Against Women, Offices For Victims Of Crime and a number of other federal funding streams, as well as many agencies also manage significant state resources. We look to them for guidance and really to keep us abreast of what's going on in the field. This is one way that we do that, by administering this program so that we learn more than, I think, from all of you in terms of the applications that you submit that we use actually throughout the year.

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So what are we looking for when we're looking for an outstanding program? First of all, we want the program to address an important criminal justice issue. We don't define those issues, but I think all of you in the field know what those are. There's a number of issues that are of concern and that consume a lot of resources in terms of time and funding, including the heroin abuse epidemic. Reentry continues to be an issue. Pretrial justice reform has come to the fore and a number of other issues and, as I said, we don't try to define them. We don't put any kind of priority.

One issue we're looking, the application has to make it clear that it's an important criminal justice issue. It could be an important criminal justice issue in your community. It doesn't have to be necessarily a national criminal justice issue, but it has to be important. You need to make sure that we understand that it's an important issue. Another issue that we're always promoting is the idea of collaboration. We know that we ... No one can address all these problems by themselves, so we're always looking for programs that demonstrate collaboration. We're also looking for quantitative evidence of its effectiveness and I'll talk more about all of these. We just want to see programs that leverage federal, state and local and other non-governmental funds and resources and then can this program, can your program, be easily replicated in another jurisdiction. Programs that are unique to a particular set of circumstances or location would probably not do as well in the award process as programs that can be picked up and replicated by other agencies.

Starting with the important criminal justice issue, as I said, the issue has to represent a challenge facing criminal justice practitioners. Heroin addiction, disproportionate minority involvement, reducing recidivism, justice system reform, sentencing pretrials, things like police practices, that kind of thing. It doesn't have to be a criminal justice program in the strict sense of the word and the phrase. It can be a juvenile focused program. Sometimes we get questions about would we consider a juvenile program. Yes, we will. Because we use the words criminal justice, that does not exclude juvenile programs, juvenile focused programs.

Some of the previous award winners, as you see up here, are the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Center of Excellence, the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy Alternative Social Worker Program. That's a public indigent defense program. And then the Chemical Health and Justice Sanctions La Crosse County Human Services. I put those examples up there because they represent a variety of different kinds of programs. Obviously the Pennsylvania program is focused on juvenile justice. The Kentucky program, as I mentioned, is an indigent defense program. The Chemical Health and Justice Sanctions comes from a county human services agency. It doesn't necessarily have to be a criminal justice agency, but it does have to address a criminal justice issue.

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As I said, we wanted to demonstrate collaboration. Challenges can't be overcome by a single agency and we want to see programs where the success of the program depends on participation by two or more partners. We say collaboration among non-traditional partners is encouraged, such as law enforcement and substance abuse, school systems and courts. You see some of the previous winners demonstrate that kind of element in their program. With the Saint Leonard's Ministry, which is a faith based organization working with a housing authority ... There is on a drug prevention abuse and misuse program with local community coalitions and state government agencies. And the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence which included academic as well as law enforcement and city agencies. So we're looking for ... I think collaboration has become more of an expected element of programs over the years and so we continue to encourage those kinds of collaboration.

We've got one question here. Can private, non-profit, non-NCJA members agency nominate for this award? Anyone can nominate for the award. It can be a state agency, an NCJA member state agency. It can be any other kind of program. It doesn't necessarily have to be a criminal justice agency that makes the nomination. A program can nominate itself. I think the most important element here is on the face sheet, an element of the application, is that we request the signature of the state administering agency. This is not ... The signature doesn't indicate any kind of support. It just indicates that the SAA is aware of the application being submitted. If those of you, and I think I talk about this later, those of you who might not know who your state administering agency is, can find that on our website, which is N-C-J-P dot org. There's a tab called state agencies and you can see the state agency for your jurisdiction.

This is probably the area that is the hardest, we find the hardest to deal with. We want quantitative performance measures. Those two words, quantitative and performance, are very important. The program must provide data based outcomes. As I said, this is the most problematic area. I would say as a hint, pay attention to the following factors. Outcomes must relate to the program goal and outcomes must be provided for a significant time period. We have had applications submitted by what looks like a very good program, but that it's only been in operation for six months. That's really not probably a significant time period to demonstrate outcome.

The third point there ... Output measures are not outcome measures. I think all of you probably know the difference but, for example, in a training program, the number of training sessions delivered or the number of people attending those training sessions are really not outcome measured. The measures relate to what happens because those people attended those training programs. Were they more likely to get a job? Were they more likely to recover from addiction? As I said there, number of training sessions is not an outcome measure. Testimonials by clients'

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families and community members are not outcome measures. We like reading them and it's good to see that, but that's really not what we're looking for in terms of how we evaluate a program.

As I said about the significant time period [inaudible 00:12:38] population, 95% of ten people completing a program is not as impressive as 95% of a hundred people. Now I know that not all pro-... We don't want to exclude programs that are dealing with small populations either because in a rural area or a specific problem ... But you need to be able to demonstrate to us why that is significant, why the outcome measure is significant in terms of how it relates to your program, your program goals.

We don't expect gold standard evaluations, the randomized controlled trials and all that kind of stuff. We're not looking for that because we know very few programs have the resources to do that. One example that we hold out there is Project Hope, the probation program that originated in Hawaii. They won our Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award. They were fortunate enough to have the funding and the support to engage in a randomized control trial evaluation. So they meet the gold standard but we're not looking, necessarily, for the gold standard. Obviously if you have that kind of evaluation, then we're interested. Some questions I have up here who aren't affiliated with the same program.

Speaker 2: [crosstalk 00:14:03] With regard ...

Cabell Cropper: With regard to program evaluation component, if the program evaluation is in progress, not yet completed, could an agency still nominate the program? Yes. Can still nominate the program, yes. You can still nominate it and if you have preliminary findings, make sure that's included. Include your evaluation design and at what stage you're at and what it's looking at. I think we have a question about can programs that aren't affiliated with a state program be nominated? Very definitely.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:14:35] tribal person.

Cabell Cropper: Okay. What about the tribal entities and the signature? I think, as I remember, I'm asking about something that, we waive that, right for the SAA?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Cabell Cropper: For tribal applications, you don't need your SAA. You don't need the SAA's signature. How many organizations win this award? We award one program in each of our four regions. So we have an award for our programs in the Northeast, in the South, in the Midwest and in the West, and then we have a Tribal Criminal Justice Program Award, which could be in any region, could be sort of a national thing. Any

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other questions up there? Okay. Let me go on. That was about the quantitative performance measures. Please, this is very important to us because it's an important element of evaluating programs and identifying programs that are really making a difference and are succeeding in accomplishing their goals and making a impact on the challenge that they've chosen.

This is a hypothetical example of quantitative performance measures issue. Let's say that you have a job training program from inmates released from a correctional institution and the goal is increasing the employment rates for these inmates and reducing recidivism. So the kind of performance measures that we're looking for ... Number of participants. That's an output but that's also performance because if it's a voluntary program that inmates may choose to participate in and so you show a high number of participants entering the program and completing the program, that's a good outcome measure. Number of employment or informational interviews completed by participants, number of participants placed in full time positions, number of participants maintaining full time employment for six months and for twelve months, number of participants arrested within six or twelve months, and number of participants re-incarcerated within twelve months following completion of program.

All those measures go to the goal of increasing employment rates for released inmates and reducing recidivism. That's what we would be looking for. We wouldn't be looking necessarily the number of training sessions provided or the number of counseling hours or that kind of thing. What we really want to know ... What are the outcomes of those training sessions and counseling hours?

We also are interested in programs that leverage resources and I think the elements of outstanding programs are they blend funding from multiple sources. They're not all dependent on one particular source of funding. We like to see grant funds, programs that use grant funds to implement the program and demonstrate success and transition, but then transition to non-grant funding. This is really the traditional basis for the Byrne JAG program. It was designed to provide funding for implementing pilot programs with the idea that they are given a time period, usually three years, to demonstrate success, and if that success is attained, then they can transition hopefully to non-grant funding sources either local government or state government funding.

We also like to see non-monetary support from program partners, support that kind of thing. [inaudible 00:18:26] do not depend exclusively demand on grant funds for extended periods of time. It is our contention that if a program is successful and worthy of continuation, then it moves off of grant funding onto permanent funding of another type. A couple of the previous winners, Muskogee Creek Nation Integration Program, leverages a number of resources across the community to provide support to tribal members re-entering the community.

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Project Hope does the same way, uses a lot of community programs to do this. I would encourage you to take some time to look at the descriptions of former award winners to see what kind of programs and their elements have been recognized in the past.

I have a question here. It says, "Examples have been at an individual level. Is community level intervention and outcomes also an area that is of interest?" As I said, we cast a wide net. Everything is of interest to us that meets the criteria that we're looking for. So, yes, if it's a program that addresses an important criminal justice issue and can demonstrate success, we're definitely interested. Attachment of documents. Should they attach an appendix or include it in the question response section? If you're attaching something like an evaluation report, it should be an attachment rather than included in the question and response section. For us, it's easier if the question and response section is focused on the particular question. It's easier for us to read through that and then refer to the appendices, but I would encourage you to indicate in the question response that you are attaching a document for us to review. Where do we find the description of previous winners? We'll send you the link and I think the link is on the page where you apply.

Speaker 3: It is actually ... Right. That's the page that you apply. While you're on our website if you look on the left hand bar, there's a page that's labeled previous award winners.

Cabell Cropper: We'll send that out to everyone. Okay. [inaudible 00:21:03] Oh, there we go. Now the other issue that we are always interested in is sustainable and replicable. WE want ... This also goes to the funding issue. WE want programs to demonstrate capacity to continue the program over time. If you're on soft funding like grant funding, talk about what your plans are to obtain permanent funding. Also, we're interested in the structure of the program that will continue to support program operations. We know that sometimes that's a challenge in communities where there's not a lot of money available for programs, but it's important element of a successful outstanding criminal justice program. It's demonstrating its effectiveness and has a plan for continuing services after the funding that it's currently on, if it's grant funding, is no longer available.

Replicability. That's another important issue is that the program that you're working on has elements that can be picked up by other criminal justice practitioners and applied in their jurisdiction. Obviously adjustments need to be made depending on the particular environment of the replicating jurisdiction, but there should be the core elements that can be replicated and hopefully find the same success that you're finding. Need to apply strategy that's dependent on unique circumstances is one that we probably would not consider because it really can be replicated. It's too unique.

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We have a question up here. In terms of leveraging resources, what if program is solely supported by local appropriations and does not include any grant funding, would this undermine a nomination? Our agency's currently applying for [inaudible 00:23:15] grants, but we don't have any grant funding at this time. No, not at all. I mean we're definitely interested. In fact, the Williamson County, Texas CIT Program that was awarded last year has been funded by the County for over ten years and has no grant funding. So, yes, definitely we're interested in programs. Programs do not need any kind of grant funding to qualify as an Outstanding Criminal Justice Programs. Some programs that we've recognized have been in existence for a long time. Others, not so much. Some have grant funding and are moving off of it. Some of them have grant funding plus other funding. So any kind of ... There's no specific criteria in terms of how the program is funding.

As an example, if we're working towards agreements where we can bill for certain services provided to inmates, a key piece of sustainability? Yes, I would say so because that means you've got access to services that are funding themselves or they have funding to provide the services. So, yes, that's very definitely a strategy for sustainability.

Okay. The evaluation process. We have been ... Over the years, we have grown from maybe 15 applications to over 60. So what we do here in NCJA, staff will make a kind of make an initial review to determine if the program meets our criteria. We don't do a strict kind of evaluation. We just want to make sure that, as I've said over and over again, the program is addressing an important challenge; it has a valuation to show; it can show its effectiveness; has a sustainability strategy. Then we do a little bit more thorough evaluation here in the office to determine the programs that merit further review. Then we ask subject matter experts, as appropriate, to review the program applications, as well. Then our recommendation for awards, we send to our Executive Committee.

Our Executive Committee has four regional chairs that are elected by the membership to act as regional chairs for the year. We have a Western, Southern, Mid-Western, and Northeastern regional chair. However, we do not give the Northeast programs to the Northeast Chair. We give the Northeast programs to the Western Chair so that they are not looking at programs with which they may be familiar. They're the ones that then provide us with their recommendation of the program that should be recognized with the Outstanding Criminal Justice Award. We then notify the award winners and we present the awards at the National Forum on Criminal Justice on August 9th in Philadelphia.

A couple of things about the award. Number one, it doesn't carry any kind of financial stipend. It just carries bragging rights that you're able to say that your program was recognized as an Outstanding Criminal Justice Program by NCJA. We also get over the year, once program awards are made, we include the program in,

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not only the program does well in our webinar series on best practices. We do write-ups of the programs as you see on our website and for other purposes. We call upon those programs when we are doing any kind of, we need subject matter expertise in a particular area. We also provide travel support for one representative of the program. More representatives are welcome to attend. But that would be at their own expense or the program's expense. We encourage program winners and members of the program staff to attend the entire program National Forum on Criminal Justice which we will be posting agenda topics in the near future and encourage everyone to attend.

Question. Are letters of support encouraged? They're definitely not discouraged and we look at them. Again, if they can provide additional support for the effectiveness of the program, I think they can be valuable. We don't want to restrict what you submit to us. We look at everything, but again, focus your efforts on making sure that you're showing us that the program is effective. I just talked about this, what we do after the award as far as highlighting the winners as well as selected non-winners, as we call them, in different media that we have.

So final hints. The program is a set of activities based on evidence to address a significant criminal justice issue. You should take apart that sentence and make sure that your application supports all of the elements. You need data to show that the program is succeeding in achieving stated goals. The program needs to reach a significant segment of the target population. Again, as I mentioned earlier, if you're working in a small jurisdiction or with a very specialized population, your target population may be small, but we'd like to see that you're reaching a significant segment of that population.

The program needs to be functioning long enough to show meaningful results. I can't really tell you what that means, whether it's 12 months. Normally, it's very difficult for a program to show results in less than six months, but if you can, that's fine. Programs should be local, tribal or state based. The reason why that is in there is that we've had programs nominated that are national in scope, like a national PTA program. We're not looking for programs that are national, nationally based. We could be looking at programs that are affiliated with a national program, such as Boys and Girls Club, if they're doing something extraordinary or have shown significant impact. But we're not looking for the national parent.

Question about attachments. It should support important elements of the program. So if you have letters of support from your partners or from the mayor or something like that supporting the program and talking about the success that it's had on the community and the impact it's had, that's the kind of thing. Complete the application completely and carefully. No required format, type face or font size or limit of the number of words, but remember many of us have middle-aged eyes so font size of ten or twelve is appreciated. Make sure you proofread it. This is the

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old English teacher in me. Make sure you proofread it for punctuation and grammar and that kind of thing. And we're looking for programs that may not be recognized otherwise even though we ask for information about if the program has been recognized. We're really looking for programs that we can bring attention to because they're accomplishing good things. Then, keep in mind that collaboration is a key element of what we consider to be an Outstanding Criminal Justice Program. Again, we leave that up to you as to what collaboration means and for you to demonstrate in your application that collaboration is a key element.

I guess the last thing I would say is the information about where the application information forms are. I send them to Bethany by email or by UPS, USPS. We have to have the applications in our office by April 15th, so when you send your income tax return in, send in your application and we'll let you know by May 13th whether you have been selected as the Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award. In summary, what I would say is that programs must be state, local or tribal based. They don't have to have any connection with any kind of federal grant funding necessarily. They can be programs of any type and have been in existence for a short amount of time or a long amount of time. We really don't put a lot of restrictions around the kind of programs that can apply.

Is it one award only or more than one award recipient? One award only per region. So we do a total of four region awards and one tribal award. So, yes, we wouldn't do more than one award in a particular region or to more than one tribe. The other key element, except for the tribal application, please get your state criminal justice administering agency to sign off on it. As I said, that doesn't indicate any kind of necessarily support. It just indicates that the state criminal justice administering agency is aware of the application.

we will post the recording of this webinar on our website so that you can refer back to it. We will also send you the link to the descriptions of former, past award winners. We really do look forward to applications from all of you. I don't remember whether I mentioned, but an agency, either state or local agency or tribe, can submit applications for multiple programs, but each program has to have its own application and should be not a variation on a theme but addressing different challenges. Would a federal agency with a local focus be [inaudible 00:34:44]? No. We do not recognize programs from a federal agency even if they are locally focused. Since we are an association of state government agencies that support local programs, that's what we're really looking for, state programs and local programs.

Another question. Have you had past winners that did not win in their first year applying but applied again and won? Yes, we have. For some of the more promising programs that we didn't select as an Outstanding Program, we'll contact the program and give feedback in terms of what we think might make the application

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stronger and we've had programs reapply and selected as Outstanding Criminal Justice Program. We're always available to answer questions. Email Bethany. You've got her email and she can also forward those questions to me. Like I said, we really encourage you to apply. We feel that this is one of the more significant things that we do and it really, as I said at the beginning, it benefits us tremendously because we end up learning a lot from all the applications that we receive and we filled our contact base for when we need to reach out to subject matter experts in various fields. So please do that and we look forward the seeing your applications. Thank you. There you go.