



Nebraska Crime Commission Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Stakeholder Focus Group Report Overview

Background

To better inform Nebraska's five-year strategy for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) and Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP) grant programs, the Nebraska Crime Commission (NCC) partnered with the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) to conduct four criminal justice stakeholder focus groups throughout the state. These 90-minute focus groups, held on April 9 and 10, 2025, built upon information gathered from a Justice System Needs Assessment Survey that was disseminated to justice system stakeholders throughout the state from May to September 2024. The focus groups were held in Lincoln and North Platte and included 22 stakeholders from across the criminal justice community.

Discussions

The focus groups were designed to obtain insight into key issues affecting the administration of justice in Nebraska, and the themes identified in the survey were used to guide the discussion. Discussions revolved around the following themes identified in the survey, which included mental and behavioral health (including substance misuse); juvenile justice and reentry; technology infrastructure and data sharing; workforce recruitment and retention and community-based crime prevention.



Scan to read the full
focus group report.

Key Themes & Insights

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- There is a lack of treatment facilities (both inpatient and outpatient) for adults and adolescents, and insufficient detox facilities.
- There is a scarcity of wraparound mental health supports, and a lack of viable transportation options for individuals who need to access the limited treatment options that exist.
- There are significant workforce recruitment and retention challenges in the behavioral health field throughout the state.

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Key Themes & Insights continued

GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS

- The more rural the area, the more limited the treatment options become.
- Workforce challenges are exacerbated in rural communities.
- Nebraska's location along a major highway corridor brings trafficking and enforcement challenges.
- The geographical size of many areas in the state also makes enforcement difficult.

Next Steps & Highlighted Opportunities

Despite the challenges described during the focus groups, the state of Nebraska has proven tremendously resourceful and has been able to chip away at some of its most pressing problems with already available resources. In addition to these resources, other opportunities and solutions exist that may be beneficial to address some of the identified themes. Nebraska may consider the following solutions that were highlighted in the focus groups.

- Increase prevention programming in the community and schools.
- Enhance the state's data sharing infrastructure. Data sharing, specifically as it relates to behavioral health systems, could have a significant and broad, positive impact on service coordination.
- Address workforce shortages by using financial and wellness incentives to attract staff.
- Use the faith-based community and/or volunteer organizations as a way to fill gaps around transportation and support for incarcerated individuals.
- Leverage positive experiences with school resource officers in schools as a tool to not only prevent justice system involvement, but also substance misuse, gang involvement and truancy.
- Explore avenues to address the lack of physical spaces for behavioral health and mental health treatment by partnering with community-based service providers.



Center for
Justice Planning

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