

**STATE OF MINNESOTA**  
**Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Application**  
**FFY2015**

**OVERVIEW**

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

To establish direction for 2013-2015 funding, OJP convened a multidisciplinary work group comprised 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.

The 2013-15 planning group recommended a focus on reducing recidivism through corrections programming. They recommended that funded projects should:

- Target either adult or juveniles;
- Demonstrate significant system and community service coordination
- Employ evidence-based/best practices and;
- Engage in rigorous evaluation and specifically measure recidivism in addition to other performance indicators.

## **Program Narrative**

### **A. Statement of the Problem: State Strategy/Funding Priorities for FFY 2015 Sub-Grant Award Process and Program Description**

FFY 2015 JAG funding will be awarded for recidivism reduction grants to correctional programs that serve juvenile or adult offenders, employ best practices, are highly collaborative, and have the capacity to track and measure recidivism as well as other required performance measures.

FFY 2015 JAG funds will be allocated through a limited, competitive process to be offered in 2015. This will provide some level of renewal funding for initiatives initially supported with FFY 2014 JAG funds that prove promising. A Request for Proposal (RFP) process for FFY 2014 funds is being planned for the fall of 2015. This RFP, which will include resources on evidence-based and best practices, will be similar to the previous one which included the following expectations:

Applicants are expected to have working relationships between correctional facilities and community agencies so that grant-funded reentry programming can begin during incarceration and continue with return to the community. Programs will focus on case management and address such services as post-discharge employment, substance abuse treatment and relapse prevention, mental health services, educational and vocational education, and/or transitional housing.

Proposed models should be based on an integrated team approach that recognizes and assesses the influences of: trauma and violence history; co-occurring disorders; family relationships; fatherhood; peer supports and socialization; connectedness with societal values; spirituality; education; income and employment; ancillary services. Programs should utilize a strength and asset-based, motivational approach to treatment and skill building with staff that have embraced this approach. All interventions shall remove barriers to re-entry and provide specific services to reduce recidivism.

Strategies may include cognitive-behavioral strategies that promote critical thinking and healthy decision-making. Several studies have indicated that the most effective interventions are those that use cognitive behavioral techniques to improve functioning. The overall focus is on enhancing participants' functioning and behavior and developing skills to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Funded proposals will demonstrate that they address a gap in services, are proven to reduce recidivism, have established relationships with a criminal justice partner(s) and community service partners, and are prepared to engage in program evaluation and recidivism measurement.

It will be published in the Minnesota State Register, on the OJP web-site and sent out to the agency's extensive contact list. A Frequently Asked Questions webpage is updated weekly. All applications will be submitted via the OJP web-based grants management system (e-grants).

Applications will be reviewed and scored according to a standardized scoring process by external reviewers with expertise and interest in the program area. Conflict of interest statements will be reviewed and signed by each reviewer. Groups, having read and scored the same proposals, will be convened to discuss each application and develop funding priorities. Reviewers and OJP staff will use the applications, past performance, CrimeSolutions.gov and other best practice and/or research resources to guide funding recommendations. Because we recognize the challenges of funding grants that are strictly implementing evidence-based programs, we will support programs that include key characteristics of those that are; that is, those that incorporate features of programs that research shows are highly effective in reducing recidivism. Funding recommendations will be submitted to the Commissioner of Public Safety for final approval.

Effective program implementation and evaluation is a priority and as such a portion of the JAG award will be dedicated to this purpose area. Funds will support the MN Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to provide training and technical assistance to OJP staff and the selected grantees. The SAC Director was involved with the development of the solicitation, the application scoring document, and development of best practices resources made available to applicants. For the most recent group of grantees, the SAC provided training and technical assistance covering such topics as logic model development, identification of realistic goals and objectives, realistic methods for measuring, evaluation plan development, working effectively with external evaluators, etc. SAC staff will 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. The technical assistance support will enable SAC staff to provide one-on-one assistance to grantees tailored to their specific needs.

While we are confident we will have a much better idea of program impact, we have learned that even with this level of assistance many grantees struggle with adequately demonstrating outcomes. For this next RFP process SAC staff will be providing pre-application training opportunities on best practices in recidivism reduction, logic model development, and evaluation planning and implementation. In addition, we plan to have staff attend training on the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC). The CPC is designed to evaluate the extent to which correctional intervention programs adhere to the principles of effective intervention. (Developed through the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, the CPC is modeled after the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory developed by Gendreau and Andrews; however, the CPC includes a number of items not contained in the CPAI. In addition, items that were not found to be positively correlated with recidivism were deleted.) This training will enhance our ability to assist with program design and evaluation efforts. We are able to participate in this training due to our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC); they are hosting this training as part of the Statewide Recidivism Reduction initiative. OJP staff sits on the Executive Planning Team and sub committees of this initiative.

## **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. For example, in 2010, OJP 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. Respondents included current grantees, law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, court administrators, victim service providers, state partners, and others. This process resulted in awarding funds in the following priority areas: youth prevention, multi-jurisdictional enforcement efforts, problem-solving courts and reentry services.

In April of 2013, OJP invited representatives from all components of the criminal and juvenile justice system and community stakeholders to engage in a planning process. Invitations were sent to representatives of state and local law enforcement; state and Tribal courts, prosecution and public defense; community based prevention, intervention and state and local corrections.

In May of 2013, OJP staff and the Director of the Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center convened a meeting for the invited criminal and justice practitioners and community stakeholders to review and analyze data, and engage in an informed, a targeted discussion about funding priorities.

The agenda included: an overview of OJP's mission and goals; current state and federal grant programs administered by OJP, the history of declining funding at the state and federal level for criminal justice purposes, how JAG funds are coordinated with other state and federal related funds; an overview of the purpose of the JAG program and; a history of Minnesota JAG funding strategies, priorities and outcomes.

The group also reviewed and discussed emerging trends and gaps in state's needed resources for criminal and juvenile justice systems and communities. They grappled with questions including: should OJP be a sustainer or seed funder? Should OJP continue to fund programs in multiple purpose areas? Should OJP fund only evidence based programs or should also promising approaches?

After a review of the data and a wide ranging discussion, the group focused on developing funding priorities for 2013-2015. Many compelling gaps and purposes were discussed and considered. The group came to agreement that given the relatively small (and diminishing) size of the federal award that funds should be focused primarily on one purpose area. They identified reducing recidivism through effective correctional programming as the most compelling priority at this time. They recommended that funded correctional programs should:

- Target either adult or juveniles;
- Demonstrate significant system and community service coordination
- Employ evidence-based practices and;
- Engage in rigorous evaluation and specifically measure recidivism in addition to other performance indicators.

Actual participants in the process included representatives from:

State and local corrections  
State and local law enforcement  
State and Tribal courts and prosecution  
Crime victim organizations  
Community-based youth programs  
Local criminal justice planning councils  
Criminal justice academics  
State advisory committees including the Violent Crime Coordinating Council and Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

Following the strategic planning meeting in May of 2013 staff became part of a new statewide recidivism reduction effort at the MN Department of Corrections (DOC). Our continued participation in this effort ensures continued strategic planning occurs to best coordinate our funds with ongoing DOC recidivism reduction efforts and ensures that our efforts complement, rather than duplicate, existing efforts. Rather, we focus our limited resources on filling gaps, such as services in county jails.

### **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, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, 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, youth and community prevention and intervention 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 statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, Safe Harbors, tasked with developing model protocols for serving victims of trafficking with an emphasis on juveniles;
4. 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 MN; State Court Administrator's Office, and the MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault.
5. Victim Notification Advisory Board convened to assist in the further development of Minnesota's notification systems, VINE and CHOICE.
6. The Drug Court Initiative Advisory Committee, the multi-disciplinary, cross-branch committee oversees and advises policy formulation and implementation as well as funding distribution for drug courts/problem-solving approaches in Minnesota.

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

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:

- Juvenile Justice Coalition
- State Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Advisory Board
- Minnesota Interagency Council to End Homelessness
- United Way committee on Stabilizing Families
- Department of Corrections(DOC) MN Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction Plan Executive Planning Team
- DOC State-Interstate Compact Committee
- DOC Transition/Reentry Initiative
- DOC Chemical Dependency Treatment Certification Team
- Minnesota Youth Funders Network
- Minnesota Native Youth Alliance
- Statewide Substance Abuse Strategy Team
- Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force
- Statewide Homeland Security Advisory Committee

OJP staff also 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.

#### **D. Plan for Collecting Required Data for Performance Measurement**

All OJP grantees are required to attend an annual training to review the OJP Grant Manual, program evaluation requirements and performance reporting protocols. OJP has a sophisticated web-based grants management system, e-grants, to assist in the administration and monitoring of grants from application to close out. 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.

Staff from Minnesota's Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) will provide ongoing evaluation training and technical assistance to grantees selected in 2013 and 2015. Training will cover such topics logic plan development, solutions for data collection challenges, working effectively with external evaluators, effective reporting of outcomes, and using outcomes to improve program performance. One-on-one technical assistance, tailored to meet the specific needs of each grantee, will also be offered.

Continued SAC involvement will ensure that grantees are collecting and reporting meaningful data, including sufficient data to allow for recidivism tracking.

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.