

2021 POLICY BRIEF



Sustain Justice Assistance for Local Communities: Support the Byrne JAG and SCAAP Programs

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your members of Congress, especially those who serve on the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees, to provide sustained funding for U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) programs that support county courts, local law enforcement and other justice-related local functions in the annual appropriations process.

BACKGROUND:

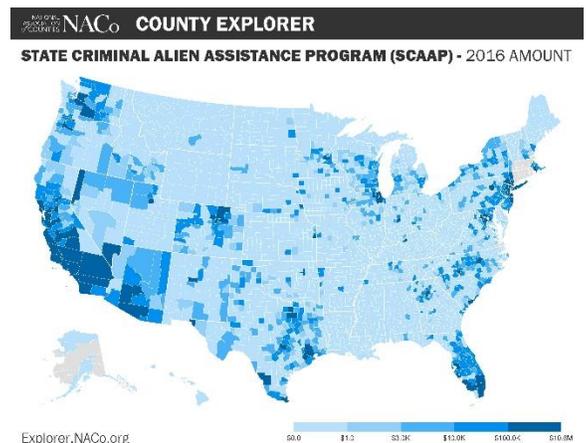
The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) funds programs that provide critical support to county courts and corrections, juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies. Among these programs are the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne JAG), which helps counties across the nation utilize emerging and evidence-based approaches to the public safety challenges facing their jurisdictions, and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses counties for costs associated with the incarceration of undocumented immigrants.

Counties work together with all levels of government to improve public safety and these federal programs are essential to nationwide efforts to safely lower jail populations, fight recidivism and combat drug trafficking while providing treatment and alternatives to incarceration. These programs have also been the catalyst for many initiatives that have brought about cost savings to taxpayers.

For FY 2021, Byrne JAG is funded at \$484 million, a decrease in \$63 million compared to FY 2020 funding. SCAAP was once funded at \$545 million in FY 2002 but has since been decreased and is currently funded at \$244 million for FY 2021.

Collectively, the nation's 3,069 counties spend over \$70 billion each year on public safety and court-related activities.

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) grant programs are a needed catalyst for, and an essential part of, local efforts to safely lower jail populations, fight recidivism and combat drug trafficking while providing treatment and alternatives to incarceration.



Total 2016 SCAAP funding, by county.

Source: NACo Analysis of U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance data

KEY TALKING POINTS

Our nation's 3,069 counties spend over \$70 billion of their total local government expenditures each year on public safety and court-related activities, and are directly responsible for juvenile delinquency prevention, crime prevention, law enforcement, victim services, prosecution, indigent defense, drug and other problem-solving courts, corrections, drug and substance abuse treatment and post-correctional support services.

The federal contribution to state and local criminal justice services is very small (only 3.3 percent of the amount spent by state and local governments according to a 2008 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics), but it is a much-needed spark that allows state and local governments to test new initiatives and coordinate across the justice system to find solutions that work.

U.S. Department of Justice grant programs have been the catalyst for many initiatives that have brought about cost savings to taxpayers while reducing prison and jail overcrowding, combatting the cycle of recidivism and reducing the rate of incarceration.

Funding for these programs provides the foundation for our nation's counties to build robust capabilities needed to fight crime, manage better outcomes for youth, efficiently administer our diverse criminal justice systems and achieve the highest level of public safety.

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