

2023

COLORADO

JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG)

ANNUAL REPORT



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Department of Public Safety

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In 2022, the state of Colorado celebrated the reduction of the average daily populations in our jails, detention centers, and prisons. As we celebrated the successes of this forced reform as a response to COVID-19, the state also experienced an increase in crime rates. The Colorado Office of Research and Statistics compiled their annual [crime statistics](#) and reported a 35% increase in the rate of murders, 32% increase in Aggravated Assaults between 2019 to 2022. And a 52% increase in motor vehicle theft between 2019 and 2022. In response to these alarming numbers, The Colorado Legislature passed several Public Safety Grant Programs. The Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance implemented a [comprehensive public safety package](#) aimed to make Colorado one of the safest states in the nation. By using a multi-faceted approach that engages all stakeholders involved in, and/or impacted by, the criminal justice system, Colorado sought to collaboratively address public safety through both prevention and early intervention strategies. The State hoped to empower local communities to implement evidence-based, innovative programs that met their specific public safety needs. The public safety package included multiple grants to assist in this mission. They are as follows:

SB22-001 [Crime Prevention through Safer Streets Grant](#)

SB22-145 [Resources to Increase Community Safety Grant](#)

- Multidisciplinary Crime Prevention and Crisis Intervention Grant
- Law Enforcement Workforce, Retention, and Tuition Grant
- SMART Policing Grant

SB22-196 [Health Needs of Person in Criminal Justice System](#)

HB22-1003 [Delinquency Prevention and Young Offender Intervention Grant](#)

HB22-1326 [Fentanyl Accountability and Prevention](#)

The seven different grant programs provided over \$40 million in state funding to law enforcement and our local communities. The JAG Board reviewed all the new legislation and funding opportunities to coordinate efforts while meeting in the fall to discuss the upcoming year JAG Solicitation. There was representation from the JAG Board on the multiple funding advisory committees created for each funding opportunity. This knowledge of those grants and awards given were of value during our FY23 Funding Conference. The advisory board was able to identify any crossover or additional opportunities for funding for JAG applicants. Over the next two years Colorado will evaluate the effectiveness in reducing the crime rate and identify best practices going forward. Those outcomes and best practices will be shared with the JAG Advisory Board so that those approaches may be incorporated in the JAG strategic plan.

The Colorado JAG Advisory Board continues to recognize the need to balance state needs as well as local needs and will use this lens when making funding decisions within the JAG Program Areas. The Colorado JAG Advisory Board continues to support the philosophy of funding programs/applications within all JAG purpose areas and prioritizing those projects that adhere to their overarching goal of:

To support implementation of sustainable programs or provide resources that prevent or reduce or address crime, delinquency, recidivism, or improve outcomes for those affected by crime, using innovative, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, promising or best practices.

The Colorado JAG Advisory Board continues to explore ways to target areas of need that are identified through crime data and analysis in addition to their current practices. The board is in the process of developing a new survey for criminal justice stakeholders to identify possible new areas of need. Once the survey is complete and implemented, the board members will review the results and will utilize those results to guide their next strategic plan.

Colorado participated in the Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning Pilot Project with NCJA. The final assessment of Colorado's Division of Criminal Justice grant making practice was received and contained feedback highlighting ways the state can ensure their grantmaking process is equitable. The JAG Advisory Board reviewed the final findings at the 2022 Fall Retreat. These findings will then be entrenched in our new strategic plan and goals and objectives. Below is the NCJA Highlight for the State of Colorado Division of Criminal Justice.

As Colorado's SAA, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice manages multiple federal and state grant programs. This funding includes an influx of grant programs through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), several state public safety grant programs, and more over the last few years.

Staff in the Division's Office of Victim Programs (OVP) and Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Administration (OAJJA) analyzed the distribution of grant dollars through these new programs and noted that the targeted recipients for which they were intended were traditionally under-represented as grant recipients. The staff worked jointly with stakeholders to remedy this issue and create a path for increased diversity in fund distribution in the future.

After identifying the reasons for under representation, all of which were identified throughout this report, OVP and OAJJA staff undertook these steps to increase equity in the administration of their grants:

- Including leaders of CBOs and grassroots organizations as members of grant review committees to provide context and background on why a proposal might be written in the way that it is.

- Expanding pre-application workshops to assist new and small applicants in writing their proposals so that they can better compete.

- Contracting with one or more CBOs with a strong financial and evaluation history to act as an intermediary between the state and less-experienced applicants and serve as their fiscal agent. This strategy allows the fiscal agent to manage and provide quality control on the administrative and operational aspects of the program, alleviate concerns about the applicant's history with meeting these types of financial obligations and provide the applicants a liaison with the state whom they know and trust.

- Utilizing stakeholders who are familiar with the CBOs and grassroots organizations to assist in the application process's marketing, proposal development and other aspects to encourage more organizations to submit proposals.

- Collecting data that documents the degree to which the dollars are being distributed to organizations that may not have been able to successfully compete previously.

These and other steps will be monitored to determine the degree to which they have helped produce more diversity in the grantee pool and determine action steps to adjust as necessary.

(Equity Across a Continuum in Grants Administration: Promising and Emerging Practices for Ensuring Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning, NCJA Center for Justice Planning, pg. 20)

Activity and Updates on Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Establish and maintain a quality JAG Subgrant Application, Review and Award Process that supports projects in alignment with the established JAG Board goal:

Objective 1.1: Maintain JAG Board membership to assure state and local representation of the diverse systems which assist in the administration of adult and juvenile justice.

- **Update:** The Colorado Governor, Jared Polis, has made a commitment to ensure diversity within the Governor Appointed Boards and Commissions. The DCJ management team are exploring new recruitment techniques and identifying community organizations to partner with to make new connections.

Objective 1.2: Schedule annual training with JAG Board members to include a “State of the State in Adult and Juvenile Justice” to inform members about critical adult and juvenile justice issues being discussed.

- **Update:** The JAG Board engaged in the “State of State” presentation at their fall retreat in October 2022. Areas of concern were identified and discuss. These high crime rate areas were Auto Vehicle Theft and Aggravated Assaults. Discussion included planning for a new Strategic Plan that will more closely affect those areas. This will occur in FY24.

Goal 2: To ensure JAG subgrant projects are successful in meeting their established goals and objectives and that such successes or challenges, when they occur, are communicated to the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Objective 2.1: Provide clear instructions and technical assistance about how to develop a quality application and how to structure proposed projects that align with Implementation Science.

- **Update:** The DCJ is working on developing a new technical assistance curriculum and training for grant applicants and awardees. This new training will provide resources and examples of how to structure their projects to be in line with evidence-based practice. The DCJ hopes to have this new TA process implemented for the next JAG Funding Solicitation in FY24.

Goal 3: Assure that JAG subgrant funds are managed and spent in alignment with approved application and that mandatory subgrantee financial and programmatic reporting is completed timely to DCJ and to BJA.

Objective 3.1: Provide grant management training to all JAG subgrantees to include information regarding special conditions attached to their subgrant and mandatory reporting requirements.

- **Update:** The DCJ has developed new training and curriculum to assist subgrantees in following special conditions and reporting requirements.

In the Fall of 2022 the Colorado JAG Advisory Board reviewed the current Strategic Plan and agreed that their current direction of funding all JAG Purpose Areas met the needs of the criminal justice community and state of Colorado. This continued philosophy provided the structure for the development of the FY23 funding solicitation.

As our state continues to address public safety concerns, implementing data collection around law enforcement reform initiatives, and implementing the public safety grant package, the Colorado JAG Advisory Board will continue to assess the states criminal justice needs and adapt accordingly. The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice is in the process of designing a statewide Public Safety Plan that will include elements from the JAG Advisory Board Strategic Plan as well as the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council Three Year Plan. By leveraging both of these strategic plans the state will be able to design a comprehensive approach to addressing public safety that include long standing funding resources and stakeholder feedback.