



# Bureau of Justice Assistance Style Guide

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## Table of Contents

Who Should Use This Guide .....	5
General Editing Guidelines.....	5
Brief on Major Changes to BJA Style .....	5
Preferred Terminology .....	6
Usage Tips .....	7
Use of the BJA Disclaimer and Outreach Language .....	8
Notes for Writing Letters and Memoranda .....	8
Tips on Writing for the Web .....	9
Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	10
Alphabetizing .....	11
Capitalization .....	11
Compound Words .....	13
Numbers .....	14
Punctuation.....	15
Comma Dos .....	15
Comma Don'ts.....	15
Quotation Marks .....	16
Semicolon.....	16
Apostrophes .....	16
Hyphen, En Dash, Em Dash.....	17
Ellipses.....	17
Notes on Formatting .....	17
Headings.....	18
Spacing .....	18
Bullets/Lists .....	18
Graphic Elements .....	19
Guidelines for Creating Tables.....	19
Publication Date .....	20
Addresses.....	21
Endnotes and References .....	22
Books.....	22

Periodicals .....	22
Series.....	23
Government Series .....	23
Electronic Sources .....	23
Repeating a Citation .....	24
Author Issues.....	24
Number Examples .....	24
Glossary .....	25

## Who Should Use This Guide

The BJA Style Guide is to be followed by all BJA staff and contractors writing and editing BJA content. It should also be shared with BJA grantees and training and technical assistance providers if they are developing content that will carry the BJA logo.

## General Editing Guidelines

- Who is the audience for the content you're writing or editing? Always keep them in mind.
- Follow the *U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) Style Manual* ([U.S. Government Publishing Office Style Manual – Content Details – GPO-STYLEMANUAL-2016](#)) except as indicated in the remainder of this style guide. Follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago) ([www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/ganda/topicList.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/ganda/topicList.html)) if the *GPO Style Manual* does not provide the answer.
- All content carrying the BJA logo should adhere to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Refer to the Section 508 Standards Toolkit ([section508.gov/refresh-toolkit](http://section508.gov/refresh-toolkit)) for more guidance on Section 508 compliance.
- For information about BJA's branding guidelines, refer to The BJA Brand Guidelines PowerPoint available in the [Communications team site](#) on the intranet where you can also find templates and the BJA logo.
- As a federal agency, BJA should adhere to the Plain Language Writing Act, which "requires that federal agencies use clear government communication that the public can understand and use." Refer to [www.plainlanguage.gov/](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/) for additional information and guidance. Also look at the [Writing for the Web](#) section.

## Brief on Major Changes to BJA Style

The following are highlighted changes from the May 2022 version of the BJA style guide.

- Do not hyphenate any ethnic or demographic groups, even when used as an adjective: African American, Native American. This has been added to the [Compound Words](#) section.
  - This change matches other Office of Justice Programs (OJP) component style guides, specifically: OJP, National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program (OJJDP), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management (OAAM).
- In telephone numbers, use hyphens rather than en dashes. This has been added to the [Number Examples](#) section.
  - This change matches the majority of OJP component style guides.
- Use a hyphen in "decision-making" at all times, whether as a noun or adjective. See the [Glossary](#) for other specific choices on word usage.

- In formal correspondence, use only one space after end punctuation like periods and question marks. This has been added to the [Notes on Formatting](#) section.
  - This change matches other style OJP component style guides.

## Preferred Terminology

- When it is questionable what wording to use in describing people, the tip is to think of the person first and then add descriptive language; however, in some cases, language BJA typically would not use is included in a bill, making its use acceptable by BJA. For example, instead of “justice-involved individual, offender,<sup>1</sup> ex-offender, criminal” and “felon,” use:
  - Person who committed a crime
  - Individual who was arrested
  - Person who was adjudicated
  - Individual who was formerly incarcerated
  - Person released from incarceration
  - Individual on probation or parole
  - Person in the criminal justice system
  - People who have criminal justice system involvement

Unacceptable terms	Use instead
alien*	noncitizen** or migrant; respondent, applicant, petitioner, beneficiary, or non-U.S. citizen
Undocumented alien or illegal alien	Undocumented noncitizen, undocumented non-U.S. citizen, or undocumented individual
Unaccompanied alien child	Unaccompanied noncitizen child, unaccompanied non-U.S. citizen child, or UC
assimilation	integration

\* “Alien” is a legal definition of a noncitizen in federal law; however, it is advised to use the term in legal documents only.

\*\* Noncitizens include both immigrants in the United States illegally, legal permanent residents (green-card holders), and visitors.

- OJP provided the following guidance on how to describe people:
  - “Black,” when referring to a racial category, and “Indigenous,” in reference to people and culture, should be capitalized. This guidance was instituted by the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the term “offender” has specific meaning and connotation as it relates to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) database and Purpose Area 3 of the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. The phrase “convicted offender index” is the actual name of the index that houses DNA profiles of individuals convicted of certain crimes within CODIS, so use of the term is appropriate within that context.

Associated Press in 2020 and has been adopted by many news organizations. Following AP style, “white” remains lower case. To learn more, visit: [blog.ap.org/announcements/the-decision-to-capitalize-black](https://blog.ap.org/announcements/the-decision-to-capitalize-black).

- BJA uses the term “behavioral health” to include mental health, substance use disorder, and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder. It does not include intellectual, developmental, or physical disabilities, which BJA considers to be a separate category.
- Hope Janke advised the following: PSOB’s vocabulary strives to use nonconfrontational words. Imagine how a message might be received by a survivor or injured officer. For example, we use “nonapproval” versus “not approved,” “cannot be approved” versus “denied,” and “filing timeframe” for “deadline.” Avoid the use of “unfortunately” altogether.
- “Criminal justice reform” is acceptable.
- Instead of “prison guard,” the American Jail Association and American Correctional Association now prefers “correctional officer.”
- Ensure /insure /assure:
  - Ensure: To make certain or sure of. (This is usually the word you want.)
    - OJP will ensure the Correspondence Tracking System works well.
  - Insure: Guarantee against loss.
    - You should insure your automobile against collision damage.
  - Assure: Remove doubt.
    - I assure you this building is safe, and no one will break into your apartment. Our security guards keep watch 24 hours a day to ensure thieves don’t enter the building. To be on the safe side, you might want to insure all of your valuables.

## Usage Tips

- Treat an organization, company, agency, institution, etc. as singular (“it”); for example, “BJA provides funding to state, local, and tribal governments. It has been doing so since its inception.”
- OJP instructs not to refer to the other OJP entities as “bureaus” or “offices.” They are to be called “OJP’s program offices.”
- “Fewer than” and “less than” are not interchangeable. “Fewer than” refers to objects that can be counted, whereas “less than” is used for qualitative objects.
  - Example: “Fewer than five students completed less than 25 percent of the assignment.”
- Percent vs. percentage: When a number appears in the sentence, use “percent,” e.g., “a 10 percent increase.” When a percentage is in parentheses, use the symbol, e.g., “They saw an increase in crime (5%) in the first half of the year.” When a specific number is not

mentioned, use “percentage.”

- Do not use contractions. Example: “do not,” not “don’t.”
- Avoid doubling up on words that are essentially synonyms, e.g., “collaborate and cooperate.”
- The term “staff” takes a plural verb form. Example: “BJA staff are reviewing the applications.” If possible, use “staff members” to avoid any confusion.
- Fiscal year (FY) has space following it when before a full year, but there is no space if only two digits are used: FY 2021 **or** FY21 (p. 277 of *GPO Style Manual*).

## Use of the BJA Disclaimer and Outreach Language

- If a publication or any other content is funded by BJA, it must include the following disclaimer, which can be translated into other languages:

This project was supported by Grant [or Contract] No. <AWARD\_NUMBER> awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

- If content is produced by BJA, then the following language<sup>2</sup> is recommended for use:  
BJA strengthens the nation’s criminal justice system and helps America’s state, local, and tribal jurisdictions reduce and prevent crime, reduce recidivism, and promote a fair and safe criminal justice system. BJA focuses its programmatic and policy efforts on providing a wide range of resources, including training and technical assistance, to law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, reentry, justice information sharing, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide. To learn more about BJA, visit [bjaojp.gov](https://bjaojp.gov) or follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/DOJBJA](https://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA)) and X ([@DOJBJA](https://twitter.com/DOJBJA)). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs.

## Notes for Writing Letters and Memoranda

- OJP’s Executive Secretariat provides guidance, templates, component letterheads, signature blocks, and a list of Members of Congress, along with other useful tools and resources that can be accessed at:
  - Correspondence Resources: [doj365.sharepoint.us/sites/OJP-OCOM/ExecSec/SitePages/Executive%20Secretariat%20Guidance.aspx](https://doj365.sharepoint.us/sites/OJP-OCOM/ExecSec/SitePages/Executive%20Secretariat%20Guidance.aspx)

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<sup>2</sup> Use of the word “component” in this instance is acceptable, for now, as it is used as “division.”



- Names and titles should never be split onto different lines (see screenshot below).
  - To keep two words together: click where you want to insert the nonbreaking space, delete the existing space between words, hold down Control and Shift, and hit the Space Bar.

Thank you for your agency's nomination for the 2016 Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery (CBOB). On behalf of the State and Local CBOB Board, it is my honor to announce that on November 8, 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions cited Officer Jason Falconer to receive the 2016 State and Local CBOB. We encourage you to share this information with your recipient, but ask that you and he not make any public announcements at this point in order to allow his congressional representatives the opportunity to plan a presentation ceremony and issue a media release.

- When editing a letter, always confirm with the subject expert when it says "as you know," making sure the addressee does in fact know the information!

## Tips on Writing for the Web

BJA follows the Plain Writing Act of 2020 and aims to use plain language whenever we communicate—it saves time, personnel resources, and money. It is the fastest and clearest way to provide the information that our audiences may need and ultimately use. Writing in plain language also makes translating content into other languages easier. You can visit [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov) for more detailed information, but the following are some key points to consider.

- **Write for your audience.**
  - Who will be reading your content? Is it one audience or multiple ones?
  - Are you using language that all your audiences will understand? Avoid using jargon, acronyms, or technical language that could alienate some visitors.
  - Put yourself in your audience's shoes. Are you answering any potential questions they may have? Are you telling them why the content they are reading is important to them?
- **Organize your information using headlines and bulleted lists.**
  - Refrain from using the web as a filing cabinet, because it forces visitors to spend a lot of time searching to find what they need. Rather, make your content easily accessible so visitors can quickly find the information they need.
  - Put your main message or purpose right up front. Leave all background information for the end.
  - Break your text into short sections with descriptive headings. Headings keep your content organized and help users zero in on the information they're seeking.
  - If information can be organized using bullets or tables, use them! Bulleted information and tables are easier to scan than a wall of words.
- **Eliminate unnecessary words and write concisely.**
  - To make it easy for visitors to scan and grab the information they need, avoid using words or phrases that are fillers and do not add much meaning. For example:
    - Avoid flowery welcome and other messages that take up space and do not

add to the purpose of your content.

- Words such as “very,” “really,” “actually,” “carefully,” “absolutely,” “completely,” “quite,” and “totally” are padding and are more commonly used in spoken than written communication.
- Write short, concise sentences. Break up complex sentences into shorter ones or organize them into bulleted points.
- Include a single topic per paragraph.
- Avoid repeating the same concept by using different words that say the same thing. For example, writing “start” is concise and to the point in comparison to “begin and commence.”
- **Use the active voice.**
  - Active voice makes it clear who or what (subject) is doing the action (verb). It eliminates any ambiguities about who is responsible. For example, compare “It must be done” with “You must do it.” Which conveys the clearer message?
  - Using the active voice can change the character of your writing more than any other writing technique.
  - Passive voice, in contrast, obscures who is responsible for an action. This can be enormously frustrating for a visitor seeking specific information. And [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov) states it is “one of the biggest problems with government documents.”
  - When you write, think about who or what is the subject and what they doing as opposed to what is being done to them.
- **Provide information that visitors can easily find.** People typically do not read web pages—they scan them to pick out information to answer their questions.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

- Introduce an abbreviation or acronym the first time it is used in each element of the front matter (i.e., foreword, executive summary, acknowledgments) only if it is used more than once in a section. Spell out the abbreviation or acronym in full, followed by the shortened form in parentheses; thereafter, the abbreviation or acronym may stand alone.
- Even if the first use of the full term is possessive, the acronym should not include an apostrophe: The National Crime Information Center’s (NCIC) uniform offense codes.
- Spell out all abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used in the main body text. Thereafter use the abbreviation or acronym throughout. (Note: In lengthy documents, spell out the abbreviation or acronym at the beginning of each chapter.)
- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms in chapter titles and section heads.
- Do not use “a,” “an,” and “the” with an acronym used as a noun, unless the usage is generally accepted. Examples: BJA, BOP, DOD, DOJ, FDA **but** the FBI, the CIA, the IRS.

“BJA requires grantees to . . .” **but** “the BJA demonstration program.”

- Plurals of acronyms take *s* (*SAGs*, *MOUs*, *MITFs*), not apostrophe *s*.
- Use postal abbreviations in addresses and bibliographies only. Spell out state names in narrative text. **But** use Washington, D.C., in text and Washington, DC, in addresses and bibliographies. (See [Addresses](#) section.)
- Do not abbreviate Street, Avenue, Road, and so on in address lists.

## Alphabetizing

- If the items in a list are to be put in alphabetical order,<sup>3</sup> alphabetize them letter by letter (not word by word). When a title begins with the article “A,” “An,” or “The,” keep the article as the first word of the title but ignore it when you alphabetize the item.
  - Examples:
    - Accessing Victim Services
    - The Adaptability of the Crime Victim Assistance Field
    - Assessing the Structure of Victim Assistance Programs
    - Identifying Victim Needs
    - A National Plan for Responding to Disasters
- Isolated entries beginning with numerals are alphabetized as though spelled out. (Chicago 16.65.)
  - Examples:
    - 1984 (Orwell) [alphabetized as nineteen eighty-four]
    - 125th Street [alphabetized as one hundred twenty-fifth street]
    - 10 Downing Street [alphabetized as ten downing street]

## Capitalization

- Capitalization rules generally follow GPO style. (See chapters 3 and 4 of the [GPO Style Manual](#).) For individual examples, see frequently used BJA terms in the [Glossary](#) at the end of this guide.
- Capitalization depends largely on whether the word in question is a proper noun/name or a common noun. Proper nouns/names denote a **specific** person, place, or thing and are usually capitalized. Common nouns denote an **unspecific** person, place, or thing belonging to the same class and are usually lowercased.
  - Derivatives of proper names used with a proper meaning are capitalized—e.g., Roman.
  - Derivatives of proper names used with acquired independent common meaning,

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<sup>3</sup> Lists do not have to be in alphabetical order; often they must be in the order the author has specified or the order of the subheads to follow.

or no longer identified with such names, are lowercased—e.g., venetian blinds.

- A common noun or adjective forming an essential part of a proper name is capitalized; the common noun used alone as a substitute for the name of a place or thing is not capitalized—e.g., Massachusetts Avenue; the avenue.
- Do not capitalize terms such as act, agency, bureau, center, clearinghouse, institute, office, or program when they stand alone as a substitute for the full name. Example: The Americans With Disabilities Act . . . Provisions of the act include (*GPO Style Manual* 3.5)
- A common noun used alone as a well-known short form of a specific proper name is capitalized—e.g., the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.
- A common noun used with a date, number, or letter, merely to denote time or sequence, or for the purpose of reference, record, or temporary convenience, does not form a proper name and is therefore not capitalized—e.g., figure 3.
- National governmental units: U.S. Congress: 110th Congress; the Congress; Congress; the Senate; the House; Committee of the Whole, the Committee; but committee, congressional.
- The “Constitution,” referring to the U.S. Constitution, is capitalized. The adjective “constitutional” is never capitalized.
- A descriptive term used to denote a definite region, locality, or geographic feature is a proper name and is therefore capitalized; also, for temporary distinction, a coined name of a region is capitalized. A descriptive term used to denote mere direction or position is not a proper name and is therefore not capitalized—e.g., the Gulf States, the Middle West, Near East, but north, eastern, northern Italy.
- Civil, religious, military, and professional titles, as well as those of nobility, immediately preceding a name are capitalized. To indicate preeminence or distinction in certain specified instances, a common-noun title immediately following the name of a person or used alone as a substitute for it is capitalized—e.g., President Washington, Lieutenant Fowler, Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State.
- Capitalize the names of BJA and BJA programs. Example: Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program.
- Names of diseases, syndromes, diagnostic procedures, anatomical parts, and the like are lowercased, except for proper names forming part of the term. Acronyms and initialisms are capitalized. For example:
  - acquired immunodeficiency syndrome *or* AIDS
  - Alzheimer disease (see below)
  - computed tomography *or* CT
  - Down syndrome (see below)
  - finger-nose test
  - islets of Langerhans

- non-Hodgkin lymphoma (see below)
- ultrasound; ultrasonography

The possessive forms Alzheimer's, Down's, Hodgkin's, and the like, though less common in medical literature, may be preferred in a general context. For x-rays and radiation, see Chicago [8.151](#).

- **Note the following exceptions to GPO:**
  - Do not capitalize state or nation.
  - Do not capitalize federal government.
  - Do not capitalize tribe and tribal unless part of a formal name.
  - Do not capitalize web (e.g., website, web URL).
  - Do not capitalize appendix, chapter, exhibit, figure, and table when used with a number in text.
  - Capitalize titles of people before and after a name. Examples: Maureen A. Henneberg, Acting Assistant Attorney General; Attorney General Edmund Jennings Randolph.
- Capitalize BJA job titles even without individual names. Examples: Program Manager, PSOB Benefits Specialist. (This rule applies **only** to BJA titles.)

## Compound Words

In general, BJA follows GPO style regarding compound words. (See chapters 6 and 7 of the GPO Style Manual.) Some general rules:

- Unit modifiers ending in “based, related, level, free,” and “connected” are usually hyphenated. Examples: “community-based, crime-related, drug-free.” If a unit modifier (u.m.) in this group has more than two terms, only the last two terms are hyphenated. Example: “criminal justice-related.”
- Do not hyphenate two-word modifiers that have as their first element adverbs ending in “-ly,” comparatives, or superlatives. Examples: “lower income neighborhoods, federally associated communities, highest crime areas.”
- Close up prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms (e.g., anti-, multi-, non-, pre-, post-) except (1) when preceding capitalized words or compound forms or (2) when doing so would double a vowel, triple a consonant, or distort a word's meaning. Examples: “nonnegotiable terms, pretreatment services, multijurisdictional activities,” **but** “post-Cold War period, semi-independent candidate, shell-like object, pre-position” (before).
- If a prefix or combining form precedes a compound, all elements of the compound are hyphenated. Examples: “anti-drug-abuse programs, anti-gang-crime activities.”
  - However, when more than two words precede and modify a noun, hyphenate only the last two. Example: “law enforcement-oriented.”
- Co-, de-, pre-, pro-, and re- compounds are generally printed closed up except when duplicating prefixes. Examples: “preexisting, rereferred,” **but** “re-redirect” (GPO 6.7).

- Do not hyphenate adjectives ending in “American” that refer to ethnic or demographic groups within the United States. Examples: “African American organization, Mexican American, Native American reservation,” “Latin American culture.”
- When words appearing together share a common base or root word but have different prefixes, the root word does not have to be repeated: “pre- and postnatal care, over- and underused technologies, macro- and microeconomics” (Chicago, 17th ed., 7.96, section 4, “Words Formed with Prefixes”).
- If the title of a statute differs from the GPO compounding style, follow the title in references to the statute. Otherwise, hyphenate the word according to GPO compounding style unless it is one of the listed exceptions. Example: “Anti-Drug Abuse Act,” **but** “anti-drug-abuse programs” **or** “antidrug programs.”
- If following GPO style may result in confusion, rewrite to avoid compounding. Example: For “higher education costs,” write “higher costs for education” or “costs of higher education,” depending on which is meant.
- Avoid strings of modifiers. Example: For “terrorist-incident weapons-of-mass-destruction first-responder training programs,” write “training programs for first responders to terrorist incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction.”
- Exceptions to the GPO compounding guide are listed under “Frequently Used Terms.”

## Numbers

- Follow GPO style as shown in chapter 12 of the [GPO Style Manual](#). Some general rules:
- Spell out numbers less than 10; use numerals for numbers 10 and greater. (This is the rule, but GPO has dozens of exceptions.) Examples: a five-story building, 285 inmates, Fifth Avenue, 14th Street.
- Only for Notices of Funding Opportunity: write out full numbers for dollar amounts; do not use “millions.” Example: “BJA expects to make up to two awards (one per category) of up to \$800,000 for Category 1 and up to \$1,000,000 for Category 2, with an estimated total amount awarded of \$1,800,000.”
- Do not add “th” to dates unless they are part of an official title of a conference, book, or other item/activity. Examples: “On July 5, we will hold a forum. The USA PATRIOT Act was passed after the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers.”
- If any number in a sentence is 10 or more, use numerals for all numbers in the sentence. Example: “The grant funding was used to support and train 6 coordinators to serve 15 nonmetro counties in 3 regions of the state.”
  - However, a unit of measurement, time, or money, which is always expressed in figures, does not affect the use of figures for other numerical expressions in the sentence (GPO Style Manual 12.6). Examples:
    - A team of five men ran the 1-mile relay in 3 minutes, 20 seconds.
    - Each of five girls earned 75 cents an hour.
- Never begin a sentence with a numeral, even if the number is 10 or greater. Spell out

the number or rewrite the sentence. Example: “Twenty-eight law enforcement officers were murdered in the United States last year.”

- Use numerals with percentages and with units of time, weight, dimension, or money. Examples: “25 percent, \$5, 3 miles, 8 ounces, 4 fiscal years,” **but** “five decades, three centuries.” (See rule 12.9 in the *GPO Style Manual*.)
- Related numbers at the beginning of a sentence, separated by no more than three words, are treated alike. Example: “Sixty to seventy juveniles are arrested for vandalism each month.” **But:** “Sixty juveniles were incarcerated in 20 different facilities.”
- Write out and hyphenate simple fractions, but use numerals for compound fractions and unit modifiers. Examples: “one-half, two-thirds, 2½, ¼-inch pipe, one-quarter,” **but** “one quarter” (calendar).
- Hyphenate most number-word combinations that form unit modifiers **except percent**. Examples: “a 48-inch ruler, a 3-week vacation,” **but** “a 5 percent increase.” (*New York*, p. 415; Chicago, table 6.1, p. 223).
- Place parentheses around numerals or letters when part of a list within text, e.g., (1) or (a).
- Do **not** use en dashes in a range of numbers following “from” or “between.” Use “from 2011 to 2015” or “between 2005 and 2006.”
- Use hyphens in numbers that denote public laws, such as Public Law 103-322 (Legal/*Bluebook* style rather than GPO).

## Punctuation

See chapter 8 of the [GPO Style Manual](#).

### Comma Dos

- Use serial commas with three or more items used with “and,” “or,” or “nor” (e.g., “red, white, and blue”). **Exception:** Leave out the comma if an ampersand is used (e.g., “Barter, Biddles & Brower”).
- Use a comma before and after explanatory phrases, appositives (e.g., “The Attorney General, Eric H. Holder, Jr., said that . . .”), and identifiers (e.g., “In Newark, New Jersey, the mayor . . .”).
- In reference citations, separate the author’s name and the year with a comma. Examples: “Smith, 1995,” “Jones et al., 1999.”

### Comma Don’ts

- Per *GPO Style Manual* 8.49, **do use a comma after the day and year**. For example: “The dates of September 11, 1993, to June 12, 1994, were erroneous. This was reflected in the June 13, 2007, report.”
  - Do **not** use a comma if writing the month and year only: “the July 1994 report.”
- When using phrases introduced by “such as” or “including,” follow the principles in

Chicago 6.53. Nonrestrictive phrases introduced by these terms are set off by commas (because they are not essential to the meaning or identity of the noun they modify). When such phrases are restrictive (i.e., essential to the meaning or identity of the noun), commas are not used. For example:

- The entire band, including the matutinal lead singer, overslept the noon rehearsal.
  - Some words, such as *matutinal* and *onomatopoetic*, are best avoided in everyday speech.
- but**
- Words such as *matutinal* and *onomatopoetic* are best avoided in everyday speech.

### Quotation Marks

- Place periods and commas inside quotation marks: “Do provide funding to that grantee,” stated the Policy Advisor.
- Colons, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points are placed outside quotation marks unless they are part of the material being quoted: Is it appropriate to use the term “justice-involved individual”?
- Place **titles of courses and trainings** within quotation marks: “Introduction to Transit System Security.”

### Semicolon

- Use a semicolon to separate a complex series of major elements when those elements also contain commas. Example: “The country’s resources consist of large ore deposits; lumber, waterpower, and fertile soils; and a strong, rugged people.”
- Do not use semicolons if the only item with internal commas follows the last “and.” Example: “Among the town’s assets are friendly people, plenty of free parking, and numerous theaters, restaurants, and cafes.”
- Do not use a semicolon when a comma will suffice, as in a list of cities and states. Example: “Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado, and San Jose, California.”

### Apostrophes

- Use apostrophes only for possessives and for plurals of single letters. Examples: Mind your p’s and q’s, **but** the 1980s and State Advisory Groups (SAGs).
- Use an apostrophe to take the place of the word “of.” For example, “He was sentenced to four years’ imprisonment for drug trafficking.”
- Federal government agencies generally omit apostrophes from names that are more descriptive than possessive. Examples: Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Customs Service, **but** Veterans’ Administration (per enabling statute).
- Follow the pronunciation when forming a possessive for a word ending in “s.” “Harris’s house,” **not** “Harris’,” **but** “Chalmers’ house,” **not** “Chalmers’s.”



## Hyphen, En Dash, Em Dash

There are three lengths of dashes: hyphen (-), en dash (–), and em dash (—).

- The hyphen connects two things, usually words that function together as a single concept or work together as a joint modifier (e.g., tie-in, toll-free call, two-thirds).
- The en dash connects things that are related to each other by distance such as a series of numerals (e.g., “pp. 147–48”).
- The em dash is similar to parentheses, allowing an additional thought to be added within a sentence—as I have done here. (See [chapter 6](#) in Chicago).

## Ellipses

- Ellipses have a space before, between, and after each period. When the ellipses replace text that would complete the sentence, a fourth period must be added. Examples:
  - The sale of his library to Congress enabled Jefferson to reduce his . . . debt by half. (Ellipses indicate text missing from within the sentence.)
  - Craven Peyton, who had acted for him in this business, offered him an emergency loan . . . . (Ellipses followed by the period ending the sentence indicate that missing text that is not relevant to this use of the material would complete the sentence.)
  - Early in the year, Jefferson’s financial difficulties had been compounded by the unfavorable outcome of an arbitration. . . . The sale of fields belonging to heirs who were underage at the time had been ruled invalid, and Jefferson was ordered to make immediate payment of close to \$800 for rent. (Ellipses follow the period at the end of a sentence, indicating that missing text that is not relevant to this use of the material would come between the sentences presented here.)
- When it is unclear whether the author intends the ellipses to complete the sentence rather than follow it, query him/her. If it remains unclear, assume that the sentence ends with the last word before the ellipses and place a period immediately following this last word (as in the last example above), then space and ellipses.

## Notes on Formatting

- Use 12-point Roboto for all documents except official correspondence; if Roboto is not available, use a sans-serif font like Calibri or Arial. Use Times New Roman for official correspondence on department or agency letterhead. Keep the styles used for headings and body text consistent throughout the document. Note that the Office of Justice Programs will not accept any documents written in Comic Sans.
- In headings (specifically level 3 headings), punctuation following the text in italics or bold should be stylized as the rest of the heading.

*Example:*

**Survey Participants.** The researchers surveyed 150 high school students from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. (Period takes bold font.)

- If you set a web address in boldface type, the punctuation surrounding it should be in

regular type. Example: Visit our website at **bjajp.gov**. (Note that the ending period is not boldfaced.)

- Avoid “widows”—a single word or half of a compound word left alone at the bottom of a paragraph, or a single line from a paragraph left alone to start a new page—where possible.

## **Headings**

- BJA documents contain a main title and up to three heading levels.
- Do not capitalize at, by, for, in, of, on, to (except if used as a verb), up, and, as, but, if, or, nor.
- Capitalize only the first element of a hyphenated word if it is acting as a modifier. Example: “Program-specific Information; Evidence-based Research Plans.”

## **Spacing**

- Use double-line spacing with left justification for all draft copy.
- Space only once between end punctuation such as periods and question marks, and following a colon and semicolon.
  - Exception: Use two spaces between the state abbreviation and the ZIP code in letter headers: Anytown, NY 55555

## **Bullets/Lists**

- All phrases introducing a bulleted, displayed list must end with a colon, even when the phrase is not a complete sentence. Example:

Programs that help kids succeed include:

  - Head Start
  - Big Brothers/Big Sisters
  - Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- However, when a displayed list is introduced by a subhead, no colon is needed. Example:

Successful Programs

  - Head Start
  - Big Brothers/Big Sisters
  - Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- When the list is given in paragraph form, no colon is needed unless the phrase preceding the colon is a complete sentence. Examples:
  - Programs that help kids succeed include Head Start, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.
  - Many programs help kids succeed: Head Start, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.
- Use a consistent format for bulleted items: single words, phrases, or sentences.

- Use parallel construction, using the same parts of speech and tense.
- Begin each entry with a capital letter.
- End each entry with a period unless the item is a single word or a title. Do not end with a period if the item is one word or a title with all prominent words capitalized. (However, if some items are phrases and others are titles, end all with a period.)
- Do not end entries with semicolons.

## Graphic Elements

- All graphic elements **must** be referenced in the text. Text references should convey substantive information about the contents of a graphic element, not just provide a description. When appropriate, a brief parenthetical reference (e.g., “see table 2”) is sufficient.
- Information in both graphic and text form should be consistent. If a graphic contains information regarding participants “ages 35 and over,” the text should not talk about participants “over 35.” Check all mathematical calculations or numbers in a graph.
- Place graphic elements as close as possible to the text reference, either on the same page or on the following page. Graphic elements should generally be placed at the end of a paragraph, but they may be placed in the body of an unusually long paragraph.
- When splitting a paragraph to insert a graphic element, make sure that at least four lines follow the graphic element.

## Labeling Graphic Elements

- BJA accepts three formats for labeling graphics:
  - **Tables.** A graphic that is a table of numbers and/or text is called “table.”
  - **Figures.** Any other graphic (e.g., a map, line graph, bar chart, drawing, or photograph) is called “figure.”
  - **Exhibits.** All types of graphics can be labeled “exhibits.”
- Depending on the size of the document and the number of graphics included, tables, figures, or exhibits should be numbered sequentially throughout the document or within each chapter. Examples: Table 1, Exhibit 1, Figure 1-1.
- Captions of graphic elements should be headline style (initial capitalization of words except prepositions) with no end punctuation. See the headings throughout this guide.

## Guidelines for Creating Tables

The function of a table is to present data to the reader in a simple, easy-to-read form. To be effective, a table must be logical in design. The following are basic rules to ensure well-structured tables.

- When creating a table, use the MS Word table format. **Use only the simplest format** because all electronically available documents must be compliant with Section 508 of

the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- Position a table in the text as near as possible to the first reference to it, preferably at the end of a paragraph. An unusually long table should begin at the top of the page following the callout. If a table is continued on the following page, repeat the table number, title (with “continued” in parentheses), and all column headings. (Under Table Tools, in Layout, select “Repeat Header Rows” all the way to the right.)
- Center table headings. Type entries in each row flush left and single space carryover lines.
- Align numbers on the decimal. Exceptions to this rule may occur when different units of measure are involved.
- Place units of measurement either in the heading or in the column, but not in both. Enclose them in parentheses in headings.
- For column headings, capitalize the most important words. For lead lines (lines in left-hand column), capitalize only the first word of each entry.
- Use single spacing between the bottom of the table and the legend (when one is needed) and between lines.
- Place table footnotes outside the ruled area. The footnote need not be a sentence, but it always ends with a period.
- The symbols *N* or *n* should be italicized with space between each element as follows:  
 $N = 380, n = 166$  These symbols are not interchangeable:
  - *N* refers to the number in the total sample.
  - *n* refers to the number in a limited portion (subgroup) of the total sample.
- In bar graphs with grouped sets of bars (e.g., 3 bars together, space, 3 bars together), the bars in each grouping should be set flush against each other, with the only space being between each grouping.

## Publication Date

All publications must have dates. Check and update the month and year of publication in the banner or on the title page of the document. If you receive a document after the fifteenth of the month, change the date of publication on the document to the next month.

## Addresses

### **Bureau of Justice Assistance**

999 North Capitol Street NE  
Washington, DC 20531  
202-616-6500  
1-866-859-2687  
Fax: 202-305-1367  
[bja.ojp.gov](http://bja.ojp.gov)

Contact BJA:  
[bja.ojp.gov/contact-us](http://bja.ojp.gov/contact-us)

### **Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program**

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
999 North Capitol Street NE  
Washington, DC 20531  
202-307-0635  
1-888-744-6513  
Email: AskPSOB@usdoj.gov

### **Office of Justice Programs Response Center**

P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
1-800-851-3420  
Fax: 301-519-5212

Questions/Comments:  
<https://www.ojp.gov/ojp-response-center>  
(Hours: 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. eastern time,  
Monday–Friday)

## Endnotes and References

- End content should be put in the following order: endnotes, reference list, bibliography (if any), and appendices. In BJA program briefs and bulletins, this back matter follows the “For More Information” section.
- When citing references in text from a reference list, place inside parentheses and separate the author’s name and year with a comma. Examples: “(Smith, 1995),” “(George et al., 2000).”
- **If an author provides endnotes and references in a consistent, logical format, then follow that format.** When endnotes and references need to be created, they should be put in the format described in this document. The format is based on guidelines from the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Endnotes/footnotes and references should have the same style, with three differences.
  - Notes and almost all note components are set off by commas, whereas most all reference list components are set off by periods.
  - Reference citations give the first author’s last name first, then begin with first names for second and third authors. Notes begin with the author’s first name.
  - Notes often have page numbers whereas references usually do not.
- Following are instructions for different kinds of publications.

### Books

#### Endnotes/Footnotes:

Author (first name, last name), Year of publication, *Title in Italics*, Place of publication: Publisher: page number(s) cited.

Example: John Jones, 1992, *History of Criminology*, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin: 10.

#### Reference Lists/Bibliographies:

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. *Title in Italics*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Example: Jones, John. 1992. *History of Criminology*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

### Periodicals

#### Endnotes/Footnotes:

Author (first name, last name), Year of publication, “Title of Article in Quotation Marks: Initial Cap All Words Except Articles and Most Prepositions,” *Title of Periodical in Italics* volume number (issue number or month): page number(s) cited.

Example: John Jones, 1992, “Crime in the Community,” *Journal of Crime* 10 (June): 3–4.

#### Newspaper article citations follow a similar format:

Author (first name, last name), Year, “Title of Article in Quotation Marks: Initial Cap All Words Except Articles and Most Prepositions,” *Title of Newspaper in Italics*, date of article,

page number(s) of article (including section).

#### Reference Lists/Bibliographies:

Author (last name, first name). Year. "Title of Article in Quotation Marks: Initial Cap All Words Except Articles and Most Prepositions." *Title of Periodical in Italics* volume number (issue number or month): page numbers of article.

Example: Jones, John.1992. "Crime in the Community." *Journal of Crime* 10 (June): 3–12.

### **Series**

#### Endnotes/Footnotes:

Author (first name, last name), Year, *Title of Publication in Italics*, Title of Series in Initial Caps, vol. and number, Place of publication: Publisher: page number(s) cited.

Example: Jefferson Chapman, 1995, *Parental Care*, Illinois Biological Monographs, vol. 22. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois: 13–14.

#### Reference Lists/Bibliographies:

Author (last name, first name). Year. *Title of Publication in Italics*. Title of Series in Initial Caps, vol. and number. Place of publication: Publisher.

Example: Chapman, Jefferson. 1995. *Parental Care*. Illinois Biological Monographs, vol. 22. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois.

### **Government Series**

Government series should follow the same format as other series, except the month should be given with the year of publication and, if applicable, the NCJ number should be given at the end of the citation. Note also in the following example how the publisher is cited.

#### Endnotes/Footnotes:

Example: Christy A. Visher, September 1992, *Pretrial Drug Testing*, Research in Brief, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 137057.

#### Reference Lists/Bibliographies:

Example: Visher, Christy A. September 1992. *Pretrial Drug Testing*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 137057.

Please note that the Government Printing Office is not named as a publisher.

### **Electronic Sources**

#### Endnotes/Footnotes:

Example: National Institute of Corrections, 2004, *NIC Fiscal Year 2005 Service Plan: Technical Assistance, Information, and Training for Adult Corrections*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, retrieved March 15, 2005, from <http://www.nicic.org/Library/019487>.

## Reference Lists/Bibliographies:

Example: National Institute of Corrections. 2004. NIC Fiscal Year 2005 Service Plan: Technical Assistance, Information, and Training for Adult Corrections. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved March 15, 2005, from <http://www.nicic.org/Library/019487>.

## Repeating a Citation

In endnotes, if the same source is cited as the one before, use “Ibid.” with a comma and a page number; e.g., “Ibid., 3.”

If the source has been given a full citation earlier in the endnotes, mention the earlier note and give the author’s last name; title of book, document, or article; and page number. Be consistent with the form you use.

Examples:

13. See note 3 above, Jones, “Crime in the Community,” 5. (an article in a periodical)
13. Supra note 5, Visser, *Pretrial Drug Testing*, 2. (a document in a series; the same style would apply to a book)

## Author Issues

- If the source has multiple authors, the first author should be written last name first, but the others should be first name first. Example: “Hillsman, Sally T., and Laura A. Winterfield.”
- Use full names of authors of both books and periodicals whenever possible. However, if only the first and middle initials are available for one or more authors within a single citation, refer to all authors in that citation by their initials only.
- If there are no authors, only editors, the editors go in the author slot. Example: “Flannegan, T.J., and K.M. Jamieson, eds.” (Note that editors are referred to by first and middle initials only.)

## Number Examples

1,000 (commas for four or more digits)

1-866-859-2687 (use hyphens for telephone numbers)

\$1 million, \$4.473 million (except for solicitations, which spell out: \$1,000,000, \$4,473,000)

100-unit

12-month

1980s (not 80s or ’80s)

25 percent (write out the word; do not use the symbol, unless in a table)

0.25 percent

25 percent increase

\$24, \$26.50, (not \$24.00, unless in tabular material) 5 years, **but** two decades

9/11 Commission

9-1-1 (emergency system)



A team of five men ran the 1-mile relay. (Units of measurement, time, or money do not change the way you handle other numbers under 10.)

On July 5, a forum will be held. Please attend the forum on July 5. (Do not add superscript “th” after the numeral [5<sup>th</sup>])

## Glossary

### A

ABA (American Bar Association)

Abt Associates Inc.

ACA (Affordable Care Act)

act (federal, state, or foreign; on second reference after introducing with full title)

ADAM (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring)

ADC (Adult Drug Court)

the Administration **but** Roosevelt administration

Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AOC)

AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)

aftercare

afterschool

AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; there is no need to spell out this acronym with first use)

AJA (American Jail Association)

Alaska Native (adjective/noun) \*this is a legal term and should always be used when referring to federally recognized tribes

al Qaeda

amendment (first amendment, fifth amendment, 14th amendment)

American Indian (adjective/noun) \*this is a legal term and should always be used when referring to federally recognized tribes

anthrax (Bacillus anthracis)

anticrime

antidrug program **but** anti-drug-abuse program and Anti-Drug Abuse Act anti-gang, anti-gang-crime activities

anti-substance-abuse (adjective; avoid this construction; no hyphen per SAMHSA CSAP/CSAT. In most cases the "anti" should be deleted, e.g., “substance abuse programs.”)

anti-terrorism (State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training Program [SLATT]) antiviolence

APPA (American Probation and Parole Association)

appendix A (in text)

Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)

application kit; BJA Application Kit; or Application Kit: BJA Discretionary Grants

ASAP (Department of the Treasury’s Automated Standard Application for Payments replaced the Grants Payment Request System (GPRS))

ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) [Note: No comma after “Firearms”]

ATN (arrest tracking number)

at-risk (adjective)

Attorney General (U.S.), state attorney general, state attorneys general, U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, district attorney, State Attorney's Office **but** state attorney  
AWA (Adam Walsh Act)

## **B**

Bacillus anthracis (anthrax)  
bill (but Bill of Rights)  
BJA (Bureau of Justice Assistance, never precede with U.S.)  
BJS (Bureau of Justice Statistics)  
Black (capitalized when used in a racial, ethnic, or cultural sense)  
BMR (basic minimum requirements)  
bookkeeper  
boot camp  
BOP (Federal Bureau of Prisons)  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA)  
breakdown (adjective/noun)  
bulletin  
BVP (Bulletproof Vest Partnership)  
BWC (body-worn camera)  
Byrne (Edward J. Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grant)

## **C**

Capital (Washington, D.C.)/capital (state)  
Capitol Building  
CARA (Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act)  
case processing (adjective/noun)  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)  
CBCR (Innovations in Community-based Crime Reduction Program, formerly the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program)  
CBOB (Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery)  
CCH (computerized criminal history)  
CCLI (Capital Case Litigation Initiative)  
CCP (Comprehensive Communities Program)  
CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [takes singular verb: is, has])  
CentTF (Center for Task Force Training; note that training is part of the acronym)  
central court information system  
CESF (Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding)  
C.F.R. (Code of Federal Regulations)  
CGIC (crime gun intelligence center)  
chapter 7 (in text)  
chief executive officer (CEO)  
Chief Justice (U.S. Supreme Court)  
childcare

CIU (conviction integrity or review unit)  
 civil rights law  
 CMISA (Co-occurring mental illnesses and substance abuse)  
 COSSAP (Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program)  
 co-applicant  
 code orange alert  
 CODIS (Combined DNA Index System)  
 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico  
 community-based (adjective)  
 community-oriented (adjective)  
 community planning (noun)  
 communitywide (adjective)  
 COMSEC (communications security)  
 conflict out (verb)  
 Congress **but** congressional/constitutional (U.S. Constitution **but** state constitution)  
 continuum of care (noun)/continuum-of-care (adjective)  
 co-occurring  
 COR (custodian of records or contracting officer representative)  
 cost-benefit analysis  
 cost-effective (adjective)  
 cost-efficient (adjective)  
 Counter-Terrorism Training Coordination Working Group  
 County/Countries (if part of official name or title, e.g., Montgomery County, Fairfax and Loudoun  
     Counties, **but** the county or the counties)  
 Court (if the U.S. Supreme Court; otherwise lowercase court except in official names, e.g.,  
     Maryland Court of Appeals, Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals) (*see also* Supreme Court  
     and U.S. Supreme Court)  
 court-central repository interfaces  
 court-ordered (adjective)  
 crime-day (noun)  
 crimes against persons  
 crimes against property  
 criminal civil rights laws  
 criminogenic  
 cross-check (verb/noun)  
 cross-reference (verb/noun)  
 cross-section (adjective/noun)  
 cross train (verb)/cross-training (adjective)  
 CRPPE (Center for Research Partnerships and Program Evaluation)  
 CSAP (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention)  
 CSAT (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment)  
 CTAS (Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation)  
 CUI (controlled unclassified information)  
 curriculum and curricula

cyberattack  
cyberbully, cyberbullying  
cybercrime  
cyberlaw  
cybersecurity (but Cyber Security Research and Development Act)  
cyberstalking  
cyberterrorism

## D

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)  
data (plural)  
database  
data fields  
dataset  
day fines (noun)/day fine program (adjective)  
day reporting (adjective/noun)  
day-to-day (adjective)  
d/b/a (doing business as)  
DCM (Differentiated Case Management)  
DCPI (Adult Drug Court Planning Initiative)  
DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration)  
Decision-maker/decision-making  
Defense Procurement Fraud Debarment (DPFD) Clearinghouse  
Department, the (U.S. Department of Justice)  
determinate sentencing  
DFB (Denial of Federal Benefits) Program  
DHS (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)  
district attorney  
DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program  
DOC (U.S. Department of Commerce)  
DOD (U.S. Department of Defense)  
DOE (U.S. Department of Energy, **not** Education, see ED)  
DOJ (U.S. Department of Justice)  
DOL (U.S. Department of Labor)  
dollar value (noun), dollar-value (adjective)  
DOT (U.S. Department of Transportation, **not** Treasury)  
DPFD (Defense Procurement Fraud Debarment) Clearinghouse  
drive-by (adjective) shooting  
drug control (adjective/noun) (consistent with Office of National Drug Control Policy)  
drug dependence (noun) **not** drug dependency  
drug-free (adjective)  
drug-identification course  
drug-involved defendant  
drug-related (adjective) drugs-crime nexus

drug testing (adjective/noun); do not use a hyphen

## **E**

eastern time (ET), **not** eastern standard time

ecosecurity

ED (U.S. Department of Education)

Edward J. Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grant (Byrne)

Edward J. Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

EFLEA (Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Grant Program)

email (no hyphen)

end user

EOD (explosive ordnance disposal)

e-request

et seq.

Executive Office for United States Attorneys (spell out United States) (EOUSA)

executive order, but Executive Order 3082

exhibit 1 (in text)

explosive detection systems

eXtensible Markup Language (XML)

## **F**

fact sheet (in text)

FBCO (faith-based and community organizations)

faith-based and community organizations (never faith-based and community-based)

FAMS (Federal Air Marshal Service)

the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)

FCQ (Financial Capability Questionnaire)

federal, federally

federal court

federal government

figure 1 (in text)

firearm-related (singular as adjective)

firefighter/firefighting

first-degree (adjective)

first responder (adjective/noun)

first time (adjective)

fiscal year, fiscal year 2005

FLETC (Federal Law Enforcement Training Center)

FO (front office)

FOIA (Freedom of Information Act)

follow up (verb)/follow-up (adjective/noun)

force protection equipment

Formula Grant Program/formula grant funds

FOVO (for official use only) funders

FY (fiscal year)  
FFY (federal fiscal year)

## **G**

gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB, the “date-rape” drug)  
GAO (Government Accountability Office)  
GED (general equivalency diploma or General Educational Development; generally, acronym can stand alone even on first reference)  
Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global)  
Governor  
graffiti (plural)  
grantmaker, grantmaking  
G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education And Training) (cap “And” per BJA 2004 annual report)  
GSP (Global Standards Package)  
Gunshot detection system (ShotSpotter is an example)

## **H**

The Hague (“The” is capitalized in both text and references)  
hardcopy (adjective, e.g., hardcopy form)  
hard copy (noun)  
Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)  
halfway house  
health care (adjective, noun)  
HHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)  
high level (adjective)  
high risk (adjective)  
Hispanic (see Latino)  
HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), HIV/AIDS (generally neither one needs to be spelled out on first reference)  
home page (but Home Page on the covers of BJA publications)  
hot button (noun), hot-button (adjective)  
H.R. 5782  
HSAS (Homeland Security Advisory System)  
HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

## **I**

IAA (inter-agency agreement)  
the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police; BJA requests that “the” be included in most cases when the acronym stands alone as a noun.)  
III (FBI Interstate Identification Index)  
in-custody  
in-depth (adjective)  
information-sharing (adjective)  
in-house

in-kind (adjective)  
inner-city (adjective)/inner city (noun)  
inpatient  
in-person (adjective)  
inservice (adjective)  
interagency  
internet, intranet  
intracity  
IPEP (Intellectual Property Theft Enforcement Program)  
issue-identification (adjective)

## J

JAG (Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program; do not need “Program” w/acronym)  
JJRC (Juvenile Justice Research Center)  
JMHCP (Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program)  
job skills (adjective, noun)  
JRJ (John R. Justice Program)

## K

## L

Latino/a — a person whose origins are in Latin America, including Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, or Central America.

- *Latino* is reserved for men and *Latina* for women. The plural *Latinas* is for a group of women, and *Latinos* is for a group of men. A mixed gender group of Latin American descent, however, would revert to the masculine *Latinos*.
- *Latinx* is a gender-neutral term. Only use Latinx if someone has said they identify that way; it is not accepted by many Latinos. Use specific language when possible.

LEAA (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) (precursor to Office of Justice Programs)  
LEP (limited English proficiency) life skills (adjective/noun)  
line-of-duty (adjective)  
live-scan device  
log on, log in  
London, England (in references and bibliographies)  
longstanding (adjective)  
long-term (adjective)  
lowercase  
low income (adjective)  
low risk (adjective)

## M

MANPADS (man-portable air defense systems)

MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine, Ecstasy)  
means-based (adjective)  
mental health (adjective)  
mentally ill (use only as an adjective)  
methamphetamine  
methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, Ecstasy)  
Mexican American (noun and adjective for demographic classification, but U.S.-Mexico border)  
MIS (management information systems)  
MJTF (multijurisdictional task force)  
MNI (master name index)  
moneys  
monograph  
MOUs (memorandums of understanding)  
MOV (Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor)  
MSEHPA (Model State Emergency Health Powers Act)  
multijurisdictional  
multimillion  
multiyear  
myriad (use only as an adjective)

## **N**

NADCP (National Association of Drug Court Professionals)  
NASADAD (National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors)  
nation, national  
National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG)  
narco-terrorism  
National Sheriffs' Association  
nationwide  
Native American (noun, adjective)  
NCCD (National Council on Crime and Delinquency)  
NCDA (National College of District Attorneys)  
NCJRS (National Criminal Justice Reference Service)  
NCJRS Abstracts Database  
NCSL (National Conference of State Legislatures)  
NEMA (National Emergency Management Association)  
NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)  
The Netherlands (note use of "the")  
NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network)  
NIC (National Institute of Corrections)  
NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse)  
NIJ (National Institute of Justice)  
NIPP (National Infrastructure Protection Plan)  
NLECTC (National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center)  
NMVTIS (National Motor Vehicle Title Information System)



non-civil-service (adjective)  
noncompetitive  
nonconsensual  
nongrantees  
nonjail  
nonmember  
nonpayment  
nonprofit organizations (never “nonprofits” as a noun)  
nonresidential  
nonsecure  
nonthreatening  
nonviolent  
NOSI (National Officer Safety Initiatives Program)  
NTTAC (National Training and Technical Assistance Center)  
NW3C (National White Collar Crime Center, formerly NWCCC)

## O

OAAG (Office of the Assistant Attorney General)  
OD2A (Overdose Data to Action)  
Office (if federal government unit or as part of official title, e.g., Office of Personnel Management, the Oval Office, United States Attorney’s Office **but** New York regional office, offices of the United States Attorneys)  
Office of the Comptroller (OC)  
OGC (Office of the General Counsel)  
OJJDP (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)  
OJP (Office of Justice Programs)  
Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Safe Streets Act) (42 U.S.C. § 3711, et seq.)  
ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy)  
online  
onsite  
OPCL (Office of Privacy and Civil Liberties)  
outpatient  
OVC (Office for Victims of Crime)  
overcautious  
overuse

## P

P/CRCL (privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties)  
Part 1 violent crimes  
PDMP (Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program)  
person crimes (personal crimes preferred by some states, e.g., Oregon)  
PharmChem, PharmChek (do not use “TM” or “R” symbol after term)  
PIECP (Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program)  
PJI (Pretrial Justice Institute)

plague (*Yersinia pestis*)  
PMHC (police-mental health collaboration)  
P.O. Box (**not** Box or Post Office Box; this follows GPO style)  
policymaker/policymaking  
post-9/11 (adjective)  
postadjudication  
post-conviction (adjective)  
postincarceration  
postincident  
postoperative  
post-prison (adjective)  
post-release (adjective)  
post-sentencing (adjective)  
posttest (no hyphen per Merriam-Webster)  
post-trial (adjective)  
PRC (PREA Resource Center)  
PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act)  
PRD (protection required data)  
pre-adjudication  
pre-incident  
preoperative (no hyphen per Merriam-Webster)  
preproject  
prerelease  
presentence  
presumptiveness  
pretest  
pretrial services program  
prison-bound (adjective)  
private sector (noun), private-sector (adjective)  
problem-solving (adjective), problem solving (noun)/problem solver (noun)  
Program Guidance and Application Kit  
property crimes  
prosecutors' offices  
prostitution abatement programs  
PSN (Project Safe Neighborhoods)  
PSOB (Public Safety Officers' Benefits) Program  
public housing (adjective)  
Public Law 107-231 (use hyphen, not en dash), although Pub. L. No. for 2018 FRMs  
punishment-related (adjective)

## Q

QOZ (qualified opportunity zone)  
quality control (adjective/noun)  
quality-of-life crimes

## R

RAND/RAND Corporation (name is a contraction of phrase “research and development”)  
reality-based (adjective)  
reanalyze  
rearrest  
recordkeeping (noun)  
reentry  
reestablish  
reevaluate  
*Ricinis communis* (ricin)  
RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations)  
risk-assessment (adjective)  
risk-management (adjective)  
RISS (Regional Information Sharing Systems)  
Rohypnol (a brand/trade name for flunitrazepam)  
roll call (does not follow GPO)  
RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners) Program

## S

SAA (State Administering Agency)  
SafeFutures  
safe house  
SAFE-ITR (Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence—Inventory, Tracking, and Reporting)  
SAG (State Advisory Group)  
SAKI (Sexual Assault Kit Initiative)  
SAM (System for Award Management)  
SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)  
SAR (search and rescue)  
SBU (sensitive but unclassified)  
SCAAP (State Criminal Alien Assistance Program)  
SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus)  
schoolwork  
self-reporting/self-report (noun/verb)  
semiautomated  
September 11 (the September 11 attack on the Twin Towers; not 11<sup>th</sup>)  
service-connected disability  
setup (adjective)/set up (verb)  
SF 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)  
short-term (adjective)  
single jurisdiction drug court  
SLATT (State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training Program)  
smallpox  
speechwriter  
SPI (Strategies for Policing Innovation)

SRR (Statewide Recidivism Reduction)  
SSL (Strategic Site Liaison)  
staff (plural, e.g., “The staff were involved.”)  
stash house  
state  
state line  
statehood  
state-level  
state, local, national, or federal government  
State Attorney’s Office **but** state attorney  
statewide  
STOP (Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing) School Violence Act Program  
street gang (noun)/street-gang (adjective)  
street-level (adjective)  
subgrant/subgrantee  
subpart  
substance abuse (adjective)  
substance abusing (adjective)  
Supreme Court of State (e.g., Supreme Court of Delaware); the Supreme Court; the court (*see also* Court and U.S. Supreme Court)  
sweat patch  
systemwide (adjective)

## T

table 1 (in text)  
take-home pay  
TASC: Treatment Alternatives to Safer Communities **or** Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (ask agency which you should use for each document)  
task force  
TC (therapeutic community)  
TCCLA (Tribal Civil and Criminal Legal Assistance) Program  
Territory of Guam, **but** the territory, territorial  
terrorist-watch (adjective, terrorist-watch lists)  
*The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*  
threat-reduction (adjective) threat reduction (noun)  
THWC (tribal healing to wellness court)  
TIH (toxic inhalation hazard)  
TJSIP (Tribal Justice Systems Infrastructure) Program  
Triad  
tribe, tribal  
TTA (training and technical assistance)

## U

UCR (Uniform Crime Report)  
underway (always one word)  
United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme  
URLPWC (Upholding the Rule of Law and Preventing Wrongful Convictions Program)  
U.S. (adjective), United States (noun) **not** American/America  
USA PATRIOT (Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act  
U.S. Attorney  
U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO)  
U.S. Attorneys' Offices  
U.S.C. (United States Code)  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
U.S. government  
USMS (U.S. Marshals Service) [Note: Marshals has only one "l" and no apostrophe.]  
USSC (United States Sentencing Commission)  
U.S. Supreme Court; the Court  
U.S. Virgin Islands

## **V**

VA (Department of Veterans Affairs)  
VALOR (Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability) Initiative  
VAWA (Violence Against Women Act)  
VOCA (Victims of Crime Act)  
VOI/TIS (Violent Offender Incarceration and Truth-in-Sentencing [Incentive Program])

## **W**

Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)  
Washington, D.C. (text)  
Washington, DC (addresses, references)  
watchlist  
WCR (wrongful conviction review)  
web address  
webcam  
webcast (e.g., satellite television and webcast programs)  
web page  
website (Cap only at beginning of line in address, otherwise: website, web addresses.)  
white-collar crime  
-wide (Close up words ending with the suffix "-wide," e.g., systemwide, communitywide)  
WMD (weapons of mass destruction)  
workforce (adjective/noun)  
work plan  
work release (adjective/noun)  
World Wide Web

## **X**

x-ray

XML (Extensible Markup Language)

## **Y**

yearlong (adjective)

*Yersinia pestis* (plague)

youth (singular and plural; not youths)

YouthBuild

## **Z**