

STOP School Violence Programs

The Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act of 2018 authorized a total of \$75,000,000 to address school violence through several avenues. Of this amount, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) was allocated \$50,000,000 in funding to provide grants to states, units of local government, and federally recognized Indian Tribes. The balance of the funding was provided to the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

This was a new program for BJA in fiscal year 2018. The act gave BJA very specific guidelines on how the program should make funds available to states, local units of government, and federally recognized tribal organizations. The areas of responsibility were:

- Training school personnel and educating students to prevent student violence against others and themselves.
- The development and operation of anonymous reporting systems for threats of school violence, including mobile telephone applications, hotlines, and websites.
- The development and operation of:
 - School threat assessment and intervention teams that may include coordination with law enforcement agencies and school personnel.
 - Specialized training for school officials in responding to mental health crises.

To address these responsibilities, BJA developed and posted two solicitations: (1) BJA STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program and (2) BJA STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program.

The act also required that grants are evidence-based, and they must have an equitable geographic distribution among all regions of the United States and among urban, suburban, and rural areas. To ensure this distribution, BJA inserted six categories into each solicitation and a seventh category in the BJA STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program solicitation that addresses the anonymous reporting responsibility identified in the act. The solicitation categories are as follows:

- Category 1 – A state with a population greater than 5,000,000
- Category 2 – A state with a population of less than 5,000,000
- Category 3 – An urban area or large county with a population greater than 500,000
- Category 4 – A suburban area or medium-sized county with a population between 100,000 and 500,000
- Category 5 – A rural area or small county with a population of less than 100,000
- Category 6 – An Indian tribe
- Category 7 – Technology and reporting (threat assessment solicitation only)

Under the act, it also states that BJA may only fund up to 75 percent of the project, with the applicant providing a 25 percent cash or in-kind match. No funds awarded under this grant program may be used for the provision of a firearm for any person, or for training in the use of a firearm.

BJA received 240 applications. Of those, 213 were sent to peer review. Upon completion of the peer and BJA reviews, 183 awards were made for a total of \$46,871,053. The breakdown of awards is as follows:

- BJA STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program – 85 awards for \$27,786,726
- BJA STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program – 68 awards for \$19,085,027