Overview

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is the State Administering Agency for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. Over the last twenty years OJP has implemented a multi-faceted strategy, informed by data, criminal justice stakeholders and community input to prevent and reduce drug abuse and violent crime with JAG funds. Together with state, local and tribal partners, we have worked to improve the state’s criminal and juvenile justice systems. With a focus on implementing best practice programming, we have enhanced public safety throughout the state.

A. Description of the Issue:

Minnesota’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has, over the years, distributed JAG funding across all JAG purpose areas, allowing the state to test innovative criminal justice practices and implement effective programming. Like most states across the country, Minnesota has seen a decrease in the amount of funding provided, from a high of approximately $9 million to the current level of approximately $2.8 million. While the funds have decreased, the need for this funding and the stress on the criminal justice system has increased.

The goal of the Minnesota FFY 2022 JAG Program is to improve public safety. Based on our most recent strategic planning activity, the FFY 2022 JAG grant will address this goal through the prevention/intervention and corrections JAG purpose areas. We will grant JAG funds to sub recipients for criminal and juvenile justice intervention grants that are based on promising practices or projects that are research based and also fill a gap in the criminal or juvenile justice system. The target population will be adults and juveniles with initial or deeper involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice system. See separate strategic plan annual report attachment for details.

During 2021, Minnesota continued to deal with impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to dealing with ongoing challenges of our current grantees, MN OJP has been managing over $45 million in Federal COVID response funds. With a funding priority for programs serving BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) populations; economically disadvantaged communities; and traditionally underserved populations (BIPOC, cultural communities, GLBTQ+, Deaf/hard of hearing, people with disabilities, youth, elders, etc.) Because of this influx of flexible COVID response funding, we are continuing to operate within our current strategic plan.

Minnesota is experiencing increasing rates of violent crime. According to the most recently available Uniform Crime Report, murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assaults all increased in 2020. The number of murders increased 58.1 percent and aggravated assaults increased 21.7 percent. In 2021, nearly 100 people lost their lives to violence in the City of Minneapolis, tying a record set in 1995 during the highest crime point in the city’s recent history. 38 people were killed
in the City of St. Paul, exceeding the previous high of 30. Most of these deaths were from gun violence.

In 2020, there were 177 car jackings in Minneapolis. Prior to 2020, carjackings were so rare, they were even not tracked as a separate statistic. In 2021, carjackings increased to 655. St. Paul saw over 100 carjackings in 2021.

In addition to supporting criminal and juvenile justice intervention grants, a portion of funds will continue to supplement state funding in support of Minnesota’s Violent Crime Enforcement Teams.

Minnesota is NIBRS compliant. All law enforcement agencies have made the transition except for two that are in the process of switching their record management systems.

FFY 2022 JAG funds will support a combination of renewal grants for subrecipients that were selected through a previous Request for Proposal (RFP) process and new subrecipients selected through a new RFP process. While we strive to fund programs using evidence-based practices, we also recognize the challenges of funding grants that are strictly implementing evidence-based programs. We will also fund programs that use promising strategies that include practices that come from the local community that may be based on practice-based evidence (PBE) and/or lived experiences of communities of color and American Indians. PBE includes a range of approaches that are developed over time through practice and experience. PBE approaches are often embedded in the culture, accepted as effective by local communities and support community healing from a cultural framework. Research-based projects include projects that can be tied to and/or include elements that draw from published literature, including both qualitative and quantitative studies.

Our RFPs list the following resources on evidence-based and best practices:

- National Institute of Justice
  - [Crime Solutions](#)
  - [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#)
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service
- Models for Change Evidence-based Practices
- Oregon Knowledge Bank
- Bureau of Justice Assistance, Justice Reinvestment Initiative
- National Institute of Corrections
- Center for Court Innovation
- SAMHSA
  - [Screening and Assessment](#)
  - [Evidence-Based Practices Web Guide](#)
- Transition from Jail to Community
- Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy
- BJA Smart Suite or Programs

RFPs are published in the Minnesota State Register, posted on the MN OJP website and sent out to the agency’s extensive contact list. A Frequently Asked Questions webpage is updated weekly until the RFP due date. Pre-application workshops are held virtually via Zoom. All applications are submitted via the OJP web-based grants management system (e-grants).
Applications are reviewed and scored according to a standardized scoring process by external reviewers with expertise and interest in the program areas. They are scored on the following areas: Organizational Overview, Planning Process, Project Description, Evaluation, Work plan/Outcomes and Budget.

Conflict of interest statements are reviewed and signed by each reviewer. Review groups, having read and scored the same proposals meet to discuss each application and develop funding priorities. Due to the pandemic, the peer review process is online.

Reviewers and OJP staff use the applications, past performance, CrimeSolutions.gov and other best practice and/or research resources to guide funding recommendations. Funding recommendations are submitted to the Executive Director of the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for final approval.

Agencies recommended for funding receive a Pre-Award Risk Assessment prior to final grant execution. This ensures compliance with MN 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 sub recipient’s risk of non-compliance for purposes of monitoring. The pre-award financial review ensures that 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.

Sub recipients attend a mandatory grantee orientation. This covers general grants administration and includes highlights from the Federal Financial Guide and the MN OJP Grant Manual. Other topics included are the sub recipient monitoring and reporting expectations, and program evaluation and data collection.

Effective program implementation and evaluation is a priority. The initial plan was for the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) Director to be involved with the development of the solicitation, the application scoring document, and development of best practices resources made available to applicants. SAC staff were to stay involved with these grantees throughout the grant period to provide continued technical assistance to ensure evaluation plans are being implemented, address solutions for data collection challenges, effective reporting of outcomes, and using outcomes to improve program performance. However, our SAC office remains unstaffed with OJP staff providing minimal evaluation technical assistance to subrecipients.

**B. Project Design and Implementation - State Strategic Planning Process**

OJP has employed a number of planning strategies in the past to gather input to guide Byrne JAG funding. In 2010, we conducted a planning process that included the development and dissemination of an e-mail survey to solicit feedback on the most urgent public safety concerns, gaps in funding and how best to distribute JAG funds in the state. In 2013, OJP staff and the Director of the Minnesota SAC convened a meeting of criminal and juvenile justice practitioners and community stakeholders to review and analyze data, and engage in an informed, a targeted discussion about funding priorities.

In the spring of 2017, another survey was sent to current OJP sub recipients, law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, court administrators, state partners and community members. Participants were asked to forward the survey to their professional and personal contact lists to
ensure maximum participation across the state from a wide variety of stakeholders. Respondents included current grantees, law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, court administrators, victim service providers, state partners, and others. 952 people responded, with 793 responses complete enough to use for analysis.

The survey identified the following priorities to fund:

- Evidence-based programs that can demonstrate outcomes
- Intervention programs
- Programs that fill a criminal or juvenile justice system gap

Successful applicants propose projects based on effective practices such as:

- Use of risk/needs assessments to prioritize programming for people with the highest risk of reoffending.
- Targeting interventions to address identified risks/needs.
- Use of cognitive-behavioral strategies that promote critical thinking and healthy decision-making.

Our decision to focus funds on intervention programming was formed based on the survey results in conjunction with information gathered through OJP staff involvement in the numerous multi-disciplinary justice related planning, policy groups, and community groups listed below.

Please see the separate 2017-2022 Minnesota JAG Strategic Plan for more information.

A new process will be conducted during 2022.

C. Capabilities and Competencies - Additional Planning and Coordination

In an effort to increase coordination and improve the effectiveness of the state’s criminal justice planning and grants activities, Governor Tim Pawlenty created the OJP in 2003. The agency merged the Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention and the Minnesota Center for Crime Victims from the Department of Public Safety with programs from four other state agencies: the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) from Minnesota Planning, the Office of Crime Victim Ombudsman, the Abused Children’s Program from the Department of Education and the Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JAIBG) grant programs from the Department of Economic Security. The 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 administers federal grant funds including: JAG, JAG SORNA, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Title II, Coverdell, Project Safe Neighborhoods, 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 and training, youth and community prevention and intervention, community justice reinvestment and crime victim services. 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 continuously seeks 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.

While Minnesota does not have an overall criminal justice governing board, OJP directly supports several multi-disciplinary justice related planning and policy groups:

1. 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;
2. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act;
3. The Criminal Justice Collaborative, originally formed as an advisory group for a VAWA Grants to Encourage Arrest project, includes representatives of the MN Coalition for Battered Women, MN County Attorney’s Association, MN Sheriff’s Association, MN Chiefs of Police Association; Tribal Court Judges Association, MN Indian Affairs Council, MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; MN Dept. of Corrections (DOC) MN; State Court Administrator’s Office, and the MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault.
4. Victim Notification Advisory Board convened to assist in the further development of Minnesota’s notification systems, VINE and CHOICE.

In addition, OJP staff serves 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 Harbors, tasked with developing model protocols for serving victims of trafficking with an emphasis on juveniles;
- The Treatment Court Initiative Advisory Committee, the multi-disciplinary, cross-branch committee oversees and advises policy formulation and implementation as well as funding distribution for treatment court approaches in Minnesota.
- Minnesota Interagency Council to End Homelessness
- DOC State-Interstate Compact Committee
- DOC State-Interstate Juvenile Compact Committee
- DOC Chemical Dependency Treatment Certification Team
- Statewide Substance Abuse Strategy Team
- Strengthening Families Affected by Incarceration

OJP staff meet regularly with representatives of professional associations including the Minnesota Chief’s and Sheriff’s Associations, the County Attorney’s Association, the Public Defenders Association, Minnesota Battered Women’s, Minnesota Sexual Assault and Minnesota General Crime Coalitions to seek input and ensure coordination of services.
OJP also houses the MN Department of Public Safety (DPS) Tribal Liaison. This staff provides training and consultation to OJP and DPS staff. They work to ensure that tribal public safety needs are taken into consideration in all of OJP’s work.

OJP seeks input from these bodies in developing strategic plans and is able to ensure coordination among the juvenile and criminal justice and crime victim processes that we support.

D. Plan for Collecting Required Data for Performance Measurement

All OJP grantees are required to attend an orientation to review the OJP Grant Manual, program evaluation requirements and performance reporting protocols. OJP has a sophisticated web-based grants management system, e-grants, that assists in the administration and monitoring of grants from application to closeout. 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:

1. Subgrantee enters data directly into the PMT website.
2. Grant managers review PMT report by;
   a. Verifying information with what was planned for in their original workplan
   b. Comparing it to the last quarters' PMT report, looking for outliers of information
   c. Checking for continuity in the narrative progress report that is submitted for the same quarter.
3. 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.
4. After all PMT reports are submitted and reviewed, OJP submits all reports in the PMT website

OJP is committed to working in partnership with all grantees, the SAC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance to ensure that grantees are in compliance with federal financial and administrative requirements and achieving their stated program goals.