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## New Strategy for Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Allocations

The Board of State and Community Corrections in January approved a new strategy for awarding federal justice department grants to focus on education, gangs and crime prevention.

Communities applying for the approximately \$20 million in grant funding now also must form committees of stakeholders, including community members, law enforcement and representatives of nonprofit organizations, to collaborate on how the money can be used most effectively locally under the new guidelines.

The move is a departure from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) allocations of previous years when the money funded marijuana suppression programs, the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting program and multi-community crime task forces. With a legislative mandate to fund programs that are proven to reduce recidivism, the BSCC surveyed stakeholders and the public and used their responses to develop a new strategic plan.

The 2013 stakeholder survey showed increasing interest in reducing gang violence through counseling programs and substance abuse treatment, establishment of problem-solving courts that provide sustained contact with the offender such as those dealing with mental health and domestic violence issues, and developing alternatives to incarceration. Crime prevention and education were the top two public safety priorities.

BSCC staff will work with an Executive Steering Committee to write the Request for Funding Proposal using the new strategy. It will be considered by the Board at a future meeting.

While \$20 million is being distributed in the current fiscal year, the amount of money available for the 2014-15 fiscal year will not be known until the federal budget is approved this spring.

The JAG grant is a federally funded public safety program through the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The Board of State and Community Corrections is the administering agency for a host of public safety grants. Established in 2012, the BSCC also serves as an independent body providing realignment leadership and technical assistance to the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems.

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