

# BYRNE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INNOVATION (BCJI) PROGRAM



Safety and perceptions of safety are critical components of vibrant communities and every bit as important as quality affordable housing, good jobs, and high performing schools. Improving the welfare and security of local residents in a way that lasts requires a focus on the physical condition of places, the quality of the connections between people in a community, and the strength and tone of relations between local law enforcement and the people they serve. When police officers and residents operate from a position of trust and mutual respect, there is more room for meaningful collaboration, and in increased opportunity to de-escalate interactions that could otherwise end in tragedy. The Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) program helps urban, rural, and tribal communities develop comprehensive, evidence-informed strategies that target areas with persistently high crime rates while helping law enforcement and residents work together to rebuild trust and the economic and social fabric of neighborhoods.

## What is the BCJI Program?

BCJI is a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The initiative's goal is to make some of the country's highest crime communities safer by mobilizing residents, law enforcement, and other organizational partners to pursue coordinated strategies in "hot spot" locations. Often these locations are streets or intersections where crime has remained high for years, and that hinder the broader community's opportunities for stability and revitalization.

The program emphasizes place-based, data-driven, community oriented, and cost effective cross-sector strategies that reduce and prevent crime and advance neighborhood revitalization goals.

Eligible applicants include units of local governments, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations (including tribal non-profit organizations), and federally recognized Indian tribal governments.

The BCJI model is comprised of the following core program elements:

- Place based: Targets crime "hot spots".
- Data-driven problem solving: Researchers work with partners using data to analyze problems and identify evidence-informed solutions.
- Community-oriented: Residents select strategies in partnership with law enforcement.

## What are the outcomes?

Successful safety approaches must seek to improve community policing and must be predicated upon consistent and sustained interactions with entire communities for the purpose of establishing a foundation of partnership, trust, and empowerment.

### **BCJI is producing significant results in communities, including:**

#### **■ Dramatic decreases in crime around problem spots**

- In Evansville, IN, reported crimes dropped 42% in the BCJI target area from 2013-2015.
- Five hot spots in the Milwaukee, WI, BCJI target area experienced a 23% drop in violent crime, compared to a 1% increase in the city as a whole from 2013-2015.

#### **■ A resurgence of real estate development and business activity in neighborhoods previously deemed unsafe**

- BCJI partners in Providence, RI demolished eight of the highest crime-producing properties in the area hard hit by the foreclosure crisis and transformed others into affordable housing.
- In Charleston, WV, a bar well known to police and neighbors for drugs and prostitution was shut down by the BCJI team. The property is now an eatery, popular among residents of a nearby senior housing complex.



#### **■ More collaboration between police and residents to increase officer and community safety**

- More than 100 residents in Seattle, WA participated in a nine-month training program and now comprise a diverse Community Task Force that leads crime reduction strategies in hot spots known for youth violence.
- In Syracuse, NY, residents led 20 projects that brought previously fearful or distrustful people out of their homes to neighborhood events such as a movie night in a local park and a fire safety workshop.
- Cost effective: Maximizes local resources and produces lasting solutions.

## What has been LISC's involvement?

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) provides a range of training and technical assistance services to BCJI grantees selected between 2012 and 2018. Enhanced by partnerships with nationally known criminal justice and community development experts, LISC's technical assistance has drawn on our

35-year history of supporting comprehensive neighborhood revitalization, including community safety efforts. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) began providing technical assistance to new BCJI sites in 2019.

## The Sites (2012-2017)



Since FY 2012, the inaugural year of funding, Congress has appropriated \$160 million for the BCJI program. BJA has awarded nine rounds of grants to 113 communities in 38 states. BCJI efforts are underway in cities of diverse size and demographics including rural and tribal areas. Funding is provided in different categories to conduct robust planning and in some cases to also implement evidence-informed and innovative strategies.

### ● BCJI LIST OF SITES

Selma, AL	Baton Rouge, LA	Hauppauge, NY
Tempe, AZ	Lowell, MA	Hempstead, NY
San Diego, CA	Springfield, MA	Dayton, OH
Corning, CA	Worcester, MA	Hillsboro, OH
Los Angeles, CA	Boston, MA	Youngstown, OH
San Francisco, CA	Chelsea, MA	Cleveland, OH
Oakland, CA	Baltimore, MD	Cincinnati, OH
Hayward, CA	Hyattsville, MD	Tulsa, OK
Escondido, CA	Belfast, ME	Portland, OR
Towaoc, CO	Battle Creek, MI	Harrisburg, PA
Denver, CO	Flint, MI	Philadelphia, PA
New Haven, CT	Detroit, MI	Erie, PA
Norwalk, CT	Minneapolis, MN	Providence, RI
Hartford, CT	Saint Paul, MN	Columbia, SC
Washington, DC	Kansas City, MO	Lancaster, SC
Tampa, FL	St. Louis, MO	Spartanburg, SC
Jacksonville, FL	Clarksdale, MS	Rapid City, SD
Miami, FL	Meridian, MS	Nashville, TN
West Palm Beach, FL	Durham, NC	Austin, TX
Atlanta, GA	Lumberton, NC	San Antonio, TX
Conyers, GA	Omaha, NE	Richmond, VA
Chicago, IL	Phillipsburg, NJ	Alexandria, VA
Evansville, IN	Newark, NJ	Seattle, WA
Indianapolis, IN	Albuquerque, NM	Milwaukee, WI
Wichita, KS	Buffalo, NY	Madison, WI
Berea, KY	New York, NY	Charleston, WV
Shreveport, LA	Rochester, NY	Huntington, WV

## What can Congress do?

LISC urges Congress to adopt legislation that authorizes the BCJI program and provide a robust program appropriation of not less than \$22 million in the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Bill.

*LISC is a national nonprofit housing and community development intermediary with offices in 35 different cities and a national rural network of 89 organizations.*

*For more information, please contact Nicole Barcliff at [nbarcliff@lisc.org](mailto:nbarcliff@lisc.org).*

*Additional information on LISC Safety Initiative is available at [www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/safe-neighborhoods/](http://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/safe-neighborhoods/).*