



Nationwide Justice Trends: Law Enforcement Byrne JAG Purpose Area

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is the nation's cornerstone public safety grant program. Under the law, states and localities may invest the funds across the entire justice system under eight broad purpose areas.¹ One of those, the **law enforcement purpose area**, may include expenditures on programs, training, equipment, personnel and operations.

States and territories have used or plan to use Byrne JAG funds to implement and support a broad range of such activities, including, but not limited to:

- Behavioral health, including crisis intervention;
- Community-based policing/community services;
- Drug and violent crime investigation and prosecution, including gun violence and domestic violence;
- Criminal records improvement;
- Law enforcement equipment, including data technology and body-worn cameras;
- Officer wellness;
- Multi-jurisdictional task forces, including drug, violent crime, anti-trafficking; and
- Policies and initiatives to improve policing.

NCJA provides training and technical assistance (TTA) to the state administering agencies (SAAs) in each state and territory responsible for planning how Byrne JAG funds will be allocated. This brief provides a high level **overview of trends and agency needs** in the law enforcement purpose area that states may find valuable as they conduct Byrne JAG strategic planning.

National Law Enforcement Trends

A scan of national law enforcement programming trends found several current areas of focus. These include:



Through **outreach and engagement with at-risk youth**, law enforcement and others can help support the positive development of youth, improving self-esteem and reducing delinquent acts. This approach helps build stronger bonds between law enforcement and the families they serve. In Dallas, [Bigs in Blue](#)¹, was a program established as a way to build relationships between residents and officers. This program matches police officers ("bigs")

with children ("littles") from mostly low-income or single-parent homes, or youth who have an incarcerated parent.



Community oriented policing is an organizational philosophy that promotes community, government and police partnerships. It emphasizes proactive problem solving and community engagement to address causes of crime, fear of crime and community issues. In [Concord, California](#)², community oriented policing prioritizes cause-driven, proactive responses with decentralized decision making by

1. To learn about the Byrne JAG program and the eight purpose areas, see NCJA's [Investing Byrne JAG webpage](https://www.ncja.org/investing-byrne-jag).
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engaging and involving non-law enforcement agencies in situations where a police response may result in more harm than good.



Group Violence Intervention (GVI) is a form of problem-oriented policing often funded through law enforcement agencies. It is based on the understanding that, within communities, small, identifiable groups of individuals are often responsible for the majority of the violence and should be the primary focus of both law enforcement and community driven efforts and resources. A well-known program, [Operation Ceasefire](#)³, was first developed in Boston in the mid-1990s and has been associated with a 61 percent reduction in youth homicide. NCJA's 2021 [Community Violence Intervention \(CVI\) Fact Sheet](#)⁴ discusses GVI and three other models of CVI.



Place Network Investigations (PNI) is a model grounded in evidence that suggests persistent crime patterns and violent hotspots are visible indicators of underlying crime

place networks. The [Cincinnati Police Department \(CPD\)](#)⁵ is currently identifying and disrupting Cincinnati's most violent crime place networks. Place interventions started in June 2016 and resulted in a decrease in gunshot victims in the area from 18 in 2015, to five in 2016, with no shooting victims reported in the last three months of the year.



Pretrial justice improvements, including law enforcement-led diversion initiatives such as [Citation Release](#)⁶ seek to maintain public safety while reducing the impact of front-end justice practices. These policies empower law enforcement officers to issue a citation in lieu of arrest to people accused of violating the law. Typically, the practice is limited by statute to minor, nonviolent offenses. Citation release can reduce the time officers spend processing minor cases, ease jail crowding, promote pretrial liberty and minimize the negative impact detention can have on people accused of low-level offenses.

Example of a Place Network Investigation crime map



CRIME PLACE NETWORKS

Crime place networks can include four types of places:

- **Crime sites** – specific high-crime places that facilitate offender and victim/target interactions
- **Convergent settings** – public places routinely used by offenders
- **Comfort spaces** – private places controlled by offenders and their associates
- **Corrupting spots** – businesses that support criminal activity in other locations

Source: International Association of Chiefs of Police



National Law Enforcement Needs

Law Enforcement agencies also have [policy, training and programmatic needs](#)⁸ that can be addressed through Byrne JAG investments, including:

[Workforce hiring and retention](#)⁹;

[Data integration and information](#)

[sharing](#)¹⁰;

[Officer mental health and wellness support and resources](#)¹¹; and

[Updates in agency-wide technology](#)¹² (equipment).

Looking for Assistance?

With support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) the NCJA Training and Technical Assistance team provides Byrne JAG support to all state and territories free of charge. SAAs interested in training or guidance in completing a Byrne JAG strategic plan, accessing resources and information on promising practices, or opportunities to connect with and learn from their peers should visit www.ncja.org or email strategicplanning@ncja.org.

Endnotes

1 BIGS IN BLUE: Connecting Youth and Police Through Mentoring. (n.d.). Big Brothers & Big Sisters of America. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.bbbs.org/bigs-in-blue/>

2 Community-Oriented Policing: Concord, CA. (n.d.). City of Concord. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.cityofconcord.org/522/Community-Oriented-Policing>

3 National Institute of Justice. (2001, September). Reducing Gun Violence: The Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire (NCJ 188741). <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/188741.pdf>

4 National Criminal Justice Association. (2021b, August). An Overview: Community Violence Intervention Strategies.

5 Tamara D. Madensen, Maris Herold, Matthew G. Hammer, Blake R. Christenson. (2017, April). Place-Based Investigations to Disrupt Crime Place Networks. International Association of Chiefs of Police.

6 Citation in Lieu of Arrest: Examining Law Enforcement's Use of Citation Across the United States. (2016, April). International Association of Chiefs of Police. <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/citation-in-lieu-of-arrest>

7 National Criminal Justice Association. (2021a, June). Cornerstone for Justice: How States Use Byrne JAG Funding to Protect Public Safety, Prevent Crime and Reduce Recidivism.

8 Chiefs' Panel Points to Top Issues and Related Innovation Needs Facing Law Enforcement. (n.d.). National Institute of Justice. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/chiefs-panel-points-top-issues-and-related-innovation-needs-facing-law-enforcement>

9 The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It. (2019, September). Police Executive Research Forum. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/WorkforceCrisis.pdf>

10 Law Enforcement Information Sharing. (n.d.). Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/who-we-are/organizations/ise/ise-archive/ise-additional-resources/2142-law-enforcement-information-sharing>

11 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness (LEMHWA) Program Resources | COPS OFFICE. (n.d.). United States Department of Justice. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://cops.usdoj.gov/lemhwareources>

12 Research on the Impact of Technology on Policing Strategy in the 21st Century, Final Report. (2017, September). United States Department of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/251140.pdf>

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