

**State of Colorado**  
**Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Strategic Plan**  
**FY 2019-2024**

**Background**

Colorado’s Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Board, which has been in place for over 20 years (previously called the Byrne Drug Control and System Improvement Program or DCSIP Board), is an instrumental partner with Colorado’s State Administering Agency (SAA), the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), in the plan for and execution of the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program implementation including funding distribution across the state. JAG Board members are carefully selected to ensure representation of the diverse systems who assist in the administration of adult and juvenile justice for the state. Members of the JAG Board are gubernatorial appointments who can serve two four-year terms and currently consists of 16 members at the state and local level, including non-governmental community based organizations, in the following criminal and juvenile justice areas: prosecution, public defense, courts, probation, adult and youth corrections (covering detention and longer term commitment), mental health and substance abuse, victims, and law enforcement (police and sheriffs).

In order to better understand how this Strategic Plan was developed, it is important to give historical context. Colorado has a history of what is considered by many to be a “local control” mandate by its citizens, largely borne out of its educational system structure as created in the Colorado Constitution where “rather than establishing a centralized, state-administered system, Colorado’s constitutional framers “made the choice to place control ‘as near the people

as possible' by creating a representative government in miniature to govern instruction"<sup>1</sup> but, also widely accepted throughout all areas within government. This is important to note because although much of criminal and juvenile justice funding may be state funding, state funds are often re-allocated to local government where local funds are also made available to support adult and juvenile justice activities. Not unique to Colorado, the financial resources available at the local level can vary greatly from one jurisdiction to the next. When coupling state and local funding for justice issues, the level of services available to adults and juveniles in the justice system can be greatly disparate based on geographic location. Because of this, it is imperative that strategic planning address not just the state but also local level to identify needs and gaps in services to better ensure the success of adult and juvenile offenders.

Because the needs within criminal and juvenile justice systems vary so greatly across the state, several years ago, the JAG Board elected to fund programs/applications within all JAG purpose areas but also guide applicants about the types of projects it would like to see through its overriding goal for the JAG Program:

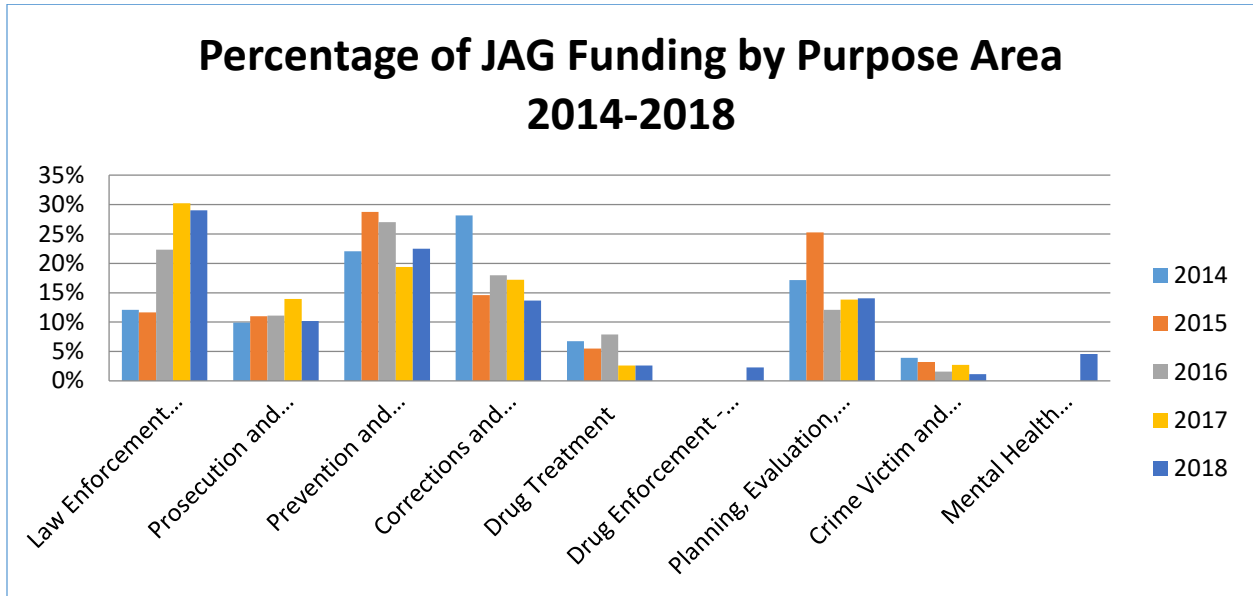
*To support implementation of sustainable programs or provide resources that prevent or reduce or address crime, delinquency, recidivism, or improve outcomes for those affected by crime, using innovative, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, promising or best practices.*

As can be seen in the chart that follows, all JAG purpose areas have received applications for funding and ultimately have been funded with the exception of Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Task Forces, which until this past year were not funded (an emergency application was received and approved this year that was funded to meet short term, unanticipated needs). The question for

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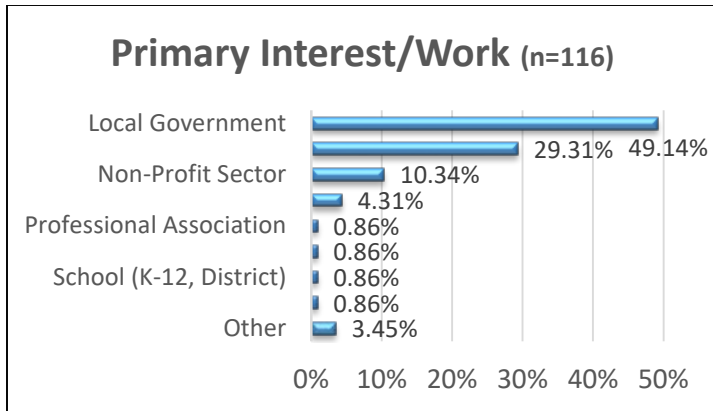
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.casb.org/Page/228>

the JAG Board was, should this practice of funding within all eight JAG purpose areas continue? In order to answer that question, it was best to ask our state and local adult and juvenile justice system partners.

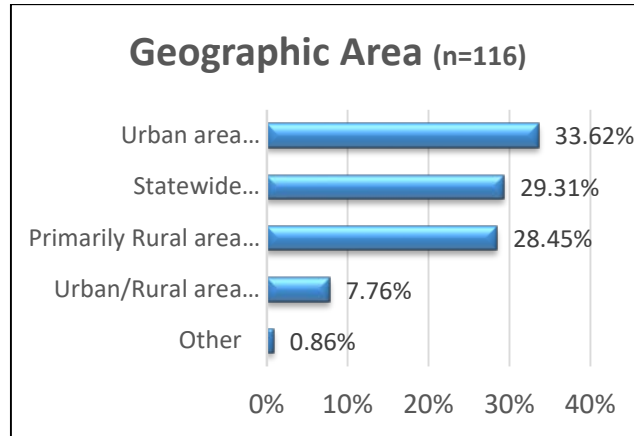


**Stakeholder Engagement**

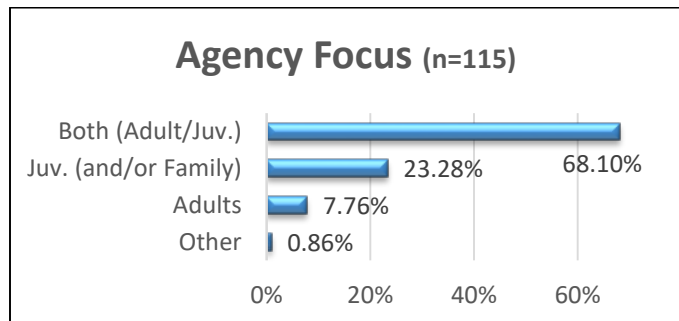
In preparation for the JAG Board’s 2019 Strategic Planning meeting in December 2018, Colorado’s Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), DCJ’s Office of Research and Statistics, conducted a statewide survey to determine the most pressing criminal and juvenile justice needs. This survey was previously conducted in 2014 and allows for a better understanding of what needs are presenting themselves at the state or local level that may indicate a need for prioritization of certain JAG purpose areas over others by the JAG Board. The response rate, although low, N=116, still allows for some analysis. Just under 50% (49.14) of the respondents were from local government, 29% were state government and 10% were from the non-profit sector.



Thirty-three percent of respondents were from an urban area, 30% were statewide and 28% were from more rural areas of the state.



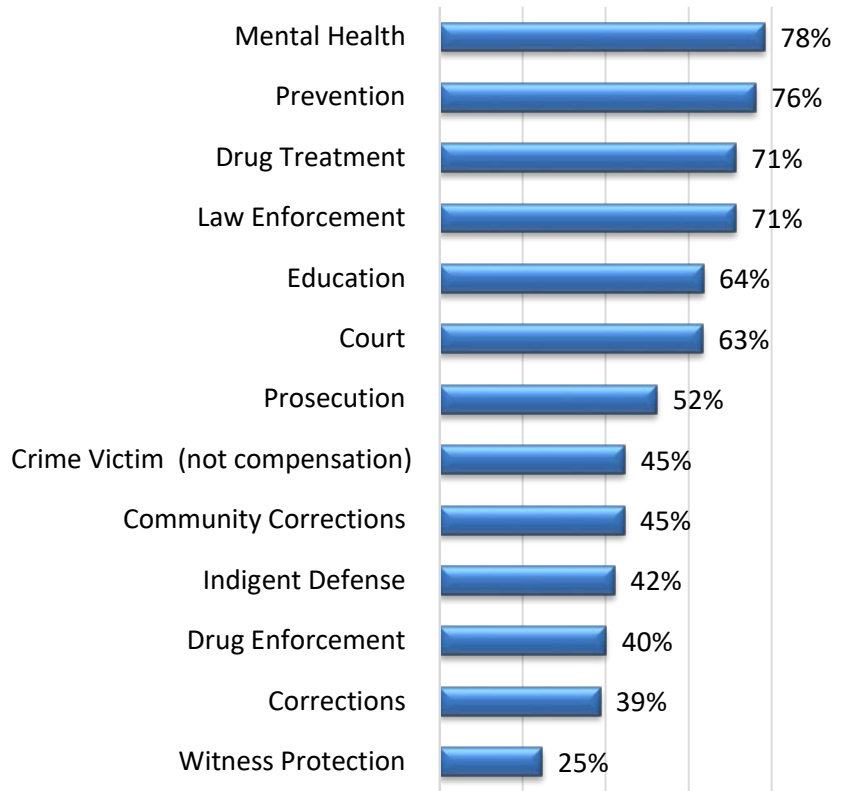
Sixty-eight percent were from agencies with a focus on both adult and juvenile justice, with 23% focusing just on juvenile justice and 8% on adult justice only.



Within the survey, questions were posed to discern if there were discrete needs and priorities within the eight JAG purpose areas. When asked to rank in order of need for funding across the

eight Purpose Areas and looking at components with them, mental health, prevention, drug treatment, law enforcement, education, court and prosecution were ranked the highest.

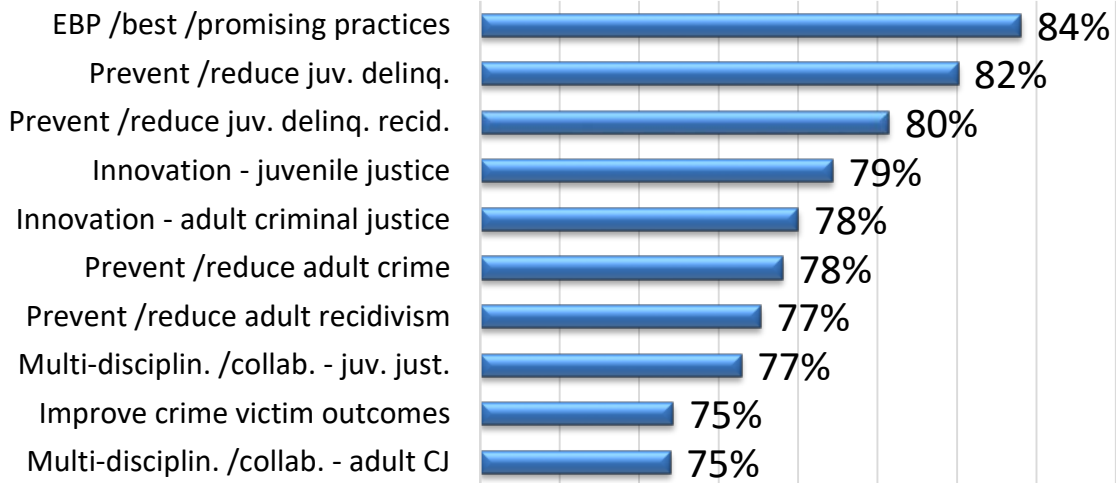
### JAG Purpose Area Components (n=78)



**78 Respondents**  
**Rank Index**  
 Average rank converted to 100 point scale  
**Components listed from Most to Least NEED FOR FUNDING**

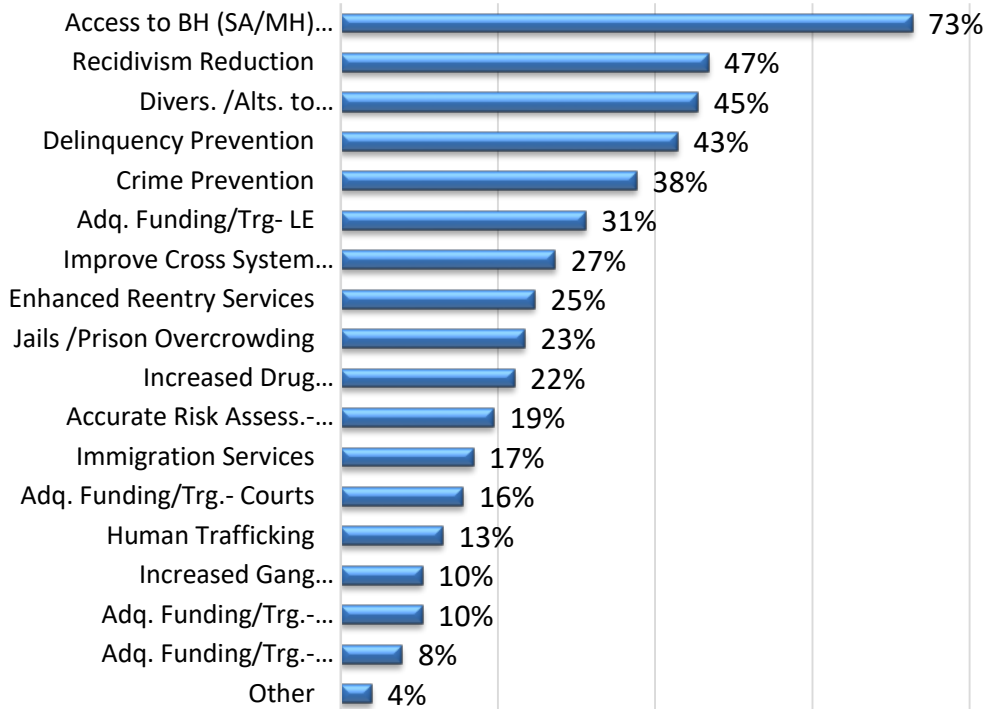
The JAG Board was also interested in knowing if its goal for Colorado’s JAG funds, continued to resonate within the field. Within its goal (see page 2 of this plan) there are several discrete components. Survey respondents were asked to think about the unmet needs of the criminal/juvenile justice system in their community/service area, and note the degree of funding need for those goal components. In the chart that follows, components are listed in rank order from Most to Least Degree of Funding Needed.

### JAG Board Goal Components (n= 72)



When asked to note five of the most pressing issues in the adult and juvenile justice systems for their community/services area, access to behavioral health (mental health/substance abuse) services was overwhelmingly selected by respondents over all other options.

### Most Pressing Issues (n=77)



**Components listed from Most to Least PRESSING**

**Interpretation: 73% of respondents included "Access to BH" in their TOP FIVE.**

### **Priorities to be addressed with JAG funding**

Overall, the survey results support the need for diversity in the use of the funding made available through JAG funds. To limit applications to within one or a select number of purpose areas would not be in alignment with the needs of Colorado's adult and juvenile justice systems across the differing geographic areas of the state. Rather, survey respondents seem to support diversity in projects but agree that the JAG Board goal to support applications that will prevent or reduce crime, delinquency, and recidivism and that improve outcomes for those affected by crime, using innovative, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, best or promising practices, remains appropriate.

### **Training, Implementing and Evaluating Evidence-Informed Approaches to Preventing and Reducing Crime**

Several years ago the Colorado JAG Board received training in evidence-based correctional practices, and members of the board are very familiar with the application of these practices in their organizations and agencies. Governor Hickenlooper (who appointed the current JAG Board members) has consistently made it clear that he wants the effective and efficient use of government resources, as stated in the JAG Program goal. This perspective was a primary aspect of his vision for the state and remains a constant refrain from officials from the Governor's Office. The goal is a clear recognition of the larger movement in the justice field to develop and implement programs and practices that build on evidence-based correctional practices. These practices are described by the National Institute of Corrections and summarized in a document that has been distributed to scores of policy makers and criminal justice practitioners in Colorado (please see <http://nicic.gov/library/026917>).

We have also noted that through our JAG funding process that the traditional approach for systems change is for agency and department administrators within our JAG funded programs to adopt innovations by simply designing new written policies and training their staff, with the expectation that this will translate to daily practice. But research on organizational change and skill development shows that this approach does not achieve sustainable outcomes. Through the Evidenced-based Practices for Implementation Capacity (EPIC) Resource Center (also within DCJ), Colorado has been addressing Implementation Science and encouraging more state and local agencies to adopt processes that have been shown to be more successful in reaching the intended goals of new initiatives.

The level of implementation that is most likely to ensure organizational change is performance implementation, which refers to the examination and development of procedures and processes that actively support necessary organizational adjustments to accommodate the new innovation/new processes. Outcomes are measured and accountability systems are identified for addressing necessary operational modifications. This is the most difficult level of implementation to achieve and the initial investment of time and resources can be daunting. However, it provides the best return on investment and is most likely to result in the intended outcome. At this level, both program and implementation outcomes are achieved and the program has noticeable benefits to consumers. It is this level of implementation that we hope to see requested through JAG funding.

In the last several months, DCJ's Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA), which administers the JAG funds, has been working with the EPIC Resource Center, which provides a full spectrum of services aimed at enhancing organizations' ability to effectively and



efficiently implement programs and services and to measure their progress and outcomes. These services are offered for free to agencies in Colorado that serve justice-involved or at-risk populations. OAJJA is tapping EPIC to assist in developing a process by which applicants for 2019 JAG funds would be trained on Implementation Science and offered technical assistance in developing JAG applications that are thorough and complete and in concert with implementation science principles and practices. This will likely result in higher funding requests as we anticipate higher training and evaluation costs within certain types of applications. This then triggers a need for training of JAG Board members so that they will understand implementation science and resulting higher costs as they review applications and make recommendations for funding.

**Subgrantee Information re: priorities for funding, outcomes expected and plans for program evaluation**

As will be seen in the next section, DCJ has worked with the JAG Board to streamline its subgrant application, but in order to assure the ability to prioritize funding for programs that address a true need for funding while *using innovative, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, promising or best practices*, the Board has strategically asked questions within the subgrant application to tease out this information from applicants. Under the Problem Statement, applicants are told:

*“All projects must show a capability to improve the administration of justice and/or impact the reduction of crime or delinquency. Applicants must provide enough detail within this application for a reader to fully understand what the project is, what it will be doing, and how it will impact the described problem.*

- *Clearly identify need through use of information or data at the level of the project (i.e., using current state or local data, not national). This section should include the following:*
- *A description of the problem in terms of causes and consequences. Articulate why this problem should be addressed. Use published literature to support your description where appropriate.*
- *The extent and nature of the problem in your target population and/or community. Use*

*data to support your description.*

- *Explain why you are requesting grant funds; did you experience a loss of funding, is this an unexpected and unplanned emergent issue that arose, etc.?*
- *Applicants shall provide evidence that demonstrates their efforts to secure other financial support for the project costs, including requests through the entity's regular funding process, before applying for JAG funds. If such requests were not made in advance of the JAG application submission, the applicant shall explain why other resources were not sought."*

Further, when describing their implementation plan for the proposed project, they must

address 6 questions posed by the Board:

*"What do you plan to do? What are the steps in your process? Your response should address the 6 questions below:*

- *Describe what this project will do, how funds will be used and what will be different (for your agency, community, population to be served) as a result of these funds. Is there specific data that you will collect to measure success and if so, how and when will this data be collected?*
- *Aside from these requested grant funds, what other resources are available to support this project? Include collaborations with other agencies and/or any funding that others will dedicate to support the project.*
- *Outline the steps to be taken to implement this proposed project throughout the grant period.*
- *Who will be responsible for this project overall and who will be responsible for individual steps, if different?*
- *How will you evaluate your progress throughout the grant period to know if you remain on track or if changes need to be made due to unexpected challenges?*
- *If appropriate to this project, have you begun the process of determining how you might want to sustain this program after grant funds are gone or how to expand the program if it shows great success?"*

Finally, applicants must address the use of data to be collected that they will use to evaluate

success or to make changes and improvements if success is not being achieved.

*"Describe the evaluation plan for measures and outcomes. In this section include at minimum, information about the following:*

1. *Using your identified measurement tools, explain your plan for collecting data on each specified outcome and managing the data once collected.*
2. *How will you analyze collected data and use the data to change/improve your program?*
3. *What is your approach to obtaining consent from participants and maintaining*

*confidentiality (if client- or community-based outcomes)?*

4. *How will you confirm whether your project was successful in making progress toward achieving your goal?"*

### **JAG Subgrant Funding Solicitation and Application Review**

Over the past several years, DCJ and the JAG Board have seen a steady decline in the number and quality of applications received for JAG funding. DCJ recently conducted a survey of past applicants on the ease of reading and using JAG subgrant application instructions and completing the on-line application. With no average score above a 3 in a 5-point scale, the JAG Board and staff reviewed the application and instructions to streamline them. Difficulties noted by subgrant applicants were length of instructions (over 45 pages) and use of the online Grant Management System for the first time. The streamlined grant application structure will be used with the 2019 JAG solicitation and it is hoped that it will not only generate more applications but will generate more complete applications. As in past years, applicants can apply for one-time funding or if it is a multi-year project are invited to apply annually for up to 48 months.

The process for the JAG Board review will not change from prior years. All of Colorado's JAG Board members elect to read 100% of the received applications (no review by subcommittee). The application review and initial scoring process is available to JAG Board members online. There is a week-long funding conference in the spring where the Board meets as a whole. Applicants for funding (first-year applications and continuation applications where concerns by staff have been noted) present to the Board and clarifying questions are asked. By the end of the funding conference, the Board makes initial funding recommendations. A 10% portion of available funds is set aside for an appeals process which is held a month or so later where applicants denied funding or recommended for less than 50% of their request can request

reconsideration of the decision. After the appeals process, final recommendations are sent to the DCJ Director for approval and to the Governor for notification.

### **JAG Program Goals, Objective and Action Steps for 2019-2024**

**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: *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.*

**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.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Review JAG roster including term limits on an annual basis.
- Work with the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions when vacancies (planned and unplanned) are anticipated or occur to minimize length of vacancies in Board positions.

**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.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Schedule a JAG Board strategic planning review meeting each Fall to review JAG Board priorities from the prior year and to maintain or establish new funding priorities for the following year’s solicitation for subgrant applications.

- Provide annual updates on priorities established by the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council.

**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.

**Action Steps:**

- Review instructions annually to determine where more information could be helpful in order to gather quality applications.
- With the assistance of the EPIC Resource Center, provide training and technical assistance to applicants on how to develop a quality application, including the necessary components to assure development of a plan that will lead to successful outcomes.

**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.

**Action Steps:**

- Review and update grant management training annually.
- Provide training annually either in person or on-line.
- Provide technical assistance to subgrantees who need extra support to understand and develop a system where they can provide timely reporting.
- On a quarterly basis, review all incoming subgrantee's reports, compare them to reporting entered directly by subgrantees in the federal Performance Measurement Tool (PMT) and request additional information and updates to reports when they are either unclear or the data does not match from one report to the other.
- Submit timely and accurate mandatory PMT reports to the Bureau of Justice Assistance on a semi-annual basis, semi-annual reports in GMS and quarterly financial reports (424s).

**Funding**

Colorado's Division of Criminal Justice allocates all JAG funding, after 10% for administrative costs are removed, to support subgrant applications from state or local criminal and juvenile justice entities. Throughout the JAG Board funding conference process described previously, the OAJA Financial Manager and the JAG Financial Grant Manager track funding recommendations to assure that the state's Variable Pass-through Rates (VPT) and Under \$10,000 Allocation mandates are fully met. As the JAG interest funds build up, again 10% is set aside to support JAG Board and other administrative costs and remaining funds are used for subgrant applications as approved by the JAG Board.