



July 2009

In the Spotlight

Justice Reinvestment—Reshaping Justice and Reallocating Resources



Over the past two decades, state spending on corrections has grown at a rate faster than nearly any other state budget item. Yet, in spite of mounting expenditures, recidivism rates remain very high, with over half of all persons released from prison returning within three years. The Council of State Governments Justice Center, with support from BJA and other funding partners, is working closely with state policymakers to advance fiscally-sound, data-driven criminal justice policies to break the cycle of recidivism, avert prison expenditures, and make communities safer. Currently working with 10 states, the Justice Reinvestment Project is in the process of identifying other states to pursue strategies to reduce spending on corrections, increase public safety, and improve conditions in neighborhoods to which offenders most often return. [more](#)

News You Can Use

Medal of Valor Nominations

To honor public safety officers' commitment to protect America's citizens and communities, Congress created the [Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor](#), the highest national award for valor by a public safety officer. The medal is awarded annually by the President to officers who have exhibited exceptional courage, regardless of personal safety, in the attempt to save or protect human life. The nomination period runs through July 31, 2009 for acts of valor that occurred between June 1, 2008 and May 31, 2009. [Nominate someone.](#)



OMB Recovery Act Reporting Guidance

On June 22, 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued "[Implementing Guidance for the Reports on Use of Funds Pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.](#)" OMB will be holding a series of webinars about the guidance the week of July 20; the schedule can be found on [BJA's Recovery Act web page](#). DOJ staff will participate in these webinars and continue to keep you informed as additional information becomes available.

Primer on Mental Health Courts

Do you want to learn more about mental health courts? How effective are they? How they differ from drug courts? Check out [Mental Health Courts: A Primer for Policymakers and Practitioners](#). This publication, published by the Council of State Governments with support from BJA, provides the field with a comprehensive overview and history of mental health courts and offers resources for jurisdictions interested in starting a program.

Grants & Funding

In response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, BJA received more than 8,000 applications, requesting more than \$5.5 billion in funding:

Solicitation	Apps Received	Funding Requested
Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement to Combat Crime and Drugs	1,153	\$612,875,894
Correctional Facilities on Tribal Lands Program	46	\$523,504,932
Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program Announcement	3,578	\$3,281,832,646
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Formula Program	3,265	\$1,955,064,490
State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program: Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity Stemming from the Southern Border of the United States	234	\$295,911,529
Total	8,276	\$5,669,189,491

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 50 percent of those released from incarceration will be in some form of legal trouble within 3 years, according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics report. BJA is committed to reducing this rate through the Reentry Initiative, a comprehensive federal partnership effort that addresses high-risk offenders. BJA, through the Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) and Second Chance, provides training, technical assistance, and funding to develop and implement reentry strategies that ensure the community's safety and reduce violent crime by preparing offenders to successfully return to their communities. From 2006 to 2008, BJA funded 63 PRI grants for a total of \$34 million. This compares to the allocation of \$110 million to 69 grantees in the previous SVORI program. Visit BJA's [Reentry Initiative web page](#) for more information.

FEATURED PROGRAM

Second Chance Reentry Initiatives

Signed into law on April 9, 2008, the Second Chance Act authorizes federal grants to provide offenders with employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, literacy classes, mentoring, and other services that can help reduce the national recidivism rate and decrease the billions of dollars spent annually on incarceration. In FY 2009, BJA has \$25 million available for grants, and will soon be announcing awards for the National Adult and Juvenile Offender Reentry Resource Center, demonstration projects, and mentoring and transitional services projects. BJA is also working with the National Institute of Justice to coordinate research and evaluation efforts

[Recovery Act JAG Awards Announced](#)

Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program. For details regarding these federal benefits for law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders killed or catastrophically disabled in the line of duty, call the PSOB Office toll-free at 888-744-6513 or 202-307-0635.

to determine the efficacy of these grant programs once they have been operationalized. For FY 2010, President Obama requested \$100 million to fund the Second Chance programs. [Learn more.](#)



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