



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Washington, D.C. 20531

June 29, 2021

BJA State Administering Agency Directors

SENT VIA EMAIL ONLY

RE: JAG funding to combat hate crime

Dear State Administering Agency Director:

Over the past year, we have seen a marked rise in hate crimes across the country, particularly against communities such as disabled citizens and African American, Asian, Latino, Jewish, and LGBTQ+ families. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, these individuals and communities are being targeted based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

In an effort to address this critical issue, as well as the large increase in homicides and gun violence nationwide, we want to highlight the versatility of Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program funding. JAG is a funding source that supports 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, crime victim and witness initiatives, and mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs, including behavioral programs and crisis intervention teams.

The JAG program continues to be a leading source of federal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions, helping to fill gaps in state, local, and tribal criminal justice systems. If there is a need in your communities, JAG resources can be used to meet that need.

In Fiscal Year 2021, the Department of Justice has placed special emphasis on Community Violence Intervention (CVI) in a number of its grant programs (See [White House CVI Investments](#)), including the [FY 2021 JAG Program Solicitation](#). In addition, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) crafted a new [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) (see page 12) in response to concerns about increased crime at nonprofit organizations, which are often targeted by hate crime offenders. The FAQ is intended to ensure visibility of this important topic and to clarify that projects in this area can be supported under JAG.

The new FAQ:

Can JAG funds be used by state and local governments to increase patrols and deployments that bolster the security of at-risk nonprofit organizations?

Yes. JAG funds can be used by state and local governments for crime prevention efforts to increase patrols and deployments that bolster the security of at-risk nonprofit organizations including synagogues, churches, mosques, and other places of worship.

We encourage State Administering Agencies to consider prioritizing JAG funding in the areas BJA emphasizes in the FY 2021 solicitation, and to emphasize to stakeholders and communities at risk of hate crimes that JAG funds may be used to respond to and prevent these attacks. The areas of emphasis include the following:

- Restoring Justice – Support for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Administration of Criminal Justice;
- Community Violence Intervention;
- Law Enforcement Accreditation, Policy Development, and Training;
- Technologies to Support Transparency and Information Sharing between Law Enforcement and Communities Sustaining COVID-19 Criminal Justice Innovations; and
- Innovative Forensic Technologies such as Rapid DNA for Booking Stations.

We hope this information will raise awareness of all the potential funding uses of the JAG program, including high priority areas of emphasis which are updated annually.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. My team and I are available to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Mahoney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Mahoney
Acting Director