

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

FY2021 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

In accordance with federal program requirements, we are providing an opportunity for community stakeholders to comment on the FY2021 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Plan.

Please submit your comments directly to:

Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM):

Chidi.Nwuneli@ct.gov

Phone 860-418-6341

Please submit comments by: July 19, 2021

The JAG Program is a federal formula grant, authorized under [42 U.S.C. §3751\(a\)](#), and administered through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The federal agency awards JAG funds to each state based on a formula weighted for violent crime and population. The federal JAG Program provides critical funding necessary to support a range of program areas including law enforcement, prosecution, indigent defense, courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning, evaluation, technology improvement, and crime victim and witness initiatives and mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs, including behavioral programs and crisis intervention teams.

The federal agency awards the JAG grant to the **State Administering Agency (SAA)** which is responsible for identifying funding priorities, managing a multi-disciplinary planning process and oversight of sub- recipient projects.

OPM is the **State Administering Agency (SAA)** for the **Connecticut Justice Assistance Grant** program as well other federal criminal justice grants. As the SAA, OPM is responsible for coordinating a transparent strategic plan process and allocating grant funds to support structural reforms that improve the administration of justice, while saving taxpayer money. OPM is also responsible for assuring that sub- recipients are in compliance with applicable federal and state financial and programmatic requirements and verifying that funds are expended within federal program policies.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT JAG
JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FORMULA GRANT PROGRAM
Grant Application Narrative FY 2021

Connecticut's **FY21 Justice Assistance Formula Grant (JAG) Plan** will provide state agencies and local governments with critical funding necessary to support a range of program areas including law enforcement, prevention programs, community corrections, drug treatment, law enforcement and technology improvement programs.

Allocation priorities include: recidivism reduction, interventions for mentally ill offenders and substance abusers, gun violence reduction, criminal justice system response to heroin and opioid epidemic, NIBRS expansion and police officer safety and wellness.

The **Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM)** is the primary recipient for the JAG Formula grant and serves as the **State Administrative Agency (SAA)** responsible for administration, oversight and monitoring of sub-recipients.

Statutory Authority: The JAG program statute is Subpart I of Part E of Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. Title I of the "Omnibus Act" generally is codified at Chapter 26 of Title 42 of the United States Code; the JAG program statute is codified at 42 U.S.C. §§ 3750-3758. See also 28 U.S.C. § 530C(a).

STATE LEVEL JAG FUNDS

The federal JAG program requires the **State's Administrative Agency (SAA)** to "pass-through" a federally-determined percentage of the State's JAG award to local governments (Local Variable Pass- Through). The funds remaining may be allocated to "**state-level**" or "state-wide" projects operated by a state agency. The "**state level**" projects are a critical component of the JAG Plan given the structure of Connecticut's criminal justice system. Connecticut is a small state with a single-tiered, unified court system and **all criminal justice functions are funded and administered at the state level except for municipal law enforcement**. Unlike many other states, Connecticut has **no county or local government systems** responsible for courts, jails, prison, parole, probation, indigent defense, victim services, prosecution and enforcement. Therefore, the JAG State-level funds must address a multitude of inter-related functions and operations while the JAG Local Variable Pass-through funds are used for local government law enforcement functions.

State-Level JAG Planning Agency:

As the **State Administering Agency (SAA)** for five federal criminal justice grants, **OPM** is responsible for assuring that all sub-recipients are in compliance with applicable federal and state financial and programmatic requirements. The SAA must verify that funds are expended within

federal program policies and ensure those funds are used to achieve maximum results while supporting priority policy objectives through a strategic planning approach.

Stakeholders Involved in Planning Process:

Connecticut's FY2021 State-Level JAG funds will focus on issue areas addressed by the [Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission \(CJPAC\)](#), which is a multi-disciplinary planning group of stakeholders representing state and local government agencies as well as community-based organizations and service providers.

CJPAC Stakeholders: CJPAC includes the following state and local government agencies and non- profit community-based organizations:

- [Department of Correction \(DOC\)](#)

All jails and prisons in Connecticut are operated under authority of DOC.

- [Judicial Branch Courts](#)

All criminal courts in Connecticut are operated under authority of the Judicial Branch.

- [Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division \(JB CSSD\)](#)

Court Support Services Division oversees pretrial services, probation, diversionary program services, treatment, family services, divorce and domestic violence, as well as juvenile residential centers including Juvenile Detention. Bail/IAR (Intake, Assessment, and Referral) provides pre-trial information to the Court and assistance to released defendants. Bail Commissioners and IAR Specialists handle pre-trial release and court appearances as well as arraignment services.

- [Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(DMHAS\)](#)

DMHAS is responsible for publicly funded mental health and substance abuse services statewide. DMHAS Forensic Division (DMHAS DFS) funds services and housing for people with mental illness and/or addictions who are justice involved.

- [Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection \(DESPP\)](#)

DESPP includes the Division of State Police and serves as the local law enforcement agency for sixty-eight small local government jurisdictions.

- [Division of Public Defender Services \(DPDS\)](#)

DPDS provides legal counsel to “indigent” accused adults and juveniles state-wide.

- [Division of Criminal Justice \(DCJ\) \(Prosecutors\)](#)

All criminal matters in Connecticut are prosecuted under authority of DCJ.

- [Connecticut Police Chiefs Association \(CPCA\)](#)

Represents local government law enforcement perspective of policy reform.

- [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(CCADV\) \(victim advocacy organization\)](#) CCADV is a non-profit organization which advocates for policy reforms to protect victims of domestic violence.
- [Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence \(CAESV\) \(victim advocacy organization\)](#) CAESV is a non-profit organization which advocates for policy reforms to protect victims of sexual violence.

- [Public Members](#)

COORDINATION EFFORTS

Connecticut has a centralized and unified criminal justice system. Connecticut is divided into 169 municipalities. There is no county government. There is no overlap of functions such as might arise with county government or a multi-tier court system. The Judicial Branch operates a single tier, unified court system with an intermediate appellate court and a supreme court. With the exception of local police services in the larger communities, all criminal justice functions are provided by state agencies.

All of the criminal and juvenile justice formula grant programs emanating from the U. S. Department of Justice, except the Victims of Crime Act, are administered by the same unit within the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). The Office of Policy and Management, the state administrative agency (SAA) for the JAG Grant, is well positioned to coordinate JAG Grant activities with other federal and state initiatives given that it is the state’s budget and planning agency.

In addition to serving as the SAA for the JAG grant, the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (CJPPD) of OPM is statutorily required to develop strategic plans to improve the outcomes and operation of the criminal justice system. The CJPPD collaborates with the state criminal justice agencies and local governments in assessing and analyzing existing functions and identifying opportunities for improvements in services to promote greater public safety. The CJPPD Undersecretary serves as the chair of the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC) which is charged with developing strategies to prevent prison and jail overcrowding and creating an offender community reentry strategy.

A. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

OPM requires the JAG sub-grantees to submit performance data as well as financial data on a quarterly basis. Both the programmatic data and financial data are aggregated into “state-wide” reports which are submitted to the federal agency via GMS.

B. Governing Body Review

The SAA (OPM CJPPD) for Connecticut’s JAG grant is a sub-division of the “governing body of the state” (Connecticut Office of Policy and Management).

The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM CJPPD) made its Fiscal Year 2021 JAG application available to the Undersecretary, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management for its review and comment on 07/19/2021.

C. Public Comment

The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM CJPPD) made its Fiscal Year 2021 JAG draft application available public comment via the OPM website