



## BJA FY 25 JAG Program – State Application

### Proposal Narrative

#### Executive Summary

The Governor's Crime Control Commission was created in 1967 by Executive Order. The name was later changed to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) with legislation enacted in 1969 to establish the Crime Commission as an agency of state government. The Crime Commission was established to develop comprehensive plans and coordinate activities related to the improvement of criminal justice administration among state and local agencies. Since its inception, additional statutory responsibilities have been assigned to the Crime Commission, which now serves as an umbrella agency for many criminal and justice programs.

The FY 2025 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) offers federal resources to enhance Nebraska's criminal justice system. The Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) serves as the designated State Adminstrating Agency (SAA) for the Nebraska JAG program and acts as the governing body in relation to FY 2025 JAG funds. The Nebraska Crime Commission is applying for JAG funds in order for grant funding to be awarded to units of state and local government and private providers of criminal justice services.

According to the US Census Bureau for 2025, Nebraska has an estimated population of 2,018,006<sup>1</sup> and spans approximately 77,358 sq. miles, making it the 15<sup>th</sup> largest state geographically. The state is

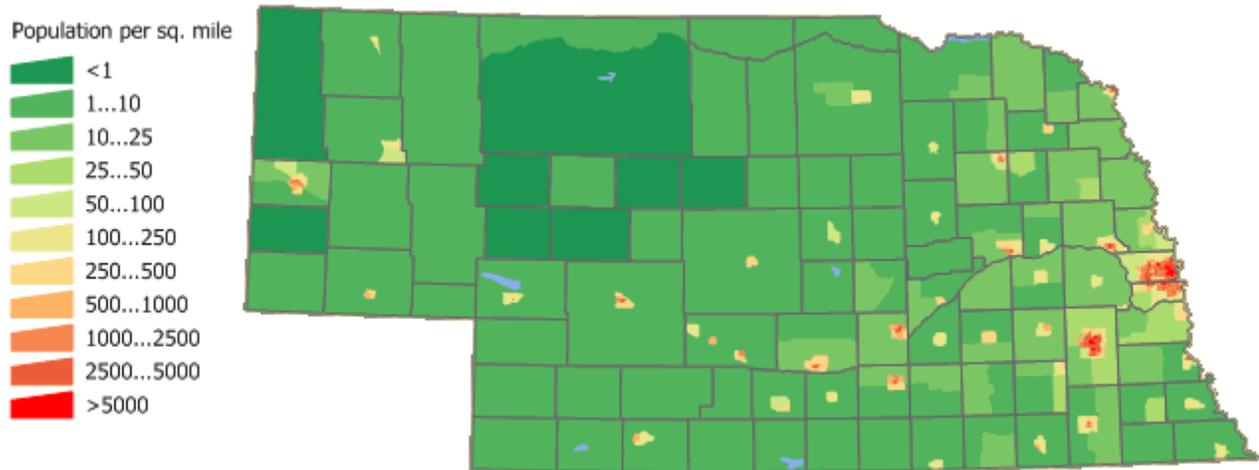
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NE/PST045225#PST045225>



predominantly rural, with 93 counties, many of which are sparsely populated. The map on the following page (Figure 1) illustrates that Nebraska is predominantly rural with a few scattered locations of higher density of population. The majority of the population is located in eastern Nebraska in the Omaha Metro and Lincoln areas.

Figure 1



Source: <https://malagabay.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/nebraska-population-density.gif>

## 1. **Description of the Issue**

The purpose of the Byrne JAG grant program is to improve outcomes and operations of the criminal justice system in Nebraska by improving public safety in communities across the state. Recently in the last year, a couple critical issues came to the attention of the Crime Commission. Nebraska does not have sufficient program resources for law enforcement and corrections to adequately address mental illness and substance use experienced by individuals coming into contact with the criminal justice system. This will be proposed to be addressed with JAG funds to fund agencies throughout Nebraska to increase mental health and substance use resources across the criminal justice system.

Nebraska lacks the resources to share and manage data with a need to modernize technological systems. Law enforcement support is required in areas of assessing and analyzing information to enhance decision-making. This will be proposed to be addressed with JAG funds to modernize technological systems in rural areas who lack resources across Nebraska. These two critical issues

have been the top needs addressed in the most recent Nebraska Needs Assessment Survey and in-person JAG Focus Groups.

Data efforts with creation of new crisis intervention tracking tools and enhancements to technological information-sharing systems will improve multi-agency coordination, reduce response delays, improve resource allocation and support policy improvements to protect public safety.

Issues that arose from administering the Byrne JAG program in previous fiscal years were not being selective on funding priorities based on Nebraska's JAG Strategic Plan. Targeted solicitations to fund specific narrowed JAG purposed areas were utilized over the last two state fiscal years (2024 – 2026). These targeted solicitation included funding for drug task forces and technology enhancements. For fiscal year 2025, funding will be prioritized based on Nebraska's 2026 – 2031 JAG Strategic Plan with targeted solicitations and incorporate performance measures on the state level for subrecipients to meet Nebraska's priority areas.

## **2. Project Design and Implementation –**

### **FFY 2020-2025 Strategic Plan**

On January 18, 2020 invitations to our online survey for strategic planning was sent to 879 criminal justice stakeholders across the state. Stakeholders represented in the planning process invitation included various Nebraska state agencies, legal associations, Native American Tribal Councils, law enforcement agencies, and various criminal justice, juvenile justice, and service programs. The purpose of the survey was to gather stakeholder views on needs regarding Nebraska's criminal and juvenile justice systems, and the community services that support these systems. Survey participants were also invited to participate in subsequent focus groups meetings.

Survey responses revealed the stakeholders' top five JAG priorities to be: (1) law enforcement and corrections programs related to mental health; (2) prevention and education programs; (3) drug treatment programs; (4) law enforcement programs more generally; and (5) prosecution and court programs. Mental and behavioral health was the largest open-ended stakeholder need as well. The 2019 arrest rates

detailed in the strategic plan demonstrated a need for redistributing funding, which is additionally supported by the data shown in Table 1 above. The strategic plan noted that more resources need to be invested in rural Nebraska and the Omaha metro. These priority areas and needs will be given top consideration as we are awarding funds moving forward.

On May 7, 2024, with the assistance from NCJA, invitations to our online survey for the upcoming strategic plan for FY2026 – 2031. The results from the survey from NCJA after they had analyzed the data received from our criminal justice stakeholders across the state to be implemented in the next strategic plan.

#### FFY 2026-2031 Strategic Plan (In Progress)

On May 8, 2024 invitations to an online survey was sent to approximately 800 criminal justice stakeholders across the state encouraging participation in the strategic planning process. Nebraska stakeholders represented in the planning process invitation included various Nebraska state agencies, legal associations, Native American Tribal Councils, law enforcement agencies, and various criminal justice, juvenile justice, and service programs. The purpose of the survey was to gather stakeholder views on needs regarding Nebraska's criminal and juvenile justice systems, and the community services that support these systems. Survey participants were also invited to participate in subsequent in-person focus group meetings.

Survey responses revealed the stakeholders the top five JAG priorities for Nebraska to be: (1) technological infrastructure and data-sharing; (2) mental health and substance misuse; (3) juvenile justice and reentry programs; (4) workforce recruitment and retentions; and (5) community-based crime prevention. The needs assessment analysis noted that more resources need to be invested in rural Nebraska and the Omaha metro to address these needs. These priority areas and needs will be given top consideration as Crime Commission will determine awarding funds moving forward. The 2026 – 2031 Nebraska JAG Strategic Plan will be finalized by the summer of 2026 that the state fiscal year 2028 will be using the priority areas and BJA's areas of emphasis that will align with the updated JAG purpose areas.

The plan will be reviewed annually by Crime Commission staff to determine the status of the goals and objectives to determine if additional resources are needed.

The timeline for the programs to be funded over the 4-year grant period of FY 2025 JAG is outlined below.

#### SAA Administrative Funding

The Nebraska Crime Commission will serve as the State Adminstrating Agency for the FY 2025 JAG grant program. Nebraska Crime Commission is requesting 10% of the total FY 2025 award for administrative costs up to the allocated amount of \$137,365. JAG administrative funds will pay for salaries, training & conferences, travel, grant management system, and operating expenses over the 4-year grant period once the prior fiscal year JAG administrative funds have been expended.

#### Sub-grantee Award Process

The Crime Commission anticipates the next open competitive solicitation for JAG funds be posted towards the end of 2026 for projects beginning July 2027 with a project period end date of June 2028. The subgrant award process will follow the Crime Commission's operating instructions for federal funds. Projects that address BJA areas of emphasis or needs identified in the state strategic plan will be given priority for funding as well as aligning with Nebraska's priority needs. Any deobligated funds will be reallocated in either continuation sub-grantees who have expended all their funds or re-awarded in the next open competitive solicitation. While the general JAG solicitation is available bi-annually, the focused priority area solicitations will be announced based on availability of funds to respond to emerging needs and innovative ideas in local jurisdictions throughout Nebraska.

#### Anticipated Expenditures for the JAG Purpose Areas

At this time, it is unknown what the exact number of applicants requesting funds will be due to the competitive process. In prior fiscal years, Crime Commission has received requests far in excess of available funds. As explained in the Program Narrative, funding decisions will be driven by a structured ranking during grant review of Nebraska's strategic priorities.

### **3. Capabilities and Competencies**

The Crime Commission will continue efforts to further the strategic plan as time progresses and continue its coordination efforts with other criminal justice agencies in the state. Ongoing discussions with subgrantees and various coalitions and associations contribute towards this goal. The Justice & Youth Programs (J&YP) Division administers various grants, which allows opportunities to coordinate and leverage resources across funding sources. The J&YP Division also works with the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to obtain relevant data and information available to us to implement evidence-informed programs better and more practically.

#### Collection of Performance Measure Data

Currently, each program is required to submit a report on a quarterly basis on the current data points required by BJA. In addition to the Performance Measure Tool, all sub grantees will be required to submit predetermined performance measures and objectives. The goal is to improve the quantity of evidence the Crime Commission generates; integrate evidence into programs, practice and policy decisions within Crime Commission grant funding; and improve the translation of evidence into practice. We will continue to keep our reporting current and express the importance of reporting to our sub-grantees.

The Justice & Youth Programs Division has been partnering with the Systems and Research Division (SAC) to be in compliance with the Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA). Reporting elements have been implemented into the Nebraska Criminal Justice Information System that jails and law enforcement across the state utilize. In addition, there is a Crime Commission staff person that follows up with entities that have not reported, as well as scrubbing the internet for articles related to death in custody. This information is then uploaded into the PMT System. Crime Commission will enforce the eligibility of grant recipients if they are not in compliance of DCRA reporting. The Crime Commission will continue to collect the required data deemed by DCRA on a quarterly basis.

#### Subgrantee Performance Measures and Monitoring

The Crime Commission's capacity for administering the JAG awards during the four year project period, including subrecipient monitoring will be at times difficult due to budget restraints on the state level. All JAG sub-grantees will have metrics and reporting structures developed by Crime Commission

staff in compliance with federal requirements. Due to the variety of subgrantees funded with Nebraska's JAG funds, it is critical to develop program-specific metrics to fully evaluate the impact and outcomes. Additional goals, objectives and performance measures are added the subgrant to ensure key outcomes are identified and achieved. In SFY 2025, a new reporting process was implemented to streamline reporting for timeliness and accuracy in Quarterly Narrative Activity Reports to align with the PMT reports in the BJA portal quarterly. Subgrantee financial reimbursements and invoices are paid after all required reports are received and approved.

The Crime Commission will determine the subgrantee monitor schedule based on the applicant's pre-risk assessment when applying for funds and the operation risk assessment tool (OAT) will be determined once the subaward's grant period has started to determine the amount of monitoring is needed for financial and/or programmatic desk reviews and if on-site monitors are needed during the grant period annually. Assigned Crime Commission staff will conduct the monitors in a timely manner based on Crime Commission's Monitoring Plan to ensure subgrantees are in compliance of federal and state requirements.