



Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program (BCJI)

Safety is a critical component of a vibrant community, every bit as important as quality affordable housing, good jobs, and high performing schools. All people deserve to feel that it is safe for their children to walk to school or play in the local park, to shop in local stores, and to enjoy other neighborhood amenities. Safety is also critical to attracting new homeowners and businesses to neighborhoods where such investments can be catalysts for revitalization. The BCJI program enables communities to create comprehensive strategies that address priority crime problems.

What is the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program?

The BCJI program is a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The program's goal is to make communities safer by mobilizing community members to work with law enforcement and other organizational partners to address crime in "hot spot" locations – areas where most crime is occurring.

The initiative emphasizes place-based, data-driven, and comprehensive strategies to reduce and prevent crime.

Eligible applicants include states, units of local governments, non-profit organizations (including tribal non-profit organizations), and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments.

The strength of the BCJI model lies in its core tenets:

- » **Addressing persistent crime problems requires input and resources from a variety of sources.** BCJI projects involve "cross sector partners" including community developers, social service agencies, schools, and other neighborhood stakeholders, in addition to police departments and other criminal justice entities.
- » **Crime prevention strategies should be selected based on robust analysis of specific problems and evidence about what works.** BCJI leaders are using research to guide their decision-making. In select cases, they are using intensive data analysis to craft innovative approaches that promise to advance our understanding of how to make communities safe.
- » **To achieve sustainable change, residents and other community leaders need to be at the table.** BCJI explicitly champions the role that community members play in shaping and implementing crime control efforts.



What are the outcomes?

Since FY 2012, the inaugural year of funding, the Bureau of Justice Assistance has awarded two rounds of grants totaling \$23 million to 29 communities around the country.

Since the first BCJI grants were made in late 2012, all of the program awardees have:

- » Identified specific crime hot spots in their target neighborhoods – blocks or intersections where crime has remained

high for a significant period of time.

- » Brought together community-based teams with the presence of criminal justice, social service, and neighborhood revitalization partners to examine those crime problems and identify possible solutions.
- » Engaged research partners and begun analyzing what is driving crime in those hot spots, including aspects of the physical, social, and economic environment which might contribute to crime.

FY 2013 BCJI awardees are currently working with their research partners, DOJ and LISC to develop action plans comprised of evidence-based strategies to respond to their specific problems. Most FY 2012 awardees are already implementing their plans, including rollout of robust service and employment programs for people returning from jail and prison, focused drug market interventions, targeted enforcement for repeat offenders and blight remediation efforts around vacant properties.

Outcomes will include crime reduction and improvements in the physical environment, such as renovated housing and new business activity. The initiative will also yield models for research-practitioner partnerships that can inform diverse crime-fighting strategies nationwide.

What has been LISC's involvement?

LISC is the national training and technical assistance provider for the BCJI program, and has received awards totaling \$2.6 million to help local grantees use data and research to develop comprehensive crime-fighting strategies, informed by the perspectives of local residents and business owners. In order to build the knowledge base of the community safety field, LISC disseminates the lessons of BCJI to practitioners and policymakers nationwide.

In addition, a number of local LISC offices are directly involved in the rollout BCJI work in their local jurisdictions. Examples include:

- » In **Philadelphia**, LISC is supporting BCJI work in the Mantua neighborhood where the planning process for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant identified major problems with crime around problem bars and vacant residential properties.
- » In **Milwaukee**, BCJI partners in the Washington Park neighborhood supported by LISC are working closely with police and prosecutors to address violent crime and problem properties, as well as disorder problems that cause fear.
- » In **Kansas City**, LISC is part of the multi-agency No Violence Alliance, which is using proven group intervention strategies to address youth violence and related crime through BCJI.



What can Congress do?

- » We urge Congress to fund the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program (BCJI) at \$29.5 million in the FY 2015 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Bill.

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Additional information on LISC Community Safety Initiative (CSI) is available at www.lisc.org/csi*