

Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services

Ohio Criminal Justice Strategic Plan

June 2014

In 2011, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) launched a multi-phased strategic planning initiative to provide the framework and resources necessary to create a comprehensive criminal justice plan for Ohio. OCJS took great care to involve in the strategic planning process a large number of stakeholders from all realms of the criminal justice system. The resulting Ohio Criminal Justice Strategic Plan guides the state's priorities and JAG funding strategy. The following pages document the elements of the strategic plan:

- I. The strategic planning process
- II. Engaging stakeholders
- III. Results of data collection efforts
- IV. Establishing funding priorities
- V. Identification of emerging issues
- VI. Coordinating criminal justice resources through collaboration
- VII. Facilitation of evidence-based practices
- VIII. Updating the strategic plan

I. The strategic planning process

In April 2011, OCJS staff began the strategic planning process. This process was spearheaded by Ohio's Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), with significant input from the SAA director and the Grants Administration staff. SAC researchers created a multi-phased process to gather data from criminal justice stakeholders throughout Ohio. This process consisted of four phases: 1) Interviews with leaders in the field, or 'key informants'; 2) Collection of Ohio crime statistics; 3) Surveys of criminal justice stakeholders; 4) Focus groups with regional representation. These activities were conducted between May 2011 and January 2012. Data were gathered and analyzed. Reports highlighting the findings of the activities were made available to the public on the OCJS website. From these data sources, priorities and gaps in services were identified and used to guide the JAG funding strategies for Fiscal Years 2012, 2013, and 2014.

II. Engaging stakeholders

Given the breadth of the JAG grant program, it was important to reach out to local and state criminal justice stakeholders across multiple disciplines throughout Ohio's rural, urban, and suburban regions to identify the needs of the state. This was done in a variety of ways. First, leaders in the criminal justice field in Ohio ('key informants') were interviewed to identify what they felt were the most pressing issues in the state. Second, a convenience survey addressing needs and priorities was administered, based in part on the findings of the key informant interviews. The survey was made available to any criminal justice entity willing to complete it, and was announced through the OCJS Criminal Justice Bulletin. It was also advertised through the many organizations with whom OCJS partners. Third, four regional focus groups were convened to further elaborate on the findings of the survey and the interviews. As a result of the information gleaned from interviews and surveys, a conference was held which provided information to local and state criminal justice stakeholders on evidence-based practices across many disciplines. The evidence-based programs that were highlighted in the conference were chosen based in part on the feedback collected from the interviews and surveys.

III. Results of data collection efforts

The following pages describe the methods used to collect information from our stakeholders. Key informant interviews, a criminal justice needs assessment survey, and regional focus groups are discussed in turn.

Key informant interviews

The key informant interviews were conducted to help establish the foundation of a more comprehensive survey that would later be distributed statewide to individuals working “on the ground” at all points of the criminal justice system, including consumers. These interviews helped determine the needs and gaps in current services, and helped identify collaboration efforts amongst state and local direct service providers, law enforcement and other criminal justice and/or government agencies.

All interviewees were provided with the same questions prior to the interview, and additional probing questions were asked based on their responses. The questions, in order, were:

1. What are the top criminal justice needs in Ohio?
2. We are interested in opportunities you see for collaboration within your field as well as across the justice system. Please identify gaps where you believe improved partnerships would be beneficial.
3. What information would be helpful in your current position?
4. If you had a pot of money:
 - a. Within your agency, what area would you allocate monies to?
 - b. How would you allocate funds for the overall justice system?
 - c. What role should federal grant programs play in funding local and state programs?

A total of 23 interviews were conducted between May –June, 2011 with key stakeholders in fields that touched many areas of Ohio’s justice system. Interviewees were executives in the following areas:

- Law enforcement
- Judicial/court system
- Mental health services
- Corrections and community corrections
- Legislation
- Pharmacy Board
- Drug and alcohol addiction services
- Youth services
- Crime victim services
- Higher education

The following summary is a representation of information provided by the key informants. These themes were consistently presented during the interviews regardless of the interviewee's field of expertise or area of specialization.

Top Criminal Justice Needs

- 1) **Mental health/substance abuse treatment** and the importance of evidence-based programs and overall research that would lead to appropriate programming and offender placement.
- 2) **Considerations regarding incarceration, sentencing practices, and overcrowding**, particularly with regard to the shift of offenders from the state to local communities.
- 3) **Training and education** for criminal justice practitioners in several areas. Specifically mentioned were law enforcement training in dealing with mentally ill persons and accurately identifying pharmaceutical drugs; education for local agencies on resources available in the community; training for judges regarding programs available to them for sentencing offenders, and education for legislators on potential impacts of legislation being proposed.

Collaboration

- 1) Economic downturn has led to various agencies working together who may not have done so in the past and these collaboration efforts have kept many organizations afloat during times of scarce resources.
- 2) Deeper collaboration efforts are needed but many struggle with what a true collaboration really means amongst varying agency needs and goals.

Funding

- 1) Agencies are being required to do more with less due to operating budgets being slashed.
- 2) Funding for training and education is extremely limited or non-existent but greatly needed for continued professional development.
- 3) Federal funding for locals is too stringent and burdensome. Funding needs to be more flexible in nature with less red tape and reporting requirements.

Data Sharing

- 1) Although not a direct question during the interview, most interviewees talked about their successes or troubles with sharing and receiving pertinent information from other agencies.

Stakeholder surveys

The primary purpose of the stakeholder survey was to assess the priorities and perceived needs of criminal justice stakeholders across Ohio. The survey instrument was developed based in part on information gathered from the key informant interviews. Other sources were also used to develop the survey instrument, including relevant criminal justice data/statistics and information obtained by OCJS administrative and SAC staff due to their involvement in various collaborations, task forces, and commissions.

Questions were asked about priorities and perceived needs across the criminal justice system in general, as well as the nature of existing collaboration efforts, future funding expectations, allocation of criminal justice resources, emerging issues, identification of barriers, and training needs. In addition to these general questions, specific questions were generated that targeted the following stakeholder groups:

- Prevention/diversion/early intervention
- Juvenile justice
- Policing/law enforcement
- Judicial/prosecution/defense
- Corrections/community corrections
- Legislation/government/policy advisor
- Advocate/victim services
- Treatment/service provider
- Academic/researcher
- Offender/ex-offender

Each respondent self-identified to which group they primarily affiliate, although they were allowed to respond to multiple sections if they felt the need.

The survey generated 1,038 responses, of which 1,022 were usable. Law enforcement represented the largest proportion of respondents in the sample (19.9%), followed by corrections/community corrections (19.6%), and treatment/service providers (17.8%).

The following pages summarize the findings of the survey. The sections discuss general statewide criminal justice needs, specific statewide criminal justice needs, needs of specific criminal justice groups, and overall themes.

General statewide criminal justice needs

All respondents were asked to rate a series of statements using a 4-point Likert scale, where 0 was 'not a need' and 3 was 'high priority need'. They were specifically asked "Please indicate the extent to which you believe each item represents a general need for Ohio's criminal justice system."

The three highest-ranking priority needs were:

- 1) Collaboration between systems of care
- 2) Additional resources to fund community-based programs serving justice-involved individuals
- 3) (tie) Collaboration between traditional criminal justice agencies and other stakeholder and interest groups/agencies outside the scope of criminal justice
- 3) (tie) Enhanced communication between agencies to create an interdisciplinary approach to serving individuals

Specific statewide criminal justice needs

All respondents were asked to rate a series of statements using a 4-point Likert scale, where 0 was 'not a need' and 3 was 'high priority need'. They were specifically asked "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following items from a range of specific topic areas represents a statewide need for Ohio's criminal justice system."

The three highest-ranking priority needs were:

- 1) Access to mental health treatment resources and services
- 2) Access to drug and alcohol treatment resources and services
- 3) Support agency staffing levels sufficient to meet agency goals and/or any compliance requirements

Needs of specific criminal justice groups

The following sections identify the needs of the criminal justice system, broken down by specific groups. The same Likert scale was used by respondents to identify the needs of the specific criminal justice groups. Each group was asked to indicate the level to which they believe the items represent a need for their community. The top three needs for each group are identified below.

Law enforcement

- 1) Ability to replace and update operational resources
- 2) Obtain up-to-date equipment
- 3) Sufficient resources to support law enforcement efforts

Judicial/prosecution/defense counsel

- 1) Sufficient resources to support strategies that would reduce recidivism
- 2) Access to relevant data to inform decision-making

3) (Tie) Capability to share data and case information between judge, prosecutor, defense, and other relevant parties

3) (Tie) Sufficient resources to support judicial efforts

Juvenile justice

1) Access to community-based treatment services for youth with alcohol or substance abuse issues

2) Sufficient resources to support justice efforts designed to meet the unique needs of juveniles

3) Access to community-based treatment services for juvenile sex offenders

Corrections/community corrections

1) Access to community-based treatment services for offenders with mental illness

2) Access to community-based treatment services for offenders with alcohol or substance abuse issues

3) Access to necessary reentry services for offenders

In addition, there were three items that were each tied with 51% of respondents who perceived them to be high priority needs. They were: Specialized training or information related to working with offenders with mental illness or dual diagnosis; Diversion of short-term offenders (less than one year) to community-based alternative corrections; Capability to share data and case information between criminal justice stakeholders.

Government/legislative/policy

1) Create linkages for information technology systems between criminal justice agencies and other agencies for purposes of data sharing

2) Use evidence-based practices for criminal justice funding, programming, and service delivery

3) Involvement in strategic planning efforts and coordination with stakeholder groups, associations, task forces, and/or coalitions

Treatment/service provider

1) Sufficient resources to support programs to meet the treatment needs of justice-involved individuals

2) Access to community-based treatment services for offenders with mental illness

3) Access to community-based treatment services for offenders with alcohol or substance abuse issues

Prevention/diversion/early intervention

- 1) Coordination of funding programs that support prevention, diversion, and early intervention services
- 2) Use of evidence-based practices for the delivery of prevention, diversion, and early intervention efforts
- 3) Community-based prevention/early intervention programs

Academic/researcher

- 1) Input/involvement of researchers in early phases of planning for statewide initiatives
- 2) Collection and utilization of outcome and process data measures to inform quality improvement efforts
- 3) Access to data on criminal justice outcome measures

Offender/ex-offender

- 1) Access to community-based programming for offenders and ex-offenders
- 2) Development of individualized service and treatment plans
- 3) Involvement of offenders and ex-offenders in community strategic planning efforts

Advocate/victim services

- 1) Sufficient resources to support efforts designed to meet the needs of victims/vulnerable populations
- 2) Utilize a multi-systemic effort to keep victims safe and/or in violence-free homes
- 3) Access to necessary crisis services for victims

Common themes found in the survey

Despite differences in the needs of the various criminal justice stakeholders, some common themes emerged from the survey responses. They are:

- Need for more community-based programming for both adult and juvenile offenders/ex-offenders, particularly in the areas of mental health and substance abuse
- Need for better access to data and a need to improve data sharing among agencies
- Need for better collaboration and more involvement amongst various stakeholders and coalitions, including those in both the criminal justice and non-criminal justice fields, to improve strategic planning efforts, and to promote the use of an interdisciplinary, multi-systemic approach to serving individuals (victims, offenders).
- Need for identification and use of evidence-based practices in criminal justice programs and service delivery

Focus groups

Information obtained from an initial analysis of survey responses as well as the key informant interviews were used to generate questions for the focus groups. The focus groups were organized based on the region of Ohio from which they came. These groups were divided into four regions: Southwest, Southeast/Columbus, Northwest, and Northeast. Participants were primarily local community stakeholders, although there were some state and federal stakeholders in the groups. They were asked questions related to the criminal justice priority needs previously identified.

Each group was provided with the same four questions. The following summary represents the most common responses provided.

#1. The priority needs identified by the informant group—are these the priority needs in your region?

The group for the most part agreed that the priorities identified by the key informants were the same but raised other issues for their region. They also expanded on several issues. One focus group commented that the core group findings were not balanced throughout the criminal justice system and as a result certain areas were not adequately addressed, such as prevention and prosecution. Another focus group said too little attention was paid to juveniles, and emphasized that the Department of Youth Services needs to be included in a criminal justice strategic plan. Still others suggested that the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections needs to play an integral role in the plan. Others simply stated that the entire continuum needs to be addressed, from prevention to victims to reentry.

The themes that stood out are identified below.

Education/Training

- There is a need for greater awareness of evidence-based practices.
- Education is a critical and ongoing need, and additional training, including multi-disciplinary training, for all practitioners working with justice-involved offenders and victims is necessary for a constantly changing criminal justice system.
- Specific groups, such as law enforcement, victim service providers, and forensic nurses were identified as needing training in targeted areas.

Victims

- There is not enough focus on the needs and resources for victims of crime, especially for juveniles, the elderly, victims of domestic violence, and victims of identity theft and cybercrime.

- Issues with regard to child support were brought up, including the need for reform on sentencing for child support and the improvement of services for custodial and non-custodial parents.

Ex-offender reentry efforts

- Communities lack the capacity to address the needs of reintegrated ex-offenders, and thus, there needs to be a more strategic allocation of resources regarding ex-offender reentry.
- Communities need to be aware of and incorporate non-traditional criminal justice agencies as partners.
- More awareness and resources are needed for special populations reentering the community, such as sex offenders, mentally ill offenders, substance abusing offenders, and domestic violence offenders.
- Ex-offenders re-entering the community have basic needs that must be met, such as transportation and housing. The effects of collateral sanctions on reentry efforts cannot be underestimated.
- Fees such as court costs, reinstatement fees, and child support, often prove problematic for ex-offenders.
- Identifying and teaching peer association for ex-offenders reintegrating back into the community is important for helping offenders understand and cope with relationship issues they may have.

Special populations

- Limited English Proficiency individuals and individuals in the deaf community often lack access to services because of the language barrier they encounter.
- More awareness, resources, and programming are needed for special offender populations. Diversion courts have an impact on many of these populations. For some populations like sex offenders, however, there is a lack of evidence-based practices addressing their unique needs.
- Justice-involved individuals (both victims and offenders/ex-offenders) in rural communities face particular challenges in accessing services such as treatment, housing/shelter, and transportation.
- There is a need to address the issues faced by veterans who commit crimes.
- Children of incarcerated parents need access to more prevention services.

Efficiency and effectiveness

- There is a need to eliminate duplication of services and agency silos to increase the overall efficiency of the criminal justice system.
- Collaboration and integration are vital given the current fiscal state.
- Technology capabilities are lacking, which hinders information sharing.
- Agencies need assistance in collecting and using data to determine if what they are doing is effective.

#2. What needs to be done to better coordinate services and share information in your region?

Collaboration

- Create or expand regional collaboration boards (some called these planning boards or criminal justice oversight boards) because local level agencies are not used to thinking on the regional level. Some discussed using existing boards and coalitions such as reentry coalitions and community correction boards as a framework for building and expanding partnerships.
- Consider creating Regional Planning Units (RPU) in some areas of the state as a tool to identify and address critical local needs.
- Include state-level partners in collaboration boards. OCJS was specifically mentioned as needing to take a leadership role in facilitating regional collaboration amongst state, county, and local agencies.
- Consider including state representatives in meetings, as they are often underutilized.
- Consider including non-traditional agencies as resources, such as the local Department of Education, county commissioners, religious institutions and city planning departments.
- Hold regular meetings between criminal justice agencies on specific populations like the homeless, mentally ill and others. CIT is a model of successful collaboration amongst law enforcement and mental health on a specific population.

Information sharing and resources

- Funding and other resources need to be identified in the community and matched to the appropriate populations and/or regions to be served. This information should be made easily available to locals. OCJS was identified as taking a lead role in this endeavor.
- Some suggested the need to establish a centralized criminal justice database for the state of Ohio. Others felt that much more thought needs to go into such a system, and that stakeholders

need to carefully consider what they want to know and what is most meaningful before embarking on such an undertaking.

- An atmosphere needs to be created in which agencies are more comfortable and are willing to share information. This can be hindered when leaders perceive it to be risky, such as when there exists competition for funding or grants.
- Limited access to technology impedes information sharing amongst some agencies. In contrast, some great tools exist for information sharing, such as OHLEG and OLLEISN for law enforcement. These should serve as models for other systems wanting to create data-sharing tools in their field.
- There needs to be a forum that allows for the sharing of knowledge, including training and technical assistance.

Barriers to collaboration and coordination efforts

- Funding competition amongst Ohio regions can impede coordination efforts. Regions should coordinate funding and collaboration especially when agencies within one county are providing services for other counties within the same region.
- Political affiliations can make coordination and collaboration difficult.
- A general lack of sharing information, and furthermore, a lack of trust on information to be shared can impede collaboration.

#3. What needs to happen so that more agencies in your region become evidence-based organizations?

Expand opportunities for researchers/experts and practitioners to engage

- Make better use of colleges and universities and increase dialogue and collaboration with these organizations. Create opportunities for researchers and practitioners to have dialogues, such as a practitioner roundtable for practitioners to meet with university researchers to discuss problems and needs.
- Increase the use of experts outside the criminal justice field, such as psychologists, nurses and other practitioners.
- Allow a forum for researchers to highlight their work as well as best practices in a format that serves the needs of practitioners and decision-makers
- Link struggling agencies and programs with others that are doing well to serve as mentors.

Increase awareness of and access to evidence-based practices

- OCJS should advertise outside trainings on evidence-based practices, or EBP, or even create trainings on EBPs so that agencies gain a better understanding of what it means to be an evidence-based program, how to implement programming and how to maintain fidelity to the chosen model.
- OCJS should create and maintain EBP resources, such as a website that identifies research-based programs and practices in the criminal justice field.
- OCJS should highlight successful programs, practices, and/or studies, and make these available to its constituents in some format, such as a listserv, the OCJS Criminal Justice Bulletin, the OCJS website, or other format.
- Financial and technical resources should be provided to implement and maintain EBP.
- Consider using the Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services concept of the Coordinating Centers of Excellence (CCOEs) to promote the implementation of EBPs.

Tie funding to use of evidence-based practices

- The use of EBPs should be required to receive funding and considered as priority in grant selection process.
- Funded agencies should be required to collect data and monitor program progress by keeping stats and data on the programs they implement.

Barriers to evidence-based practices

- There is a fear that too stringent a focus on EBP will impede on the ability for new and more innovative programs to be funded, especially for programs that serve underrepresented populations.
- EBPs are limited in some areas of the criminal justice system, including domestic violence and violent offenders.
- Leaders need to see the incentive for a change from the way they currently operate.
- EBPs can be difficult to implement, as they are not implemented in a vacuum but need to be considered within the larger context.
- Agencies need assistance with strategic planning, collecting data, conducting a program assessment, etc.—all core elements of implementing an EBP.

#4. What has to be in place for your region to more effectively plan for meeting future needs?

Staying informed and informing others

- Organize regional meetings to encourage networking and the sharing of ideas, resources, and programming.
- Open communication with state legislatures and invite them to committee meetings. Increase their awareness of what is taking place in the community, and present them with solutions, not just problems. Attend legislative hearings. Reach out to Legislative Services Commission for assistance.
- Take into account the perspective of the actual consumers of programming and treatment on criminal justice issues and needs.
- Include additional links, legislative updates, best practices updates and increase the frequency of the OCJS Criminal Justice Bulletin. Also, increase the number of groups/individuals who receive these notices.
- Increase collection and use of data for evaluation and assessment to plan for future needs.
- Local agencies need to be made aware of emerging criminal justice topics and issues, such as the prescription drug epidemic, the impact of individuals coming out of the criminal justice system, etc.

Building and sustaining partnerships

- Make sure everyone is at the table from the beginning, including non-criminal justice sources that serve the same population, such as the Department of Job and Family Services.
- Tap into volunteers.
- Teach locals how to keep an initiative moving forward and to sustain it over the long term.

IV. Establishing funding priorities

Based on the feedback obtained from local and state criminal justice experts throughout the state, JAG funding priorities were established. There are five program areas of funding, identified below. These program areas span the criminal justice system and allow for JAG funding to be distributed across the entire continuum, which is critical to stakeholders because each program area has its unique needs for which resources are required. These needs were particularly highlighted in the findings of the survey.

The five JAG program areas are:

- A. Law enforcement programs
- B. Crime prevention programs
- C. Adult and juvenile corrections, community corrections, and reentry programs
- D. Courts, defense, prosecution, and victim services programs
- E. Cross-agency and cross-system collaboration, training, and research programs

Across the five program areas, three priorities emerged as common to all. These robustly reflect the general and specific needs identified by the criminal justice community. They are:

1. Training and education
2. A focus on special populations ('special' has a broad interpretation to include juveniles and those with mental illness, among others)
3. Identification and implementation of appropriate evidence-based programs

Taken together, these combine to form the structure of the JAG strategic funding plan. Each JAG funding category will be defined in turn. In addition, a special JAG category on research highlights emerging criminal justice trends in Ohio. This is discussed in section V.

A. Law enforcement programs

The top needs for law enforcement focus on having sufficient resources to carry out their daily tasks and to conduct investigations.

Funding priority areas identified for the law enforcement program area are:

- Equipment and technology improvement. The top needs for law enforcement, based on the survey results, were to replace and update operational resources and equipment. Thus,

equipment and technology improvement were included as a priority funding area within the category of law enforcement.

- Training and education. Training and education is a theme that has been identified as a priority across all JAG program areas.
- Resources to initiate and enhance investigations. Providing resources to support law enforcement efforts was identified as the third highest priority for law enforcement in the survey.
- Interacting with specialized, underserved, and juvenile populations. Interacting with special populations is a theme that has been identified as a priority across all JAG program areas.
- Policing strategies that are data-driven, evidence-based, proactive, and focused. Funding evidence-based programs and strategies is a priority across all JAG program areas, and to assist agencies in identifying evidence-based strategies, OCJS provides in the Request for Proposal (RFP) a list of resources that identify exemplary law enforcement programs, including OJP's Crime Solutions website, the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix, and the Smart Policing Initiative website. More on evidence-based programs is discussed in Section VII.

To promote the development of data-driven strategies and policies, OCJS requires any law enforcement agencies requesting funding to report their crime statistics (summary UCR or NIBRS).

B. Crime prevention programs

The identified needs for the area of crime prevention are generally focused on prevention, diversion, and intervention. Specific evidence-based or model programs are listed in the RFP. In addition, links are provided within the RFP for websites that identify evidence-based practices in crime prevention, including the Blue Print for Violence Prevention, OJP's Crime Solutions, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy Inventory of Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and Promising Practices website.

Funding priorities identified for the crime prevention program area are:

- Community crime prevention programs. Model programs such as Communities that Care (CTC), or that incorporate crime prevention specialists, are given priority.
- Family-based prevention and intervention programs. Evidence-based programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Multisystemic Therapy

(MST), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14, and Strong African-American Families, are given priority.

- School-based delinquency prevention programs, including after-school programs and school resource officers. Model programs such as Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Safe Dates, Life Skills Training, Good Behavior Game, and targeted truancy interventions, are given priority.
- Evidence-based youth mentoring programs, including those addressing special populations such as children of incarcerated parents. Priority is placed on those mentoring programs identified as evidence-based, and emphasis is on special populations, which was identified as a priority across all JAG funding areas. Examples of special populations include children of incarcerated parents.
- Training and education. Training and education is a theme that has been identified as a priority across all JAG program areas.

C. Adult and juvenile corrections, community corrections, and reentry programs

The top concern for the corrections and juvenile corrections community focuses on having sufficient services in place to target criminogenic needs and improve offender assessment. Specific populations are identified, including mentally ill and substance-abusing offenders and ex-offenders, as well as youth.

Links are provided within the RFP for resources that identify evidence-based practices, including OJP's Crime Solutions, The Principles of Effective Intervention, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections' Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections, the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse, and the SAMHSA's Guide to Evidence-Based Practices.

Specific priority areas identified for adult and juvenile corrections, community corrections, and reentry programs are:

- Substance abuse and mental health treatment programs for offenders. Resources for this special population were identified across all JAG categories as a top need. This priority area extends to the ex-offender population as well.
- Other evidence-based programs for offenders. Having access to programming for offenders in general was a high priority for stakeholders.

- Reentry programming and services. Communities generally lack the capacity to address the many and varied needs of ex-offenders. This was a priority echoed by nearly everyone involved in the correctional field.
- Community control, transitional control, and post-release control programs. Having access to community-based programming for offenders, including special needs offenders, was identified as a high need.
- Treatment and services for youth. Due to their unique needs, treatment and services for youth are in some ways even more limited than for the adult population, and for this reason was seen as a funding priority.
- Training and education. Training and education is a theme that has been identified as a priority across all JAG program areas.

D. Courts, Defense, Prosecution, and Victim Services Programs

Although this category is quite broad, the goal of these programs is to support evidence-based programs that contribute to the reduction of crime, enhance public safety, to promote the fair treatment of victims, and to promote the fair treatment of defendants/offenders. The top needs for courts, prosecution, and defense are awareness of and access to data and resources that allow for informed decision-making. The top needs identified for victims included sufficient resources to support efforts designed to meet their needs and to keep them safe, particularly in times of crisis.

Links are provided within the RFP for resources that identify evidence-based practices in the judicial and victim fields, including OJP's Crime Solutions, the Domestic Violence Evidence Project, the Principles of Effective Intervention, and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections's Evidence-Based Practices in Community Correction.

Priority areas identified for the courts, defense, prosecution, and victim services program area are:

- Specialized dockets. These dockets typically target special populations, such as the mentally ill, substance-abusing, veteran, and juvenile populations, which is a funding priority across all JAG program areas. The specialized dockets must be actively working with the Ohio Supreme Court to pass their certification process, which ensures that the courts are engaging in a model practice.
- Diversion programs. Diversion programs aim to keep low-level and first-time offenders out of the juvenile and criminal justice system and instead get them the services and oversight they

need within the community. Diversion of short-term offenders to community-based alternatives was found in the survey results to be a high priority for many reasons, including relieving overburdened jails and prisons according to key informant interviews. Additionally, access for offenders to community-based treatment was identified in both the survey and the focus groups as a high priority.

- Community control, transitional control, and post-release control programs that implement and adhere to the principles of effective intervention. Having access to community-based programming for offenders, including special needs offenders, was identified as a high need.
- Victim services programs. Survey and focus group respondents identified the need for sufficient resources to support efforts designed to meet the needs of victims and vulnerable populations.
- Training and education. Training and education is a theme that has been identified as a priority across all JAG program areas.

E. Cross-agency and cross-system collaboration programs, training programs, and research

Many concerns were identified in the interviews, survey, and focus groups regarding the difficult, yet necessary task of building and sustaining collaborations. The importance of collaboration, both within and across systems, cannot be underestimated. Given this, a JAG category was created to provide resources to communities that wish to facilitate partnership building and data sharing. This category also provides resources for cross-system training, which both survey and focus group respondents identified as a top training need. Finally, this JAG category includes research. While research itself was not identified as a top need in the survey, focus group respondents heavily emphasized the need for research to identify best practices on emerging topics in Ohio. Therefore, specific research topics are targeted in the RFP. More detail on these emerging areas for research is provided in Section V.

Priority areas identified for the cross-agency and cross-system collaboration, training and research program area are:

- Development and enhancement of cross-agency and cross-system collaborations. Based on feedback from the interviews, survey, and focus groups, this priority area focuses on activities that facilitate the building and sustaining of community collaborations.

- Cross-agency and cross-system training. Both survey and focus group respondents identified the importance of multi-disciplinary training for all practitioners given the overlapping population that different disciplines serve.
- Implementing or enhancing cross-agency and cross-system data sharing. Data sharing was noted as a top priority for interviewees as well as survey and focus group respondents. Most noted the difficulties that are encountered when agencies attempt to share data, and thus resources are provided to help move data sharing forward.
- Research on emerging issues. The research category focuses on emerging issues that are of great importance to Ohioans. The following topics were identified by researchers, experts in the field, and the Governor's Office as statewide priorities. More detail on the research in these areas can be found in Section V.
 - Human trafficking
 - Crisis intervention teams (CIT)
 - Specialty courts
 - Cybercrime
 - Reentry
 - Justice Reinvestment Initiative
 - Heroin and opiate abuse

V. Identification of emerging issues for research

The research category focuses on emerging issues that are of great importance to Ohioans. The following topics were identified by researchers, stakeholders and experts in the field, and the Governor's Office as statewide priorities.

- Human trafficking. In 2012, Governor John Kasich formed the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force to address the issue of human trafficking in Ohio. It is estimated that over 1,000 Ohio children become victims, and that over 3,000 more are at-risk. Governor Kasich is committed to addressing this problem. Research is sought on a variety of topics in this area, including a detailed investigation of trafficking victims, and an analysis of human trafficking laws and their impact on outcomes.
- Crisis intervention teams (CIT). Ohio is a leader in the CIT movement, yet there are still questions to be answered regarding their impact on the safety and overall well-being of individuals, law enforcement, and the community. An evaluation of CIT effectiveness, or of the components of CIT that are associated with the most positive outcomes, is desired.
- Specialty courts. Emerging specialized dockets, such as veteran's courts, reentry courts, and medication-assisted treatment courts, are being implemented across Ohio using the drug court model. As more funding continues to support the creation of these dockets, research is needed to evaluate their overall effectiveness as well as effectiveness of specific components of these programs.
- Cybercrime. Cybercrime was specifically identified during the focus groups as an area of increasing concern. A study on the current state of cybercrime, its victims, and its offenders in Ohio is wanted.
- Reentry. Successful offender re-integration is of the utmost importance to the citizens in our communities, and is of great importance to the Governor. Through Second Chance Act funding, millions of dollars have poured into the state to create reentry coalitions to provide coordinated services to ex-offenders. An evaluation is desired to look at the impact of a well-established reentry program in Ohio. Alternately, given the paucity of treatment and programming for special populations in general, an evaluation to identify specific needs and gaps in services for this group of individuals is also a priority.
- Justice Reinvestment Initiative. The passage of House Bill 86 in September 2011 changed the face of criminal and prison law in Ohio by increasing rehabilitative treatment over punishment for low-level offenders. The law emphasizes the diversion of low-level offenders from the prison system and into community programs designed to integrate them as productive citizens. Three years later, an

analysis of the impact of House Bill 86 is desired to indicate its effects on the prison population, the local criminal justice system, and on sentencing practices and the courts.

- Heroin and opiate abuse. Under Governor John Kasich, the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team was established to address the continuing epidemic of misuse and abuse and overdose from prescription opiates. Legislation was developed to minimize the availability of prescription drugs from illicit sources. As a result of this legislation and other enforcement, prevention, education, and treatment efforts, arrest and treatment data suggest that prescription drug abuse is starting to decline. An unintended consequence of this, however, is the recent rise of heroin overdose deaths, due in part to increased availability and decreased cost of the drug. A study is needed to evaluate existing strategies to combat the heroin epidemic in Ohio, including strategies in the areas of interdiction and enforcement, treatment, education and awareness, and recovery supports. Additionally, given the recent law allowing law enforcement to administer naloxone to persons experiencing opioid overdoses, an evaluation of the use of naloxone by law enforcement is desired.

VI. Coordinating criminal justice resources through collaboration

OCJS has always emphasized the importance of building collaborations by requiring collaboration boards and letters of support for all grant-funded projects. Responses from the key informant interviews and surveys, however, really underscored the importance of collaboration. Collaboration between systems of care and collaboration to create an interdisciplinary approach to serving individuals were two of the three top-ranking priority needs found in the survey. Further discussions among focus group participants highlighted ways in which OCJS could help coordinate efforts.

Several action steps resulted from these discussions. The JAG RFP was modified to include the cross-system and cross-agency collaboration program area, which allows for communities to request funding to facilitate partnership-building and data sharing around a given criminal justice area. An example of a successful funded program is the *cross-systems mapping initiative*, described below. Also, OCJS spearheaded efforts to engage communities in collaboration-building initiatives such as the Ohio Community Initiative to Reduce Violence, the Ohio Strategic Multi-Agency Research Team, and the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science. These are described in the following pages, along with other ongoing coordination efforts in which OCJS supports or plays an active role.

Local efforts to coordinate criminal justice resources through collaboration

One way that JAG funds are coordinated with other funds at the local level is through the use of Regional Planning Units (RPU) or local coordinating councils. These operate in Franklin (Columbus), Cuyahoga (Cleveland), and Lucas (Toledo) counties to promote and foster cooperation and coordination amongst governmental units and agencies, and improve the justice system through planning, analysis, technical assistance, and information management. RPUs conduct their own criminal justice assessments to determine the best use of justice funds at the local level. Information gleaned from these assessments is used to project spending trends for current and future grant cycles.

An example of a recently funded local effort to promote collaboration and coordinate resources is the *Ohio Cross-Systems Mapping Initiative*, which was funded in the newly created cross-system and cross-agency collaboration program area. This project aids communities in strengthening local strategies to address the interface of criminal justice and behavioral health systems for justice-involved persons with mental illness. Through the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence, which is operated by the Northeast Ohio Medical University, this JAG-funded program provides technical assistance to counties by promoting dialogue and communication among stakeholders, identifying challenges and

opportunities, and creating a plan for action. It requires significant interaction and involvement of criminal justice and mental health leadership. Thus far, four counties have been provided technical assistance, and additional counties are being considered.

Another example of a JAG-funded program that promotes collaboration and the coordination of resources is the *Ohio Community Initiative to Reduce Violence*, or OCIRV. OCIRV is a violence reduction strategy based on the Boston Ceasefire initiative of the 1990s that relies heavily on the coordination of local, state, and federal law enforcement, social services, and community members. Implementation of this initiative involves intensive strategic planning, as well as the identification and coordination of a large number of resources. As a result of these collaborations, some cities have won state and federal grants for continued implementation and expansion of efforts. OCJS played the key role in spearheading this effort throughout the state by providing technical assistance, training, and some funding. Currently, Canton, Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown are implementing CIRV, and other Ohio cities are implementing versions of this strategy.

State efforts to coordinate criminal justice resources through collaboration

Building state-level partnerships for the coordination of criminal justice resources is crucial. It allows for a better understanding of existing gaps and duplications in resources. Several initiatives that promote state-level resource sharing are described below.

Interagency Victim Assistance Coordinating Council (IVAAC). IVAAC is a partnership between OCJS, which distributes JAG and VAWA STOP funding, the Ohio Attorney General's Office, which distributes VOCA/SVAA funding and victim compensation funds, and the Ohio Department of Health which distributes VAWA Rape Prevention Education and Sexual Assault Services Act and Prevention Health and Health Services Block Grant, Sex Offense Set-Aside funds. The goal of this partnership is to coordinate these victim funding streams to reduce duplication and maximize the spread of funds to qualified victim service programs.

Similarly, but in a less formal manner, OCJS and the Ohio Attorney General's Office work together to provide funding to agencies that support anti-human trafficking efforts. In addition to coordinating JAG resources with other state and federal resources, the two agencies also collaborate on federal grant applications.

Ohio Strategic Multi-Agency Research Team (O-SMART). OCJS recently convened a partnership of traditional and non-traditional state criminal justice agencies who have shared interest and

responsibilities. Called O-SMART, this partnership collaborates on criminal justice issues, coordinates criminal justice resources, and solves problems in a comprehensive manner by reducing the silos that can sometimes plague state, federal and local government. O-SMART has two standing committees: the executive committee that provides governance and sets policy direction, and a research subcommittee whose purpose is to inform the executive committee. The membership of O-SMART currently consists of the Office of Criminal Justice Services, the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, the Department of Youth Services, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Medicaid.

VII. Facilitation of evidence-based practices

The Office of Justice Programs strongly emphasizes the use of data and evidence in policy-making and program development in criminal and juvenile justice. OCJS also strongly believes in the importance of funding evidence-based practices both as a matter of increasing safety to Ohioans and as a matter of being good stewards of grant dollars. Throughout all JAG program areas, OCJS prioritizes funding projects that are evidence-based and provides resources to direct readers to information on specific evidence-based programs and practices.

Ohio's criminal justice stakeholders also recognize the importance of engaging in evidence-based practices, as evidenced by the focus group responses. They indicated the desire to gain a better understanding of the basic elements of an evidence-based program, to identify appropriate evidence-based practices in their field, and learn how to implement these practices in their communities. Furthermore, they pinpointed OCJS as the vehicle through which such learning could be provided. In response, OCJS spearheaded the following:

Ohio Strategic Planning Conference. OCJS convened local, state, and federal stakeholders for a conference in November 2011. Experts in the field presented on evidence-based practices that ran the spectrum of criminal and juvenile justice.

Ohio Consortium of Crime Science (OCCS). OCJS, in partnership with the University of Cincinnati, created the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science, or OCCS. The OCCS is a state-level consortium of over 40 researchers from 13 colleges and universities in Ohio whose goal it is to provide research, evaluation, data analysis, and technical support at no cost to local Ohio agencies who seek assistance. Through the OCCS, local researchers are paired with local practitioners based on their area of expertise and geographic location. A small stipend is provided to the researcher who undertakes the request for assistance. The benefits of this researcher-practitioner partnership are mutual—the Consortium strengthens individual and institutional capacities for research and learning and enhances public knowledge on important criminal justice issues. It also aims to foster sustained partnerships between researchers and practitioner, thus leading to a more effective and efficient criminal justice system.

Evidence-based practices website. OCJS created a website of practitioner-friendly resources specific to the identification of evidence-based practices specific to criminal justice and related fields. This source is also identified in the JAG RFP. The site is continuously updated as more relevant resources become available.

Other OCJS procedures that promote the use of evidence-based practices in JAG-funded programs include the following:

- The use of outside subject matter experts to review all JAG proposals
- The use of internal subject matter experts (who are part of the Statistical Analysis Center) to oversee the external peer review process and to provide recommendations during Director's Review.
- The facilitation of a close SAA-SAC partnership to identify evidence-based programs and practices and to encourage data-driven priorities.

VIII. Updating the strategic plan

The JAG strategic plan will be updated every four years. The primary means of gathering input from stakeholders will be through implementation of a survey. Future surveys will address the following areas of interest: priority areas and funding needs of criminal justice entities, collaboration efforts, emerging trends, identification of evidence-based practices.

Another data source for informing the Ohio JAG strategic plan is the National Criminal Justice Association's Midwestern regional caucuses, held annually at the National Forum on Criminal Justice. Here, State Administering Agency executives and staff convene with Statistical Analysis Center directors and other stakeholders to hold discussions of regional priorities. Although not a thorough representation of the concerns of any state or region, the results of the regional caucuses are offered as a representation of the current issues each region brings to the discussion.

The strategic plan will be developed and posted on the OCJS website and will be made available to BJA for placement on its website.