

Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

Note: The JAG Program has not yet received Congressional approval, but it is in the President's FY 2005 proposed budget.

Introduction

We at the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) are very excited about the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program's potential and want to share some of our current thoughts about the program with you. The potential merger of the [Edward Byrne Memorial Formula Grant \(Byrne Formula\) Program](#) and the [Local Law Enforcement Block Grants \(LLEBG\) Program](#) into a single funding stream allows us to look at what each fund's strengths are to achieve a more ideal program. We are committed to pursuing a new Justice Assistance Grant Program that:

- Maintains the current equitable division of funds between states and local recipients.
- Broadens the flexibility of both state and local jurisdictions to use their funding by blending the purpose areas to create a wider range of options that will more fully support the funding decisions made by the recipient jurisdictions—not by the Federal Government.
- Allows us to tailor and expand the types of technical assistance, training, and user-friendly information distribution that state and local entities want in ways that are cost effective and do not unduly deplete scarce program funds.
- Clarifies and streamlines the recipients' responsibilities when they apply for funds and report their use of funds to BJA so only those requirements and policies that are truly necessary for effective oversight of the combined program are included.

Overview

The JAG Program is a proposed grant program that will help states and local governments support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime and improve the criminal justice system. It would replace the Byrne Formula Program and the LLEBG Program with a single funding mechanism that will allow easier administration by both grantees and BJA. We will streamline requirements, policies, application processes, and ongoing grantee reviews to eliminate duplication of effort and provide better service to our constituents.

General Use of Funds

Anything funded under the current Byrne Formula or LLEBG Programs would continue to be eligible for funding under the JAG Program's specific purpose areas (see below). In addition, funds could be used for personnel, overtime, and equipment purchases. Funds provided for the states could be used for statewide initiatives, technical assistance and training, and support for local (including rural) jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions could also work together by combining their funds to form regional projects.

Specific Purpose Areas of the Proposed JAG Program

- Community-Based and Statewide Prevention and Education Programs
- Law Enforcement Programs
- Adjudication Programs
- Corrections and Treatment Programs
- Program and System Improvements

Advantages of the New Program

Simplifies and Streamlines Policies, Practices, and Procedures

- Fosters a more efficient and effective government at the federal, state, and local levels.

- Combines funding streams for programs that have similar purposes and are intended for the same recipients.
- Promotes advanced technology (e.g., moving to a paperless system).
- Streamlines reporting requirements.
- Eases administrative burdens with fewer and more general purpose areas.
- Reduces general administrative tasks at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Promotes more efficient monitoring.

Enhances State and Local Control

- Gives grantees greater flexibility to use funds.
- Enhances the abilities of local law enforcement to address community problems with a wider variety of solutions.
- Allows grantees to pay greater attention to actual programs and spend less time mastering the two sets of requirements that now exist.

Supports Collaboration and Communication

- Encourages greater sharing of information and coordination between state and local governments.

Promotes Best Practices

- Enhances abilities at the federal, state, and local levels to exchange new and successful practices.
- Enhances BJA's ability to report results to the U.S. Department of Justice, Congress, and grantees.

Options for Administering the Program

BJA is exploring a range of options to administer the program. Guiding principles include reducing paperwork and streamlining processes, taking advantage of technology, and ensuring that the updated system will support reporting of program accomplishments. The current LLEBG platform provides a model for grant application, approval, fund drawdown, and reporting. It is BJA's goal to build from that platform, making necessary modifications to involve the states in a review and comment function in the grant approval process for the local portion that flows directly to city and county officials. As a result, states will be able to plan better because they will be more informed about how localities intend to use their funds.