

FY 2018 JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

What Is JRI?

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) is an intensive, data-driven approach that helps state, local, and tribal justice stakeholders identify the drivers of crime and understand how they use resources to address those issues. The resulting information allows stakeholders to improve their capacities to prevent and respond to crime by knowing how to reallocate their resources into high-performing crime- and recidivism-reduction efforts.

Currently, criminal justice stakeholders do not have the time or access to subject matter experts to apply a data-driven review of their various processes. As a result, many of the solutions put in place are reactionary and, regardless of how many resources are supporting them, fail to yield measurable and sustainable improvements. To gain better and sustainable outcomes, these criminal justice agencies need to proactively prioritize their limited resources; however, they need assistance to do so.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is committed to using all available resources to reduce violent crime and opiate abuse. To that end, this year's JRI funding opportunity focuses on state, local, and tribal governments that want to use the JRI approach to reduce violent crime and address the high costs to their criminal justice systems that are caused by violent, chronic offenders and the opioid- and stimulant-specific (e.g., methamphetamine) epidemics.

At the state level, JRI is a partnership of leaders from all three branches of government who commit to sharing their criminal justice data to identify, adopt, and implement proven, innovative, and comprehensive approaches. Their goals are to reduce crime, cut recidivism rates, and shift resources to more cost-effective public safety strategies. The same approach can be applied at the local and tribal jurisdiction levels.

Since 2007, 33 states have used the JRI approach. Through a range of individualized policy and practice changes, these states have fundamentally changed the way they conduct criminal justice, including making prison space for serious, violent offenders a priority and investing in strategies that have the greatest impact on reducing crime and recidivism.

JRI Funding Opportunities

For fiscal year (FY) 2018, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is providing support for systemwide improvements in policies and practices at the state, local, and tribal levels by funding two grant programs. One program invites sites to apply directly for financial assistance, and the second is a solicitation for technical assistance or subject matter experts who can support the JRI approach in states and communities.

Training and Technical Assistance Solicitation—The TTA solicitation will provide funding for training and technical assistance providers to work with state, local, and tribal governments as they pursue their JRI engagements.¹ This would include gathering national subject matter experts and data scientists to facilitate the JRI approach in a specific state or locality. Specifically, JRI TTA providers under this revised approach will orient interested state, local, and tribal governments to the JRI approach. Jurisdictions should seek to address at least one of the administration's priority areas, such as violent crime or opioids, through their JRI effort. BJA will evaluate the problem statement of any jurisdiction before accepting it for JRI TTA. The training and technical assistance provided will help the selected jurisdictions operationalize their data so they can identify and respond to their particular circumstances with a variety of strategies. These may include the following tasks:

¹ Category 2 in this solicitation is specifically designed to support state-level engagements with intensive technical assistance and seed funding for implementation.

- Create a shared understanding of the issues by making the crime, courts, corrections, and recidivism data analyzed through JRI available to all criminal justice partners.
- Enhance the data collection and enable meaningful sharing of information across system stakeholders.
- Develop an analytic capacity to inform more targeted and effective strategies to address specific crime problems.
- Collect additional data about victims of crime and provide more resources for them.
- Focus probation and parole agency resources on mitigating the risk that people on supervision will engage in violent behavior or be the victims of violent crime.
- Assess and strengthen law enforcement’s ability to use proven approaches for investigating and responding to crime and provide alternatives to resource-intensive activities that are not proven.
- Make incapacitating serious, chronic, and violent offenders a priority for confinement resources and ensure that bed space alignment supports the jurisdiction’s violent crime-reduction goals.

States may examine criminal codes and associated penalties as needed. They may also consider modifications to penalties for opioid- and stimulant-specific cases (e.g., methamphetamine), where incorporating treatment options may be appropriate for offenders whose instant offenses and criminal histories are not violent, do not involve guns, and whose drug offenses are limited to personal use.

JRI Site-Based Solicitation—This is a new competitive solicitation that seeks applications directly from state, local, and tribal governments that want to use the JRI approach to develop, implement, and test innovative and research-based responses to the high-cost drivers of crime and other public safety and community challenges, including those related to law enforcement, prosecution, sentencing, jail and prison, and probation and parole. Private and nonprofit organizations, and colleges and universities, with national law enforcement and corrections expertise are invited to apply for Category 2 as well. Examples of high-cost drivers include opioid and substance abuse; high system utilization by people with significant mental

illnesses; repeat violent offenders; or lack of information sharing or technology integration within the criminal justice system. By collaboratively identifying the root causes, implications, and solutions to these problems, criminal justice agencies can better prioritize their resources and improve the management of offenders returning to or residing in their communities who are most likely to commit new or violent offenses. This solicitation has the following two categories:

- **Category 1: Improving the Efficacy of State, Local, and Tribal Justice Systems**—BJA seeks applications for addressing persistent or emerging crime and public safety problems, or removing impediments to directly addressing them. Applicants should review the entire criminal justice system spectrum—from event to reentry—to identify opportunities for improvement that align with the Administration’s priorities, including to hold violent offenders accountable, address the opioid epidemic, support law enforcement, and support victims of violent crime.
- **Category 2: Innovations in Information Sharing To Coordinate Crime Reduction**—BJA seeks applications for developing and testing innovative and responsible tools and practices that facilitate information sharing and help coordinate community corrections, law enforcement, prosecutors, and other system stakeholders, in order to improve the identification of, and coordinated responses to, violent crime. Applicants should propose ethical approaches for removing offender anonymity—that is, improve sharing of how and when offenders come into contact with each part of the criminal justice system and across jurisdictions—to make the most efficient use of resources and hold offenders accountable.

About BJA

BJA helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation’s criminal justice system: Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization. To learn more about BJA, visit www.bja.gov, or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DOJBJA) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is part of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs.