

Application # 2013-H2475-IL-DJ
Illinois' FFY13 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

Program Narrative

Introduction

The State of Illinois, using the resources and office of its Administrating Agency, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (Authority), has consistently pursued specific planning processes to develop and coordinate integrated approaches for its strategies that address issues within all components of the state's criminal justice system. The Authority is a statutorily created state agency charged with improving the administration of justice within the state; coordinating JAG funds among state and local initiatives; preparing and submitting the state JAG application; administering JAG funds, including establishing funding priorities; distributing funds; monitoring sub-recipients' compliance with all JAG special conditions and provisions; providing ongoing assistance to sub-recipients; submitting quarterly and annual financial status and performance metrics reports; ensuring sub-grantee compliance; and passing through a pre-determined percentage of funds to local jurisdictions; as well as, administering the pass-through of funds from "less than \$10,000 jurisdictions" that were not eligible for a direct award. The Authority is governed by a Board comprised of 25 individuals who have been identified as major stakeholders in criminal justice administration, policy and planning, including the courts, prosecution, defense, victim advocacy, corrections, research and law enforcement communities, and members of the public at large. The Board, through its meetings as a whole and its committees, reviews, analyzes, discusses and defines the Authority's general priorities and specific initiatives as an essential part of both strategic and short term planning.

Strategic Planning Process

In November 2009, the Authority initiated a comprehensive assessment process to identify challenges and successes within the criminal justice system. Authority staff gathered information from state and local leaders, criminal justice practitioners, policymakers, academic researchers and service providers about the primary issues facing their agencies or jurisdictions and the pressing concerns related to the effective administration of criminal justice related services and sanctions. This multi-tiered process included phone interviews, focus groups and surveys with local and county-level law enforcement, state's attorneys, public defenders, judges, probation and court services officers, and health and human services providers. Authority staff also examined academic literature, state criminal justice and drug policy strategies, and reports and policy statements from major national criminal justice related groups and associations.

In addition, the Authority met with the leaders of existing criminal justice reform initiatives on the issues of mental health and justice, offender reentry, victim services, and corrections reform to ensure the strategic planning process complemented and was informed by work already underway to improve and enhance the adult criminal justice system. Staff also reviewed existing academic and public policy literature about criminal justice policies, practices, and programs. The Authority used this information to craft its 2010 *Smarter Solutions for Crime Reduction Summit* and brought together over 200 criminal justice practitioners, policymakers, legislators, service providers, researchers, and community members for two-days of sessions to discuss and evaluate known problems and strategies occurring in local jurisdictions, statewide. Each session provided information about current strategies that can be replicated or adapted in local jurisdictions, highlighting effective practices that are multidisciplinary in nature and

incorporate promising or evidence-based components; highlight professional development or training models; and support innovative information-sharing standards, policies and practices.

The Summit provided for cross-disciplinary breakout groups, with representation across the criminal justice and related health and human services system. The breakout groups were organized by geographic representation, including: Cook County, Northern Illinois, Central and Southern Illinois, and two groups including individuals employed by the State of Illinois. The overarching goal of the breakout groups was to assist in the development of recommendations toward a five-year strategic plan for criminal justice policy and programs, and related health and human services policy and programs.

The charge of the breakout groups was to:

- Acknowledge challenges—this working session offered participants the opportunity to discuss with others from their region the primary challenges facing their organizations and communities.
- Identify smarter solutions—this working session explored the potential integration of panel session strategies into the work of participants in their local jurisdictions.

Facilitators helped to distill the challenges identified in the earlier breakout session into realistic and measurable action steps for the strategic plan.

- Begin the action plan—this working session built a consensus about broad goals for the strategic plan with priority given to three action strategies: multidisciplinary and multi-jurisdictional partnerships; promising or evidence-based strategies; and professional development and training. Participants also discussed next steps for drafting the plan,

including a process for follow-up working group meetings and identifying objectives and measures for each goal.

After the Summit, Authority staff compiled the information from each breakout group into categories representing the key stakeholders and decision points across the justice system – from prevention and early intervention to probation and parole. To assist the Authority in identifying strategic recommendations and action steps, partners from all professions around the state were invited to participate in a series of work group meetings. Over 160 participants from Illinois from all sectors of the criminal justice and human services fields participated in the workgroups. The workgroups included:

- Workgroup I: Identifying Best Practices for Community Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies
- Workgroup II: Identifying Best Practices for Ensuring the Rights and Service Needs of Crime Victims
- Workgroup III: Identifying Best Practices for Law Enforcement
- Workgroup IV: Identifying Best Practices for Community Supervision and Alternatives to Secure Confinement
- Workgroup V: Identifying Best Practices for Jails and Prisons
- Workgroup VI: Identifying Best Practices for Data Collection, Privacy and Information Sharing

The workgroups revisited the challenges identified at the Summit and identified a number of tangible activities that could achieve the broadest impact on the criminal justice system and that could be realistically achieved within a five-year period.

Specifically, working groups:

- Ensured that the critical challenges identified at the Summit represent those that are most acute and widespread;
- Identified other relevant challenges;
- Determined whether strategies recognized to be effective in Illinois or other jurisdictions can be adopted, replicated, or expanded to address the core challenges; and,
- Proposed additional action steps to address the core challenges, including: programmatic initiatives, research and evaluation activities, training and professional development strategies, data and information sharing practices and public policy action steps.

As a result of the information learned from these working groups, the Authority attempts to apply the following four core premises to its funding recommendations:

- Initiatives should seek to appropriately apply sanctions and services to keep offenders from reoffending. Law enforcement and prosecution must work together to protect public safety. Criminal behavior is sometimes a product of mental health issues or addiction while other offenders present real and significant threat to society. This premise drives funding for projects which recognize a need for both sanctions and services to protect public safety.
- Initiatives should focus efforts according to an offender's risks (e.g.: prior criminal history, homelessness), assets (e.g.: employment, dependent children) and needs (e.g.: substance abuse treatment or physical health issues). This premise drives funding for projects that identify strategies which most effectively and efficiently prevent further

offending from individuals who pose a low risk to public safety and could therefore be managed by a mixture of community sanctions and services.

- Resources are most efficiently used for initiatives which attempt to replicate evidence-based or promising practices; engage in multi-disciplinary, collaborative, projects; provide for professional development and training; or adopt integrated information sharing systems projects.
- Issues and strategies within the criminal justice system can shift. Resources should be made available to respond to changes in criminal justice policy and practices and advancements in the field.

The Authority will build on this process in 2013 when Authority Board members and criminal justice stakeholders meet to consider priorities for the use of JAG funds. The priorities developed at this meeting will guide the allocation of JAG funding through 2015.

Evidence-based practices

The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) has been driving the discussion on evidence-based practices for state agencies, such as the Authority, that administer the Federal Justice Assistance Grant dollars to state and local criminal justice agencies. NCJA continues to provide the Authority with invaluable guidance to identify the appropriate place for evidence-based practices in a statewide policy.

The Authority recognizes the value of the “gold standard” approach to principles of evidence-based practices; however, such a standard is rarely achieved in criminal justice and human services interventions, and therefore few interventions exist under this label. A more feasible approach to identifying evidence-based practices is through one or more evaluation

studies that use a quasi-experimental design, or one in which participants are not randomly assigned and thus, there is no “perfect” comparison group. These practices have been repeatedly shown to achieve positive outcomes and ultimately provide taxpayers and citizens with a good return on their investment.

There are numerous challenges and limitations posed in implementing evidence-based strategies in the exact manner, under the exact conditions necessary for program fidelity. Therefore, the Authority encourages adopting practices that have been assessed through program evaluations or include practices that demonstrate effective outcomes from the existing criminal justice research and technical assistance. Additionally, the Authority recognizes the value of an organic strategy that is informed by an on-going discussion of evidence-based practices and core components of effectiveness, as the state of knowledge in these areas will continue to evolve.

Multi-disciplinary partnerships

The Authority recognizes that criminal activity can be best addressed through collaborative practices that coordinate sanctions and services for offenders. Multi-disciplinary partnerships require a broad array of individuals with broad expertise from different fields to come together to identify a specific problem in the community, analyze the factors contributing to the problem, and implement a program that is tailored to the site-specific crime issue. Advisory boards and steering committees often guide the process to share information, contribute to the overall planning and/or implementation of the program and identify supplemental resources to strengthen the initiative. The Authority values, encourages and coordinates multi-disciplinary partnerships.

Integrated information sharing

The Authority is committed to projects focused on integrated information sharing that focus on delivering complete and accurate information on individuals' status as they progress through the criminal justice process; provide more timely access to necessary information held by other criminal justice system agencies; foster more coordinated approaches to expending scarce resources on offender needs while ensuring public safety; and reduce duplication in time and costs by eliminating multiple layers repeatedly collecting identical data.

Challenges

In spite of the good work in place, there is much work to do in Illinois by the Authority to help reduce the cost of justice involvement. In this time of serious fiscal challenges, it is imperative to leverage scarce resources through inter-agency communication and collaboration, and the fostering of strong partnerships with health and human services organizations that also deal with justice-involved individuals. Currently, there are limited opportunities for criminal justice professionals, health and human services professionals and other interested parties to meet together and develop common goals and approaches regarding issues of mutual interest, particularly that of providing a coordinated system response to offender rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

Illinois lacks alternatives to secure confinement and has various barriers to diversion for defendants, dependent upon jurisdiction. Such barriers involve judge or prosecutor reluctance, lack of knowledge of available options, standard protocols, a validated pre-trial risk and eligibility assessment tools and collaboration among involved key players. Additionally, many jurisdictions lack appropriate diversion options due to funding cuts and limited treatment spaces.

There continues to be a need to share data about offenders and criminal justice processes available across the various decision points in the criminal justice system and between criminal justice and health and human services when serving the same population. This is a critical component of an efficient and effective criminal justice system. Illinois faces an imbalanced distribution of technical resources and skills, an aging technology infrastructure at many agencies, and other barriers to implementing integrated information systems at the local or state levels. These inadequacies consistently lead to duplication of effort, inaccuracies in essential information, and inefficiencies in sharing information, which in turn increase costs to the justice system. Similarly, Illinois law enforcement must make advances in areas such as mapping and technology and multi-jurisdictional or multi-disciplinary partnerships that can enhance law enforcement objectives, contribute to improved public safety and reduce long-term costs.

Goals

The Authority continues to use information learned from its 2010 Summit to help guide funding decisions. The Authority will continue to use Justice Assistance Grant funding to protect public safety, to hold the criminal justice system accountable for decision-making and to create the most efficient and effective use of resources. The Authority's goals over the next five years are to:

Goal I: Improve criminal justice outcomes through the use of promising and evidence-based practices that demonstrate effectiveness.

Goal II: Increase the efficiency of the criminal justice system by optimizing existing resources.

Goal III: Support programs which seek to implement alternatives to corrections by providing services when appropriate.

Goal IV: Support policies and decision making through integrated technology and standardized information sharing across the criminal justice system and with non-criminal justice partners.

The Authority has defined numerous objectives, actions steps and benchmarks toward achieving its stated goals and has initiated a diligent effort to shift its focus toward identifying and funding those programs which use evidence-based or promising practices and form cross-disciplinary and cross jurisdictional partnerships.

Awards and Data Collection Processes

The Authority's Governing Board (Board) meets quarterly to provide analysis and discussion of potential gaps within the state's criminal justice system and Authority's efforts to coordinate a response to bridge those gaps. The Authority's Budget Committee also convenes to review and ensure Authority funding aligns with its Strategic Planning Initiative. The Authority staff meets throughout the year with directors, executives and other leaders of Authority funded programs to discuss planning, implementation and performance of those programs.

The Authority funding strategy requires all JAG funding applicants to address defined priority areas; identify need through use of validated statistics; present realistic and measurable goals and objectives; use realistic methods for measuring; present a justifiable budget; demonstrate a history of reliability and responsibility; and, persuasively present a need for funding. Once such funding applicants have been identified, their programs are presented to the Authority Board for evaluation and determination to fund. The Authority Board works to ensure

JAG fund distribution is in accordance to the Authority's defined strategy and sub-grantees are held accountable to their stated goals and objectives. Sub-grantees are required to provide a 25 percent match for funded programs; however, due to well-documented budget deficits within local governments throughout Illinois, the Authority may waive match for those applicants that provide substantial proof of their inability to meet the match requirement.

The Authority, through its Federal and State Grants Unit (FSGU), oversees many of the principal federal and state assistance programs in Illinois which relate to the administration of justice. The FSGU, along with the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit (RA), develop program data evaluation reports for funded programs. Sub-grantees are required to collect and submit on a quarterly basis, to the Authority, the data requested in these reports. The FSGU uses these reports to help identify successful programs and to determine future funding. The FSGU also requires sub-grantees to submit quarterly and final fiscal reports detailing obligations and expenditures. The FSGU uses these reports to ensure sub-grantees are on-track with their program expenditures and are using funds for what they were intended. In addition, sub-grantees are required to collect and submit quarterly data reports as required by the Bureau of Justice Administration's (BJA) Performance Management Tool (PMT). The Authority requires its sub-grantees to submit PMT reports directly to the FSGU for review of completeness and accuracy. The FSGU then enters the sub-grantees' data into the BJA PMT website on a quarterly basis. A sub-grantee that fails to comply with timely submission of PMT reports may have their funding withheld. Authority grantees are typically provided funding in performance periods of no more than 12 months for each award. Equipment grants are typically awarded for a performance period of six months.

Funding Priorities and Additional Coordination Efforts

The existing priorities for funding under the Byrne/JAG program developed through prior planning efforts are:

1. Law enforcement program priorities:

Support programs that pursue violent and predatory criminals.

Support programs that provide law enforcement agencies throughout the state with necessary means to prevent, deter, or investigate crime through staffing, training, special projects, or equipment to improve public safety and quality of life.

Support projects that work to develop and implement multi-jurisdictional, cross-component, information sharing systems and technology.

Support programs that contribute to multi-agency collaboration, shared-services, consolidation or multi-disciplinary partnerships.

2. Prosecution and court program priorities:

Support prosecution efforts that focus on prosecuting violent and predatory criminals and drug offenders.

Support programs that contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice court system at state and county levels in all facets: the judiciary, clerks, prosecution, defense, probation, and victim services.

Support projects that work to develop and implement multi-jurisdictional, cross-component, information sharing systems and technology.

Support programs that contribute to multi-agency collaboration, shared-services, consolidation or multi-disciplinary partnerships.

3. Prevention and education program priorities:

Support proven or innovative prevention or intervention programs for juveniles and adults identified as at risk for involvement or already involved with the criminal justice system to provide services aimed to mitigate risk factors recognized as contributors to violent crime, illegal gun and drug use, gang affiliation, and other criminal behavior.

Support projects that work to develop and implement multi-jurisdictional, cross-component, information sharing systems and technology.

4. Corrections and community corrections program priorities:

Support juvenile and adult re-entry programs and programs that enhance jail or correctional facility security and safety.

Support proven or innovative programs for those already involved in the criminal justice system, those incarcerated, or those on probation that are targeted to address recognized risk factors for recidivism by mitigating risk factors that contribute to criminal behavior.

Support projects that work to develop and implement multi-jurisdictional, cross-component, information sharing systems and technology.

5. Planning, evaluation and technology improvement program priorities:

Support efforts to implement information sharing systems throughout the state that ensure each component of the criminal justice system has access to timely, complete, and accurate information necessary to informed decision-making throughout the criminal justice process.

Support research and evaluation efforts that focus on various criminal justice topics within the scope of JAG purpose areas.

6. Drug treatment and enforcement program priorities:

Support programs that provide substance abuse treatment and combat and disrupt criminal drug networks.

In the summer of 2013, the Authority and its governing Board will be engaged in a planning process to review, refine and revise these priorities. The planning process will engage Illinois criminal justice stakeholders, Authority grant and research staff, outside academics, and other interested parties. Among the information presented will be current BJA Byrne/JAG priorities; current and historical ICJIA Byrne/JAG grant funding; other ICJIA grant funding; current crime trends and data; an environmental scan of the Illinois criminal justice system; significant successful criminal justice programs; areas of need within the system; evidence-based and promising practices to address Illinois needs; areas for collaboration among stakeholders and

lessons learned from existing efforts and future research and evaluation efforts that will help inform Illinois criminal justice grant funding and policy.

Conclusion

The Authority claims an integral role for the Illinois Criminal Justice System in the strategic planning, coordination and administration of JAG and other Federal funding sources. The Authority views its role as significant and will continue to diligently work to fund programs, goals and objectives that align with the JAG program's purpose areas and the state of Illinois' priority criminal justice system issues. The Authority has identified through its 2010 Summit and post-Summit activities the issues within the Illinois Criminal Justice System and is well prepared to coordinate an informed response. The Authority will continue in 2013 to use its resources to identify the state's priority needs and most effective strategies for program implementation. The Authority will continue to allocate priority JAG funding to sub-grantees working to address issues related to Illinois issues, as well as, provide thorough monitoring of those programs to ensure goals and objectives achievement and proper use of JAG funding.

The Authority recognizes that the best plans are organic and through grant monitoring, analysis of evidence-based practices, and future planning and coordination efforts with its local and state stakeholders will rapidly respond to address the criminal justice systems often changing needs and priorities. In addition, the Authority values its relationship with BJA and will continue to adhere to its performance measurement data collection, reporting mechanisms, financial regulations and special conditions throughout the duration of the grant.