

Nebraska Byrne Justice Assistance Grant
Program (JAG)
Strategic Plan FFY 2026-2031

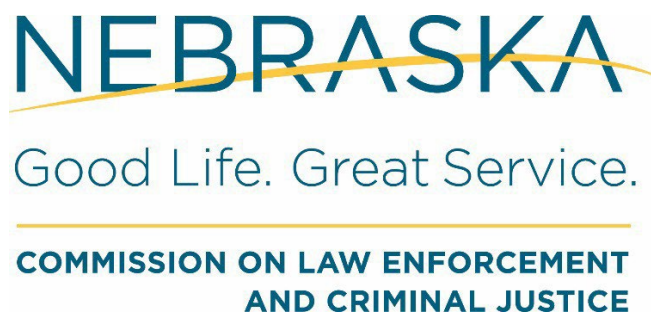


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Executive Summary

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG) provides federal criminal justice funding to states and local jurisdictions. JAG funding in Nebraska has been critical to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies, state criminal justice programs and community services across the State of Nebraska. The Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) is the State Adminstrating Agency for the JAG program. The responsibility of the administration of the funds has remained with Nebraska Crime Commission since Nebraska began participation in the JAG program. ..The Nebraska Crime Commission is tasked with completing the 2025-2030 Nebraska JAG Strategic Plan. The planning process began with the intent of an overall funding strategic plan that encompasses the multiple U.S. Department of Justice funding sources administered by the Nebraska Crime Commission. The Nebraska Crime Commission collaborated with the National Criminal Justice Association for the creation and analysis of the needs assessment survey with stakeholders throughout Nebraska.

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) 2025 - 2030 strategic planning process began with a statewide solicitation for participation emailed to stakeholders across the state who represented all segments of Nebraska's criminal justice system. Collaborating with the National Criminal Justice Association, the Nebraska Crime Commission launched and distributed an online needs assessment survey, and conducted focus group sessions that allowed opportunities for all interested stakeholders to offer their perspective on the criminal justice needs of Nebraska. The goal of each planning step was to define the priority areas based on need among Nebraska's criminal justice stakeholders that, in turn, would expose opportunities for the Nebraska Crime Commission to leverage multiple federal and state funding sources strategically to programs that have the capacity to service those stated needs.

The statewide needs assessment survey and focus group session results revealed Nebraska stakeholders' top five JAG priorities to be:

Priority 1: Technological Infrastructure and Data Sharing;

Priority 2: Mental Health and Substance Misuse;

Priority 3: Juvenile Justice and Reentry Programs;

Priority 4: Workforce Recruitment and Retention; and

Priority 5: Community-Based Crime Prevention.

Each priority is accompanied with implementation activities and measures stakeholders identified during the focus group as indicators of successful accomplishment (See also Appendix B). Moreover, the five priorities identified, and their respective implementation activities align with 8 of the 9 Byrne JAG purpose areas: law enforcement programs; prosecution and court programs; prevention and education programs; corrections and community corrections programs; drug treatment and enforcement; crime victim and witness programs; planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs; and mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs.

Problem Statement

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. Funding should be optimized to increase mental health and substance use resources across the Nebraska criminal justice system. Currently, Nebraska Crime Commission is coordinating with the Nebraska Supreme Court to data-share through a Cloud-Based Power BI Reporting Platform for Judicial Data & Crisis Analytics. This initiative aims to improve public safety that will enable law enforcement to quickly identify high-risk individuals and juveniles, particularly those with firearm restrictions or active protective orders, to ensure firearms are kept out of the hands of those who pose a threat to themselves or others. The data efforts with the creation of new crisis intervention tracking tools will improve multi-agency coordination, reduce response delays, improve resource allocation and support policy improvements to reduce gun violence.

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. Funding should be optimized to modernize technological systems in rural areas who lack resources across Nebraska. This has been a top need addressed in the most recent Needs Assessment Survey and the in-person Focus Groups.

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) administers the Byrne JAG program in memory of Police Officer Edward Byrne who lost his life in 1988 through gunfire while trying to protect a witness from local New York City drug dealers. The overarching purpose of JAG awards is to support a wide range of programs and activities to prevent and control crime and to improve the functioning of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. The Byrne JAG program is one of the most flexible sources of federal funding, allowing states, tribes and local governments to support a wide range of programs.

The Byrne JAG Program has identified eight purpose areas for the grant funds. State Administrators may fund eligible projects and costs based on the identified needs of the state. The strategic planning process helps the state to identify and determine how to prioritize the use of the JAG funds. The needs assessment was started by sending out a survey to the stakeholders. The survey distinguished the federal purpose areas and asked the stakeholders to evaluate the importance of each:

- Law Enforcement programs
- Prosecution, Court, Defense and Indigent Defense
- Prevention and Education
- Corrections and Community Corrections
- Drug Treatment and Enforcement
- Planning, Evaluation and Technology
- Crime Victim and Witnesses
- Mental Health Programs and Related Law Enforcement and Corrections Programs, including Behavioral Programs and Crisis Intervention Teams

Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

The Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) was established in 1969 and is the state administrating agency for multiple U.S. Department of Justice grant programs. In addition, Nebraska Crime Commission also has oversight of law enforcement training and certification, jail standards, criminal justice data and research, and juvenile justice programs.

The Nebraska Crime Commission is the state administering agency for the following federal grant programs: Victims of Crime Act-Assistance, Victims of Crime Act-Compensation, Byrne Justice Assistance Grant, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment grant, Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program grant, OJJDP Title II grant, Violence Against Women STOP grant, and Violence Against Women Sexual Assault Services Program grant. In addition to the above formula grants, the Nebraska Crime Commission has also been awarded discretionary grants from U.S. DOJ. The Nebraska Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) is co-located in the Nebraska Crime Commission and works closely with the grant administrators to address the criminal justice needs of Nebraska.

Historical Byrne JAG Funding

Funding from the Byrne JAG program has been fairly consistent in terms of total amount of funds awarded to the SAA for criminal justice programming. The JAG funds allocated to Nebraska have remained stable over the last five federal fiscal years, averaging approximately \$1,298,890. See chart 1 below. While the main purpose areas that Nebraska JAG dollars have funded has remained consistent since 2020, targeted solicitations to fund specific narrowed purpose areas were utilized over the last two fiscal years (2024-2026). These targeted solicitations included funding for drug taskforce, election security, and technology enhancements. Chart 2 below illustrates the priority areas that were identified during the strategic planning process, and the subawarded amount of funds and number of funded programs per priority area over the last five fiscal years.

Chart 1

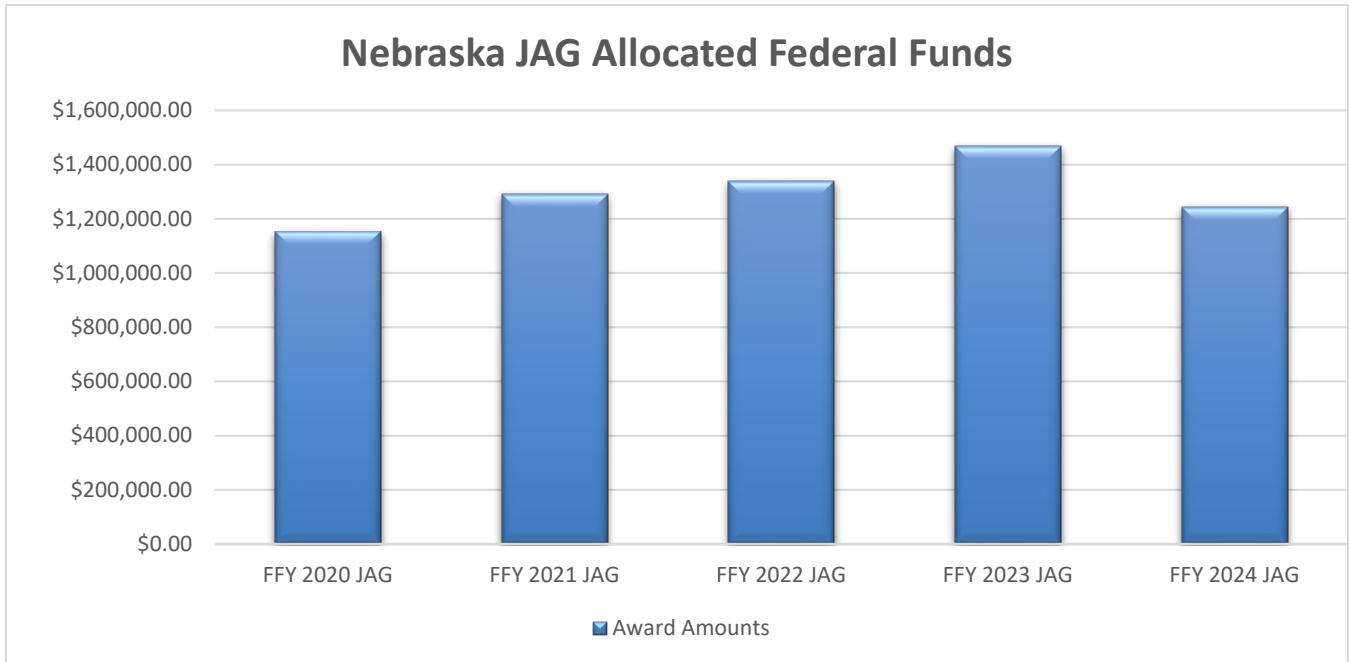
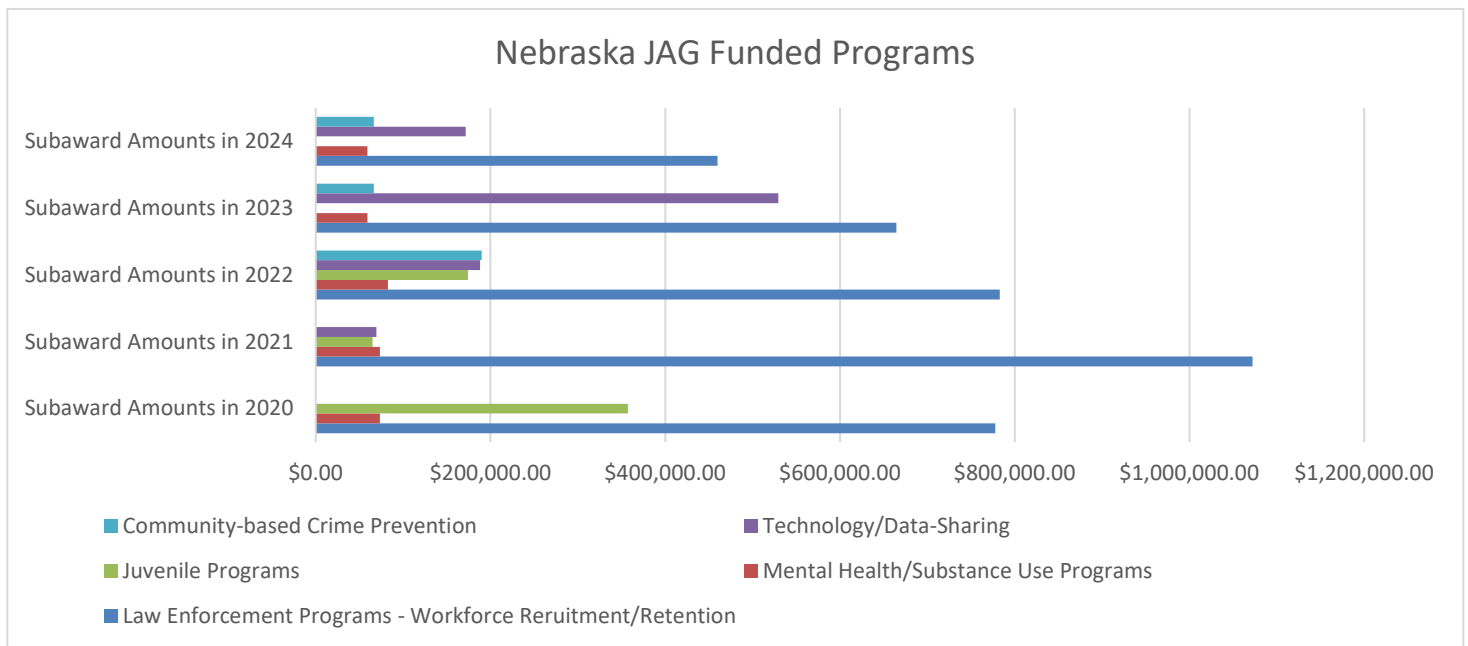


Chart 2



*Programs may be captured in more than one program type

Strategic Plan Development

The Nebraska Crime Commission is responsible for developing a strategic plan for the administration of Edward Byrne JAG funding throughout Nebraska. Recognizing that JAG funding is critical to meeting the needs of Nebraska law enforcement agencies, state criminal justice programs, and community services, the intent of the plan is to expand administration of JAG funds subawarded and enhance outreach to stakeholder-identified priority areas that are currently unfunded or underfunded. The central aim of the JAG strategic planning process is to assess stakeholders' priority of need within the nine JAG purpose areas. The assessment results will narrow the focus of the Nebraska Crime Commission's aid distribution and outreach toward programs and populations that align with the stakeholders' underserved/underfunded identified needs.

Stakeholder Need Assessment Survey

On May 8, 2024, invitations to an online survey were 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:

- Nebraska State Attorney General's Office
- NDHHS Division of Behavioral Health
- Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Nebraska District Courts
- Nebraska County Courts
- Nebraska Supreme Court
- The Governor's Office
- Nebraska Public Defenders
- Nebraska County Attorneys
- Nebraska Bar Association
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS)
- Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
- Native American Tribe Councils
- Nebraska Police Departments
- Nebraska State Patrol
- Nebraska Jails
- Indigent Defense Legal Services
- Nebraska Probation
- Nebraska Parole
- Social Service Agencies
- Sexual Assault Service Programs
- Juvenile Justice Prevention Programs
- Criminal Justice Reentry Programs
- Current and Previously Funded Stakeholders
- Unfunded Criminal and Juvenile Justice Services

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. The results of this survey will assist in the development of a multi-year strategy plan that will focus priorities of funding opportunities to match stakeholder identified needs and guide the distribution of the grant funds. Stakeholder responses were based on their views and opinions as they reflect on their work or involvement with Nebraska's criminal and/or juvenile justice system and service.

Methodology

The Nebraska Crime Commission needs assessment survey was distributed by email to criminal justice stakeholders across Nebraska. The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) utilized Survey Monkey Software as an internet-based platform to administer the survey. The needs assessment emphasized JAG and SCIP grant funds in order to create a comprehensive strategic plan applicable to all DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance grants administered by the Nebraska Crime Commission. Survey results compiled by the NCJA team had further analysis with stakeholders in scheduled focus groups arranged by region. In April 2025, four scheduled in-person focus group sessions were conducted in two sessions per day in Lincoln and North Platte. The focus group sessions became key in clarifying the survey results, gathering consensus on stakeholder priority of needs, and determining implementation steps to take toward meeting stakeholder needs.

On May 8, 2024, the Nebraska Crime Commission distributed an email to approximately 800 Nebraska criminal justice stakeholders containing a link to the online needs assessment survey. Utilizing Survey Monkey Software, the survey asked participants for their criminal justice perspective regarding JAG and SCIP grant funding with the intent to utilize survey results to create a comprehensive strategic plan applicable to all DOJ grants administered by the Nebraska Crime Commission. Each survey took about 15-20 minutes to complete. A reminder email was sent to approximately 800 invited stakeholders on July 26, 2024, urging their participation. Access to the survey remained open for approximately three months.

The needs assessment survey comprised of 37 questions divided into two sections (*Appendix A: Nebraska Crime Commission Justice System Needs Assessment Survey Analysis*). *Section: Self-Identification* asked the participant to select their affiliation with the Nebraska criminal justice system, and to indicate the county or counties in Nebraska they primarily serve. The participant affiliation portion of *Section: Self Identification* provided participants with a list of 15 options and a fill in the blank option if they identified as being a service provider other than ones listed. Of the approximately 800 stakeholders invited to participate in the needs assessment survey, 251 people completed the survey representing 17% agencies serving the entire state. Majority of the respondents served in Victim Services (13%), Law Enforcement (15%), and Juvenile Justice (10%), with 16% identified as "Other:" (e.g. Child Advocacy Centers and community organizations). The largest locations were Lancaster County and Douglas County, which had the highest county-specific responses. Of the 93 counties in Nebraska only 3 counties did not have representation in the survey.¹

Section: JAG Program Areas contained 10 questions that listed out each of the eight JAG purpose areas. The "Corrections and Community Corrections Programs" purpose area was split into two separate questions; "Corrections programs in institutions" and "Community Corrections Programs." The "Drug Treatment and Enforcement Programs" purpose area was split into "Drug Treatment Programs" and "Drug Enforcement Programs." The division of these two particular purpose areas was done to gather a clear assessment of the need within each respective aspect of the purpose areas. In this section, participants were to read the full list of JAG purpose areas then go back and rate the importance of need for funding projects and services that fall under each purpose areas. Results 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 (see *Appendix A*).

¹ Boone County, Cherry County, and Wayne County.

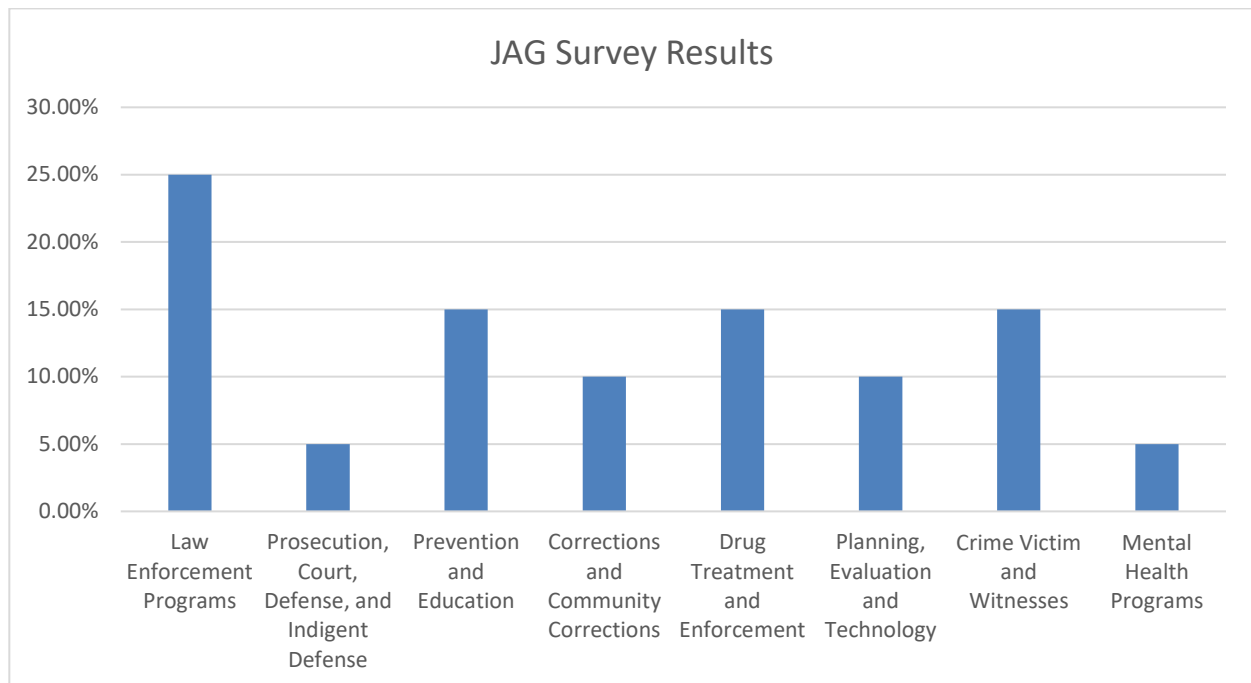
Section – SCIP Areas for Investment contained 5 questions to better assess the funding needs for the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) and the development of the Nebraska SCIP Advisory Board. This section focused on gun violence-related challenges and areas of investment where stakeholders could articulate the three most pertinent issues relating to gun violence. Behavioral health/mental health crisis response needs were ranked the highest, followed by domestic violence/intimate partner violence and suicide by firearms as the third highest issue.

Section – Challenges & Prioritized Areas of Investment provided participants the opportunity to express any remaining concerns, comments, or questions relevant to their state or organization. This section used an open-ended question format where stakeholders could articulate these additional needs and/or services in their own words. The predominant theme included crimes committed out of necessity and the relationship of crime. However, not all of these needs were unique with many stakeholders using identical or very similar language to identify the same issue. The NCJA team conducted a qualitative analysis across each open-ended response to identify 8 overarching categories of need (see *Appendix A*).

Survey Findings

The 251 survey responses fell into one of Byrne JAG’s eight purpose areas: law enforcement, courts, prosecution and defense, prevention and education programs, corrections, drug treatment/enforcement, evaluations, planning and technology, crime victim and witness services, and mental health and crisis intervention programs. Law Enforcement programs accounted for approximately 25% of the responses.

Chart 3

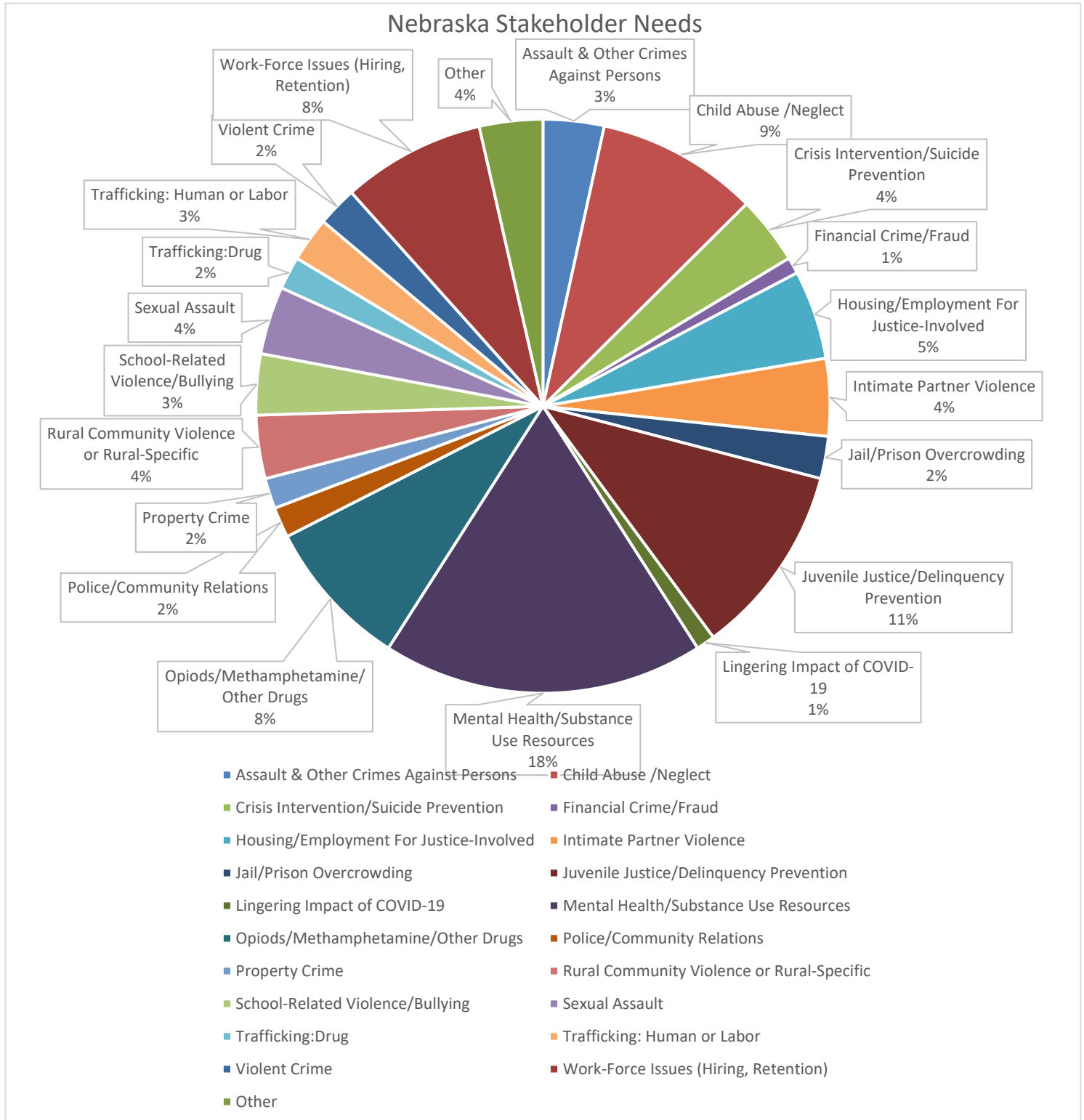


Prior to exiting the survey, participants were asked to provide their name and email address if they wanted to participate in upcoming focus groups meetings to review the results of the survey and discuss survey findings. Conversations held at these meeting would assist in establishing goals and objectives for the strategic plan. Seventy-three participants expressed an interest in contributing to focus group discussions about the assessment's data findings.

NCJA team analyzed the data collected from the needs assessment survey and four focus group sessions were scheduled in Central and Southeastern regions of Nebraska to gather in-person stakeholder input on survey findings. Participants enrolled in one of the four sessions offered with each focus group meeting lasting approximately 90 minutes. Twenty-two stakeholders took part in the focus group sessions out of the 73 survey participants that originally expressed an interest in participating. Focus group members represented rural and urban Nebraska and various agencies including law enforcement, victim services, child advocacy services, domestic abuse services, tribal services, diversion services, substance use and mental health services, community aid, and county attorneys.

In chart 4, Nebraska stakeholders selected the most challenging issues facing their agency currently. Twenty-seven responses elected to write in their response for other. The common themes included crimes related to juveniles, juvenile delinquency such as truancy, poverty, and intersecting social welfare issues including transportation and rural barriers. (*Appendix A*)

Chart4



Nebraska at a Glance

The difficulty in planning for the use of JAG dollars in Nebraska is balancing the needs of the densely populated higher crime areas with the need to fill resource and service gaps in a state that has significantly rural land areas. Nebraska's total area, including land and water, is 77,358 square miles (200,358 square kilometers) – almost 20 percent larger than New England. The state's land area alone is 76,878 square miles (199,113 square kilometers). Nebraska ranks 16th among the states in land and water area, and 15th in land area alone.² Nebraska has a population of approximately 2,005,465 (2024 estimate), the 37th most populous state.³ The population density is approximately 25 people per square mile. Thirty-one percent of the towns/cities have a population of 200 or less, not including the villages that are unincorporated. Nebraska has three cities with a population over 60,000; Omaha with a population of 486,051, Lincoln (the capital city) with a population of 292,000, and Bellevue with a population of 64,176. Bellevue, located in Sarpy County is considered part of the Omaha Metro area. Nebraska has four metro statistical areas as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with urban cores: Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, and Sioux City (Iowa). OMB classifies nine micro statistical areas in the state with urban clusters in Beatrice, Columbus, Fremont, Hastings, Kearney, Lexington, Norfolk, North Platte, and Scottsbluff.⁴ The map below (Figure 1) shows the remaining areas of Nebraska categorized as rural.⁵

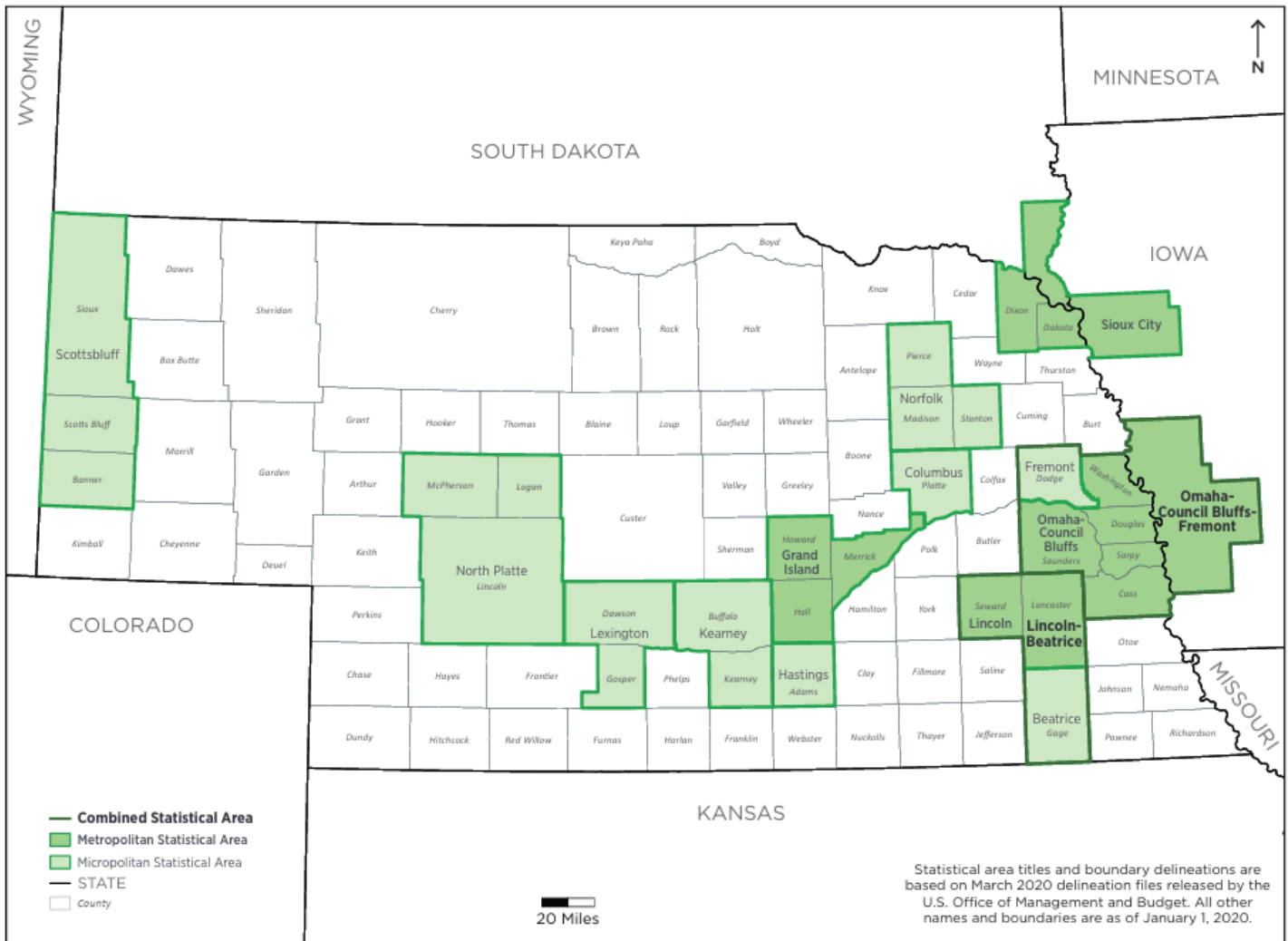
² Nebraska Blue Book, 2024-25. <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/about/blue-book.php>

³ Id.

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Bulletin-20-01.pdf>

⁵ https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/reference-maps/2020/state-maps/31_Nebraska_2020.pdf

Nebraska: 2020 Core Based Statistical Areas and Counties



U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Figure 1

Criminal Justice Indicators in Nebraska

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)/Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1930, serves as the nation's primary system for collecting and analyzing crime data from more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies. Through standardized reporting procedures, the UCR Program provides critical information used to identify crime trends, allocate resources, and inform public safety strategies. Historically, the UCR Summary Reporting System categorized offenses into Part I and Part II crimes; however, limitations in reporting methodology prompted the development of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of criminal activity.

Effective January 1, 2021, NIBRS became the national standard for crime data collection replacing the UCR

Program. Unlike the traditional UCR system, which reported only the most serious offense in an incident under the hierarchy rule, NIBRS captures multiple offenses within a single incident and collects detailed information regarding victims, offenders, locations, weapons, and incident circumstances. This expanded level of reporting provides law enforcement agencies with a more accurate and actionable understanding of crime patterns, allowing for enhanced analysis, forecasting, and operational planning.

In 1989, the Nebraska Crime Commission became the authority for collecting, reporting, and repositing UCR data for the State of Nebraska. Nebraska law enforcement agencies are statutorily required to submit monthly UCR/NIBRS data with reported totals of known and unknown arrests within their jurisdiction. In Nebraska, required reporting agencies include the State Patrol, two certified campus police departments, the State Fire Marshal, all police departments, and all sheriffs' offices.

To be eligible for grant funds, the Agency shall be in current compliance with the mandatory Nebraska Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) requirements as stated in 78 Neb. Admin. Code, Ch. 5, § 006. The agency shall maintain compliance with those requirements throughout the entire project period to remain eligible to have an active grant award.

Incident report numbers before January 1, 2021, are not as reliable due to the limitations in the methods several large agencies used before the federal NIBRS requirement went into effect. Omaha Police Department did not come into compliance with NIBRS reporting until August 2023. Due to the city of Omaha accounting for roughly 30-40% of the crime in Nebraska, Nebraska's Byrne JAG funding allocation (from 2020 to 2024) was significantly impacted due to the lack of crime data reported from Omaha Police Department.

As of January 2026, the non-compliant NIBRS reporting agencies are Blaine County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Sargent Police Department, Dodge/Snyder Police Department, Hooper Police Department, Fairmont Police Department, Hooker County Sheriff's Office, Crofton Police Department, and Ceresco Police Department. Agencies exempt from the NIBRS reporting requirement are communities with a population of 1,500 or less that contract with its county for law enforcement service. The data is reflected in the contracted county sheriff office submission to the Crime Commission.

Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA)

The Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA) is a federal law requiring all U.S. states, territories and law enforcement agencies to submit quarterly data to the U.S. Attorney General regarding the deaths of individuals in the process of an arrest, en route to being incarcerated or held in correctional or detention facilities. Each report must include the decedent's information, incident details, the involved agency and the circumstances of how the death occurred.

States that fail to comply with DCRA reporting requirement face up to a 10% reduction in funding under the Byrne JAG Program. As of FFY 2024, Nebraska has maintained compliance with DCRA reporting requirements with no resulting penalty reductions.

[Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-1821](#) mandates immediate notification to the county coroner whenever an individual dies during apprehension or while in the custody of law enforcement. Furthermore, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 29-1401 requires a grand jury investigation to be convened whenever a death occurs in law enforcement custody.

There are currently 200 active law enforcement agencies, 63 county jails, and 9 state prison facilities for a total

of 212 reporting agencies.⁶ In 2025, DCRA reporting was completed by 86% of agencies, covering 83% of the population and 88% of sworn officers. Of the agencies not reporting in 2025, most consist of small townships and small county sheriff's offices. Notable non-reporting agencies in 2025 are Lincoln Police Department and Washington County Sheriff's office, having not submitted either "incident reports" or "zero reports."

The Crime Commission sent DCRA Noncompliance Notice letters to Lincoln Police Department and Washington County Sheriff's Office outlining the importance of DCRA reporting and are working with the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to resolve the issue and come into compliance. As of March 18, 2026, Lincoln Police Department is in compliance with DCRA reporting. Washington County has not responded to the Crime Commission for noncompliance as of June 2026.

If an agency is not reporting timely and accurately to the Crime Commission with quarterly DCRA reports, the agency is not eligible to receive grant funds from the Crime Commission. If an agency provides DCRA reports after the quarter ends to the Crime Commission, the SAC staff will request BJA to reopen the PMT report to update the changes.

Collection of Crime Data

Most jurisdictions in Nebraska are utilizing National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), and the state of Nebraska has been deemed NIBRS compliant. There are some jurisdictions within the state that have not transitioned to NIBRS and are still submitting summary data.. Once all agencies are reporting NIBRS data, advanced analysis of the data reported will be possible. Through the work at the Nebraska Crime Commission through the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), significant improvements have been made in terms of partnerships to ensure we have a holistic picture of crime and the criminal justice system in Nebraska. The Nebraska Criminal Justice Information System (NCJIS) is a repository for data and information accessed and submitted by law enforcement, jails, courts and probation, juvenile justice programs. Most recently, the Nebraska Crime Commission integrated a victim case management and data reporting system into NCJIS. The Nebraska Crime Commission is enhancing NCJIS capabilities to extract actionable data to serve as a centralized portal for statewide criminal justice reporting.

Nebraska Crime Statistics

The 2024 Crime in Nebraska Annual Report⁶ released January 13, 2026, outlines statewide crimes reported based on the crime index offenses between violent crimes and property crimes. As stated in the report:

[t]he number of crimes reported to Nebraska law enforcement agencies in 2024 increased 18.5%. This jump was the result of onboarding Omaha in August of 2023, who covers approximately 24% of the State's population. There were 36,914 crimes reported in 2024, compared to 31,142 crimes reported during the same period in 2023, resulting in an increase of 5,799 reported crimes. These numbers include only the crimes of Murder-Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson, which serve as the Crime Index used to measure crime statewide.

Reported violent crimes (Murder-Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault) increased 31% in 2024. There were 4,120 violent crimes reported

⁶ Most jails operate under the County Sheriff, and all state facilities are counted as one agency.

in 2024, compared to 3,146 reported in 2023, resulting in an increase of 974 violent crimes.

Reported property crimes (Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson) increased 17.1% in 2024. There were 32,794 property crimes reported in 2024, compared to 27,996 reported in 2023, resulting in an increase of 4,798 property crimes.⁷

(See Appendix D, 2024 Crime in Nebraska Annual Report)

The slight increase is due to Omaha Police Department's NIBRS reporting but not the overall trend in crime. The report indicates population-based crime trends have generally decreased, with the exception of populations over 400,000, which spiked due to a surge in reported crime index offenses by the Omaha Police Department.

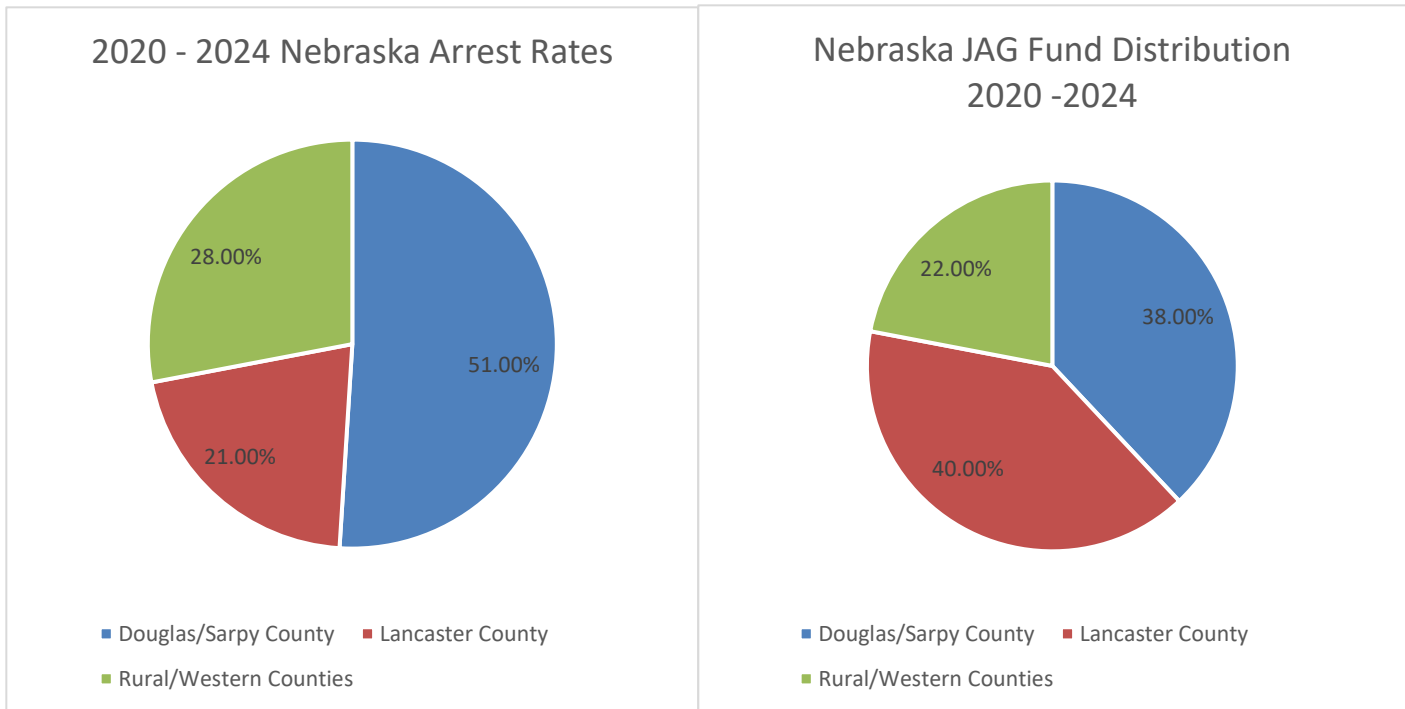
- Populations of 399,999 to 100,000 decreased 7.9% overall (violent -8% / property -6.1%)
- Populations of 99,999 to 5,000 decreased 9.9% overall (violent +1.8% / property -11.2%)
- Populations of 4,999 and under decreased 25.4% overall (violent -13.8% / property -27.3%)
- County areas decreased 12.8% overall (violent +33.2% / property -18.3%)
- State properties decreased 42.9% overall (violent -54.6% / property -28.3%)

Criminal Justice Needs

Criminal justice needs in rural areas differ from those of densely populated jurisdictions. Rural areas have difficulty securing enough resources to address criminal justice needs and often rely on surrounding areas for assistance. Behavioral health and substance use was a recurring theme during the strategic planning process, as access to qualified professionals in rural Nebraska is difficult. The lack of available and/or specialized mental health or substance use treatment providers was mentioned numerous times both within the survey and the focus groups. Law enforcement agencies in rural parts of Nebraska cover sparsely inhabited large land areas with limited services, making it difficult to provide staff capacity to travel long distances for transporting individuals in crisis. For example, agencies with only a few staff would require paying overtime to officers to transport an individual in emergency protective custody to an available placement in other area of the state. Although it is challenging to trace an exact correlation between arrest rates with the distribution of JAG funds, this comparison indicates a need to redirect more resources toward rural areas and the Omaha Metro area. (see Chart 5).

⁷"2024 Crime in Nebraska Annual Report." **Nebraska Crime Commission, 2026,**
<https://ncc.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/doc/2024%20Crime%20in%20Nebraska.pdf>.

Chart 5



In 2024, 10% of the JAG funds were awarded for the purpose of juvenile justice programming. In contrast, the arrest data for 2024 indicates that only 13% of the arrests in Nebraska were juvenile related. The juvenile arrest data may be inflated as the count includes law enforcement warn and release without any further action. Under Nebraska Revised Statute § 43-249, a minor taken into police custody is legally considered to be in temporary custody rather than under formal arrest. Recognizing the importance of juvenile justice programs, in particular diversion, it is equally important to ensure that all available grant resources that the Nebraska Crime Commission administers are utilized to the maximum benefit. Because the Nebraska Crime Commission administers grant programs specific to the intervention and prevention of juvenile delinquency, juvenile programs are not a priority for use of the JAG funds in Nebraska for the timeframe of this strategic plan.

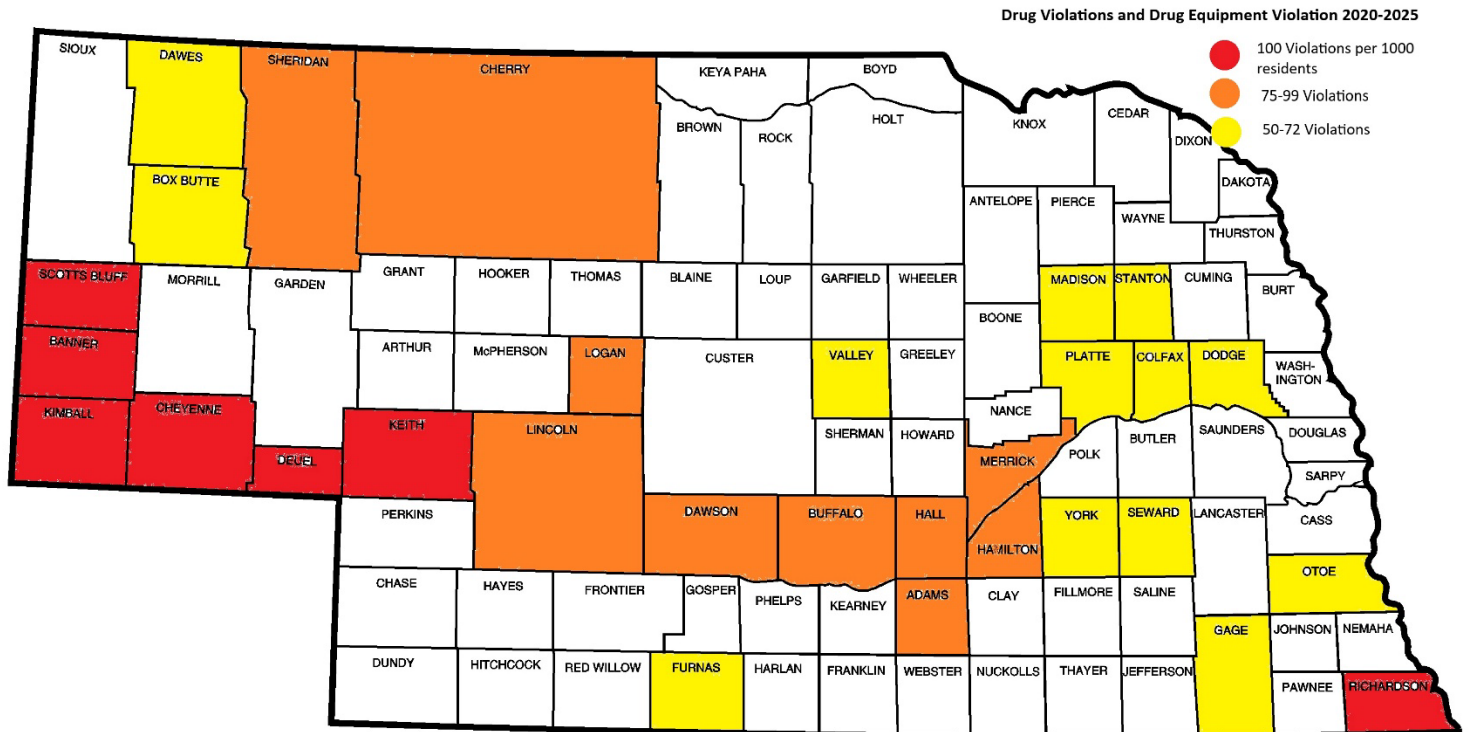
There is currently no mechanism to track the utilization of mental health services in the criminal justice system that the Nebraska Crime Commission has been able to identify. However, capturing mental health services utilization in the criminal justice system through NCJIS is a topic of discussion for future exploration. The need for mental health services is interwoven in all stages of the criminal justice system and was identified as a high need. Data is available in terms of drug arrests in the State of Nebraska. In 2024, of the total offenses⁸ reported, 30% were drug related as either drug/narcotic violations or drug equipment violations⁹. In Figure 2, the coloring illustrates the concentration of drug violations across the state in each county. The most severe rates are highlighted in red (the 7 highest-percentage counties),

⁸ Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. (2020-2024). Uniform Crime Reporting. Retrieved from <https://ncc.nebraska.gov/reporting-compliance>

⁹ Drug equipment violations are defined as: use or possession of drug paraphernalia; deliver, manufacture drug paraphernalia; deliver to minor, drug paraphernalia

followed by orange (10 counties in the second tier), and yellow (13 counties in the third tier), showing a clear geographical distribution of these offenses. Most of the counties with the highest percentage of drug offenses run along the I-80 interstate. Analyzing the data available in relation to the geographic location will assist with ensuring that funding decisions are being made that reflect what the data indicates the need.

Figure 2



Priority Investment Areas and Initiatives

The priority areas as determined by the strategic planning process for the purpose of the FY 2026-2031 Nebraska JAG Strategic Plan will only address the areas for investment as allowed by the JAG program. Additionally, there was considerable insight shared regarding the needs of the juvenile justice system in Nebraska, in particular as it relates to diversion. To maximize the Byrne JAG dollars for criminal justice priority areas outlined in the strategic plan, funding recommendations generally focused on juvenile programs will be referred to other grant funding.

Priority #1: Establish mental illness and substance misuse prevention and treatment related to criminal justice.

(JAG Purpose Areas: Law Enforcement; Prosecution, Court, Defense and Indigent Defense; Prevention and Education; Corrections and Community Corrections; Drug Treatment and Enforcement; Mental Health Programs including Behavioral Programs and Crisis Intervention Teams)

Objectives:

1. In the **SFY 2028-2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG funds for programs that will address the behavioral health needs of individuals by expanding integration of behavioral health, particularly in rural areas. Performance Measurement:
 - a. Mental/Behavioral Health programs in Nebraska that address the behavioral health needs of adults involved in the criminal justice systems will be increased by adding 2 programs through the utilization of JAG grant funds. *Baseline: 1*
 - b. Expand behavioral health training by standardizing CIT/CRIT for law enforcement and jail staff; provide training to service providers and community members to strengthen local capacity.
2. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds for programs that will address the behavioral health needs of individuals by expanding telehealth access, particularly in rural areas., Performance Measurement:
 - a. Mental/Behavioral Health programs in Nebraska that address the behavioral health needs of adults involved in those systems will be increased by adding 1 program through the utilization of JAG grant funds. *Baseline: 0*
 - b. Establish collaborations among hospitals, community organizations, schools, law enforcement and behavioral health providers.
3. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to enhance transportation services for people with behavioral health needs. Performance Measurement:
 - a. Crisis Intervention teams or services for people with behavioral health needs that come into contact with law enforcement with a need for transportation in Nebraska will be increased by the development or enhancement of 1 program in Nebraska. *Baseline: 0*
4. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to enhance youth mental health through prevention and early education for juveniles with behavioral health needs.
Performance Measurement:
 - a. Evidence-based mental health programs in schools will be increased by the development or enhancement of 2 programs in Nebraska. *Baseline: 0*

Priority #2: Enhance technological infrastructure and data sharing statewide related to criminal justice.
(JAG Purpose Areas: Law Enforcement; Prosecution, Court, Defense and Indigent Defense; Prevention and Education; Corrections and Community Corrections; Drug Treatment and Enforcement; Planning, Evaluation and Technology; Crime Victim and Witnesses; Mental Health Programs including Behavioral Programs and Crisis Intervention Teams)

Objectives:

1. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to enhance and support criminal justice programs to upgrade to technological infrastructure or data sharing.

Performance Measurement:

- a. Provide technical assistance on the requirements for applying for JAG funding to prepare for SFY 2028 solicitation by December 2026.
- b. Criminal justice programs that address technology or data sharing enhancements in the criminal justice program will be increased by adding 3 programs through the utilization of JAG grant funds. Baseline: 3
- c. Create a list of criminal justice programs, their locations, and the technological or data sharing enhancements to prevent crime, protect public safety and reduce recidivism by June 30, 2030.

Priority #3: Enhance workforce development programs related to criminal justice.

(JAG Purpose Areas: Corrections and Community Corrections Programs; Prevention and Education; Planning, evaluation, and technology improvement)

Objectives:

1. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to enhance and support criminal justice programs to recruit and retain workforce.

Performance Measurement:

- a. Establish collaborations among hospitals, community organizations, schools, law enforcement and behavioral health providers.
- b. Provide technical assistance on the requirements for applying for JAG funding to prepare for SFY 2028 solicitation by December 2026.
- c. Criminal justice programs that address workforce development programs in the criminal justice program will be increased by adding 1 program through the utilization of JAG grant funds.

Baseline: 0

Priority #4: Enhance criminal justice programs throughout the state by creating targeted JAG solicitations.

(JAG Purpose Areas: Law Enforcement; Prosecution, Court, Defense and Indigent Defense; Prevention and Education; Corrections and Community Corrections; Drug Treatment and Enforcement; Planning, Evaluation and Technology; Crime Victim and Witnesses; Mental Health Programs including Behavioral Programs and Crisis Intervention Teams)

Objectives:

1. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize using targeted JAG grant funds to enhance the support of criminal justice programs. Performance Measurement:
 - a. Create a list of active drug task forces and other task forces across the state by January 2027.

- b. Create a list of potential targeted JAG solicitations by January 2027.
 - c. Task forces in Nebraska will be increased by funding at least 2 task forces that are either new or enhancing their efforts in the SFY 2028 - 2030 grant award process. *Baseline: 2*
 - d. Targeted criminal justice programs will be increased by funding at least 2 programs that are either new or enhancing their efforts in the SFY 2028 – 2030 grant award process.
2. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize using JAG grant funds to develop and enhance law enforcement training on mental health issues. Performance Measurement:
- a. Fund at least one initiative that provides mental health/behavioral health trainings (in person and/or online) designed to educate law enforcement personnel on appropriate referrals and course of action. *Baseline: 0*

Priority #5: Enhance community-based crime prevention programs throughout the state.

(JAG Purpose Areas: Law Enforcement; Prosecution, Court, Defense and Indigent Defense; Drug Treatment and Enforcement; Prevention and Education; Corrections and Community Corrections; Crime Victim and Witness Programs)

Objectives:

- 1. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to increase the number of victim witness advocates in rural Nebraska. Performance Measurement:
 - a. Victim Witness programs in rural Nebraska will be increased by utilizing JAG funds to add 2 new programs in rural Nebraska. *Baseline: 1¹⁰*
- 2. In the **SFY 2028 - 2030** grant award process, prioritize utilizing JAG grant funds to increase the number of gang violence prevention programs in rural Nebraska. Performance Measurement:
 - a. Gang violence prevention programs in rural Nebraska will be increased by utilizing JAG funds to add 2 new programs in rural Nebraska. *Baseline: 0*

6.

¹⁰ Nebraska Crime Commission has utilized JAG funding in the past to support victim witness programs; however, Victims of Crime Act grant dollars and State Victim Assistance funds have been the main source of support for these programs