

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Division



Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

**State Strategic Plan
FY2014 – FY2018**

Executive Summary

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs / Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Division (ADECA/LETS) supports state and local criminal justice projects by subgranting federal dollars from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG). In order to facilitate the efficient use of public funds, ADECA/LETS has developed a strategic plan to guide funding priorities and to identify problem areas that must be addressed by criminal justice stakeholders through these grant funds.

The Division's coordination with federal, state and local criminal justice partners, along with the statewide strategic plan and program performance measures will allow Alabama to responsibly and effectively distribute public funds through a variety of proven and effective programming areas.

Strategy Development Coordination

In the development of Alabama's FY2014-2018 State Strategy, a variety of information-gathering techniques were utilized to identify successful federal, state and local efforts and to respond to the specific needs and concerns of the Criminal Justice Community throughout Alabama. Throughout this process, the Division endeavored to include as many points of view as possible and all significant interests. This information was compared to criminal justice data gathered over a period of years. This plan examines the nature and extent of the identified problems; analyses drug trends in the state; and summarizes current efforts and promotes coordination of efforts.

Over a period of months spanning 2013 and 2014, as part of the state's planning process for its federal Byrne JAG allocation, ADECA/LETS began working with the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) to develop a useful cost effective stakeholder engagement strategy. As part of this engagement strategy, LETS sought input from traditional and non-traditional partners from across the state on:

- 1) priority project types and initiatives within the seven Byrne JAG purpose areas,
- 2) priority purpose areas for funding,
- 3) previous strategic planning priorities, and
- 4) most pressing state and local issues.

Working together with the NCJA, a survey instrument, designed to gather input from across the stakeholder community, was developed. On behalf of ADECA/LETS, NCJA distributed the survey to state and local stakeholder groups through list-serves, professional associations and e-mail databases beginning on April 21, 2014. The survey closed on May 19, 2014 with 275 responses from around the state and across all elements of the justice system. The research staff at NCJA

collected and tabulated the results and provided a detailed analysis for ADECA/LETS to utilize in its planning efforts.

The survey was designed so that responses could be sorted by function within the criminal justice system. Analysis focused on finding consensus around state and local issues; the Byrne JAG purpose areas most in need of limited funds; and determining which projects in each purpose area were viewed as most critical to Alabama's state and local criminal justice systems.

Findings

Identifying the Most Pressing State and Local Needs

In an effort to get a macro understanding of state and local issues and to ensure that state Byrne JAG investments and priorities are in line with stakeholder identified needs; LETS staff included two questions that asked respondents to prioritize the greatest criminal justice system needs at the state and local levels. Responses and the priorities identified through these questions were very much in line with respondent's prioritization of purpose areas and the prioritized initiatives within purpose areas.

State

Respondents from across the justice system selected three priorities, listed below, as the most pressing criminal justice issues impacting the state's justice systems.

- 1) **Need for Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives (Drug/Crime Prevention, Early Intervention for Drug Addicts)**
- 2) Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism
- 3) Better Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives

Local

Respondents from across the justice system selected the three priorities below as the most pressing criminal justice issues impacting local justice systems.

- 1) **Need for Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives (Drug/Crime Prevention, Early Intervention for Drug Addicts)**
- 2) Better Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
- 3) Jail Overcrowding and Recidivism

Prioritized Purpose Areas and Top Ranked Initiatives

While the majority of survey questions sought to prioritize initiatives within the seven Byrne JAG purpose areas, two questions were designed to address prioritization of the purpose areas themselves. Survey respondents from across the criminal justice system ranked Prevention and Education (Byrne JAG purpose area #3), Law Enforcement (#1) and Prosecution, Court and Indigent Defense (#2) as the top three purpose areas in need of limited Byrne JAG dollars. The top ranked purpose areas demonstrated respondents support for a balanced approach between prevention, treatment and enforcement. Prioritized initiatives within these purpose areas showed further support for balanced approaches to improving public safety and investing JAG dollars. It should be noted that balanced approaches to prevention, enforcement and demand reduction have demonstrated the dual ability to enhance public safety and reduce future justice system expenditures.

1. Prevention and Education

Prevention and Education was selected as the top priority with strong support from across the justice system. Respondents from across the justice system showed a preference for initiatives that prevent youth from entering the justice system. Particular support for Prevention and Education was seen in the Juvenile Justice, Corrections, Community Corrections, Courts, Social Services, Education and Victim Assistance fields.

Within the Prevention and Education Purpose Area the top three investment priorities were as follows:

- 1) Substance Abuse Prevention/Education Projects,**
- 2) School Violence Prevention/Education Projects, and
- 3) Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Projects.

These investment categories were prioritized over other types of initiatives including but not limited to: Gang Prevention/Education Programs, Prescription Drug Prevention/Education Projects and Other Services to Address Gaps in Prevention and Education Programs. Research has shown that effective substance abuse and delinquency prevention initiatives positively impact public safety and save money through reductions in crime, victimization, future incarceration, and involvement with law enforcement and court entities. In addition, cost-benefit analyses have continually shown that effective prevention initiatives have a higher return on investment than initiatives which engage individuals that are already system-involved.

Responses by Sector and Region

Among those working in the non-profit sector the strongest support was seen for School Violence Prevention/Education Projects followed by Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Projects. The greatest support for Substance Abuse Prevention/Education Projects came from among those working for state and local government. While geographic variation did not change the top three priority projects, it did reveal that 34 percent of those serving primarily rural areas selected Prescription Drug Prevention/Education Projects as one of their top two priorities.

Potential Model Programs

Potential model programs State Administering Agencies (SAAs) have used to address similar priority areas: LifeSkills® Training, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Community-Based Mentoring (CBM) Program, Adolescent Transitions Program, Multisystemic Therapy–Substance Abuse

2. Law Enforcement

Receiving consistent support throughout the survey, Law Enforcement was selected as the second most important purpose area. Particular support for Law Enforcement was seen in the Corrections, Community Corrections, Prosecution, Victim Assistance, Forensic Science and Social Service fields. Within the Law Enforcement Purpose Area the top three investment priorities were as follows:

- 1) **Law Enforcement Equipment Purchases**,
- 2) Law Enforcement Training, and
- 3) Drug Enforcement Projects.

These investment categories were prioritized over other types of initiatives including but not limited to: Gang and Gun Enforcement Projects, Prescription Drug Projects and Community/Place Based Policing Projects. Respondents from the Law Enforcement community selected the following as their top three priorities: 1) Law Enforcement Equipment Purchases, 2) Law Enforcement Training and 3) Drug Enforcement Projects.

Responses by Sector and Region

Among local law enforcement respondents, the strongest support was seen for Law Enforcement Equipment Purchases with 46 percent of respondents selecting this as their highest priority. Similar support was seen from respondents within primarily rural areas, with 51 percent prioritizing equipment purchases over any other type of initiative. Among state level law enforcement the greatest support was seen for Drug Enforcement Projects. The strongest support for Law Enforcement Training was

seen among respondents from urban areas with service populations over 75,000 residents.

3. Prosecution, Court and Indigent Defense

Selected as the third priority purpose area, Prosecution, Court and Indigent Defense received particular support from the Courts, Defense, Law Enforcement, Substance Abuse and Social Service fields. Within the Prosecution, Court and Indigent Defense purpose area, the top three investment priorities were as follows:

- 1) **Specialty Courts (i.e., Drug Courts, Mental Health Courts, Veteran’s Courts),**
- 2) Specialized Prosecution, and
- 3) Training.

These investment categories were prioritized over other types of initiatives including but not limited to: Pre-Trial Diversion Programming, Technology Upgrades and Specialized Indigent Defense Programs. In addition to Specialty Courts and Specialized Prosecution, respondents from the Prosecution, Courts and Indigent Defense sectors selected Pre-Trial Diversion as the third priority.

Within this purpose area, prioritized projects showed a balance between initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism/re-arrest and targeted enforcement. Research has shown specialty courts are effective at reducing recidivism, improving accountability and ultimately at saving taxpayers money by reducing future system expenditures. In addition, these courts have been shown effective with challenging populations and those populations with the highest likelihood of re-arrest.

Within this Purpose Area involved stakeholders prioritized initiatives in the following way:

Courts	Prosecution	Indigent Defense
1) Specialty Courts	1) Specialized Prosecution Initiatives	1) Specialty Courts
2) Technology Upgrades	2) Specialty Courts	2) Training
3) Specialized Prosecution Initiatives	3) Training	3) Technology Upgrades

Responses by Sector and Region

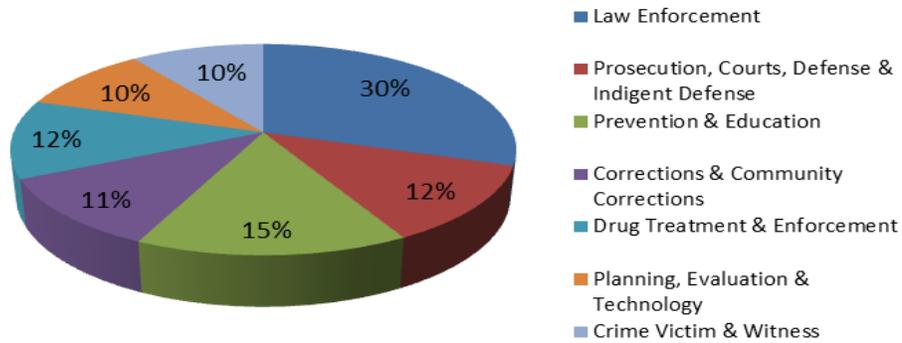
For respondents at the local level, Training and Technology Upgrades were seen as the top two priorities. Among those working for the state, Specialty Courts and Training were prioritized. Specialty Courts also saw strong support from those living in urban areas. This group also showed strong support for increased Training

resources. Among respondents from rural areas there was strong support for Training and Technology Upgrades

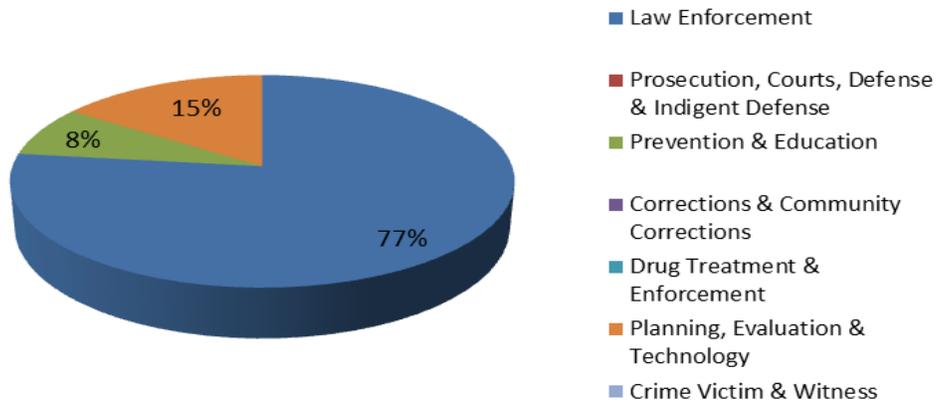
Funding Allocation by Purpose Area

While the majority of questions within the survey focused on the prioritization of purpose areas and the investments within them, the survey included a question about how respondents believed limited Byrne JAG dollars should be allocated. Respondents from every element of the justice system indicated they would spread funding across the seven purpose areas with the aforementioned purpose areas receiving (on average) a higher percentage of funding. The charts, on the following page, are included because they offer decision makers not only a national comparison but a better understanding of how the survey's respondents believe limited JAG dollars should be allocated.

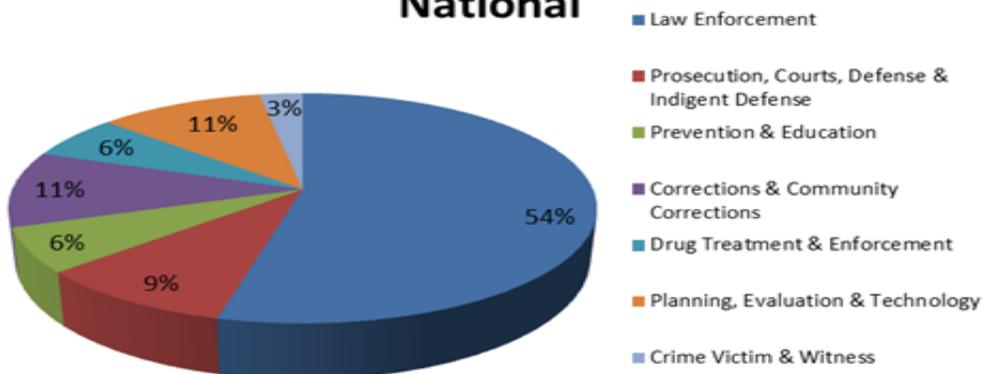
All Respondents: How AL JAG Should be Distributed



FY2013 ADECA-LETS JAG Spending



2012 SAA Byrne JAG Spending: National



Moving Forward

While this survey serves as the bedrock for LETS's stakeholder outreach strategy, survey findings are not meant to be a strategic plan. Strategic planning takes into account the knowledge held within the field, the decision making of appointed justice system leaders, an understanding of the funding landscape within the state and a thorough review of available data to formulate a strategy that addresses identified needs, gaps or emerging trends. While Byrne JAG funds represent only a small percent of criminal justice spending nationally, these dollars represent an opportunity to fund initiatives that can positively impact the work of **multiple** system partners and enhance public safety. If used effectively, they will ultimately reduce justice system costs and save the taxpayers' money. With that said, findings addressed here are meant to inform the LETS Division of the knowledge, opinions, and consensus within the field. The overwhelming survey response was that a very diversified, balanced approach to spending across all purpose areas was preferred to one more heavily weighted in one area as has been the practice in Alabama over the past 20 +/- years.

Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) Compliance

The Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, required that the 50 states, District of Columbia (DC), 5 principal territories, and some federally recognized tribes substantially implement SORNA by July 27, 2011. SORNA mandated a 10 percent reduction in JAG funding if a state failed to substantially implement SORNA by the July 27, 2011 deadline.

On June 20, 2011, the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the Office of Prosecution Services, with funding assistance from ADECA, submitted a substantial implementation package that included:

1. a completed Substantial Implementation Checklist-Revised
2. Alabama's Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act
3. Sex Offender Registry System Documentation
4. Alabama's Public Sex Offender Registry Website Documentation
5. Relevant Sex Offense Statutes
6. and an explanation of the State's working relationship with the Indian tribe located within the state.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) conducted an exhaustive review meant to detail any area in which the state has not met SORNA standards. The review of these materials followed the outline of the SMART Office Substantial Implementation Checklist-Revised, and contained 15

sections addressing the SORNA requirements. Under each section, was indicated whether Alabama met SORNA requirements of that section or deviated from the requirement in some way. In instances of deviation, the SMART Office specified that the departure(s) from a particular requirement does not substantially disserve the purpose of that requirement. In other words, Alabama was encouraged to work toward rectifying deviations from requirements in order to achieve full implementation of SORNA, however, it was determined that this was not necessary for substantial implementation purposes.

The intent with respect to the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 is to continue to allocate funding toward the SORNA program currently being managed by the Alabama Department of Public Safety and to continue to guarantee their work in conjunction with the Alabama Office of Prosecution Services thereby ensuring substantial compliance with the Act.

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Compliance

Beginning with FY 2014, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) affected Alabama's Byrne JAG funding. BJA has informed the states that they will receive a 5% penalty on several DOJ funding sources received by the state's non-compliance with PREA. In response to leveled penalties, the SAA, ADECA, will apply for those penalty funds and direct them through an appropriate request for proposals process toward eligible entities that are able to demonstrate a specific advancement of compliance using penalty grant funds.

On May 15, 2014 Governor Robert Bentley signed the documents certifying that Alabama is not yet fully compliant with the PREA standards. Prior to this, on March 3, 2014 ADECA staff met with the Alabama Department of Youth Services and the Alabama Department of Corrections to determine the status of their efforts. This meeting and many months of work by both correctional agencies identified needs within both systems to move towards full compliance.

The Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) will use the opportunity provided by the U.S. Department of Justice's FY 2014 PREA Program to implement Demonstration Projects to Establish "Zero Tolerance" Cultures for Sexual Assault in Correctional Facilities Competitive Grant Program, provided by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to implement a project to achieve full PREA compliance and enhance sexual safety at Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women (Tutwiler) and all facilities under the responsibility of ADOC. ADOC is responsible for the management and supervision of adult offenders, convicted as felons, within the state.

As a priority consideration, ADOC plans to focus its efforts on Tutwiler. This project will focus on the more complex PREA standards, including cross gender supervision, staffing and supervision, and gender-specific challenges when working

with women offenders, such as, addressing trauma and the implications for enhancing sexual safety in facilities for women. The project is intended to improve operational practice and policy support, and to develop its leaders through training and coaching, while using all available resources to achieve sexual safety at each of its facilities.

The ADOC has identified five areas that will enhance the establishment of a “zero tolerance” culture for sexual assault and address PREA compliance in the correctional facilities: 1) assist with PREA readiness by completing Sexual Safety and PREA Readiness assessments at male facilities, 2) identify and address barriers to a healthy reporting culture, 3) improve the effectiveness of data analysis and PREA compliance by establishing a position of Assistant State PREA Coordinator, 4) conduct PREA Audit Support and Corrective Action activities, and 5) the introduction and implementation of trauma informed care and operational practice at Tutwiler.

The Alabama Department of Youth Services (ADYS) reports the following regarding PREA Compliance:

ADYS has been working diligently with three state operated juvenile facilities as well as with contract service providers to implement the PREA standards and prepare for PREA audits. ADYS has set up PREA files on each standard and have invested many hours in providing training for staff and juveniles. ADYS released an RFP in February for a certified PREA auditor for its Autauga Campus. ADYS selected an auditor and is preparing for Legislative Contract Review in May with a projected date in late June for an audit. The Vacca Campus will be audited in June of 2015 and the Mt. Meigs Campus will be audited in 2016, the third year of the PREA audit cycle. ADYS has been working with contract service providers for two years assisting them with general PREA compliance, completing facility vulnerability assessments and conducting mock PREA audits of its facilities and files.

Drug Use Trends in Alabama

Drug Use in Alabama

According to data collected among the state funded Drug Task Forces (DTFs) and the Gulf Coast HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas) the following drugs have impacted Alabama the most:

1. Cocaine

- a) Continues to be the primary drug threat to the urban areas of the state of Alabama.
- b) Wholesale distributors transport cocaine into the state in its powder form, the majority of which is converted locally into crack.

- c) Crack cocaine distribution and abuse is associated with more incidents of violent and property crimes than any other drug.
- d) Cocaine is primarily transported into areas of Alabama by Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and also by Black DTOs often affiliated with smaller street level groups of individuals who distribute crack.
- e) Investigations show that the majority of cocaine entering Alabama comes from the Atlanta, Georgia area. Couriers utilize methods such as commercial, rental, and private vehicles to transport cocaine.

2. Methamphetamine

- a) Methamphetamine continues to be a major drug threat to the rural areas of the state.
- b) Methamphetamine distribution and abuse continue to peak in Alabama.
- c) Methamphetamine generates violent crime and affects public safety, public health, and environmental concerns during its production and distribution.
- d) Powder methamphetamine is widely available throughout the state.
- e) Alabama Act 2012-237 was passed April 2012, requiring that drugs containing meth precursors like ephedrine or pseudoephedrine be sold only in pharmacies and that they be kept behind the counter. As a result, local methamphetamine laboratories have decreased, and smaller one-pot laboratories have increased.
- f) The production of methamphetamine is a major drug threat, contributing to the commission of violent and property crimes.
- g) Powdered methamphetamine is being converted to ice methamphetamine throughout the state.
- h) Mexican DTOs are the primary wholesale distributors of methamphetamine in Alabama.
- i) The use and distribution of methamphetamine continue to rise among the Black DTOs in Alabama.

3. Heroin

- a) Heroin is increasingly becoming an alternate drug of choice for hydrocodone users.
- b) Heroin is becoming increasingly available in the college areas as well as urban areas in the state.
- c) Alabama treatment programs have reported an increase in admissions for heroin abuse.
- d) Areas in and around Birmingham have experienced an increase in heroin related deaths resulting from overdoses.
- e) Intelligence reports indicate that heroin is being transported into the state from Atlanta, Georgia and Detroit, Michigan.

4. Diverted Pharmaceuticals

- a) The abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals has reached epidemic proportions in the state of Alabama.
- b) Treatment centers in Alabama reported the highest number of admissions for pharmaceuticals abuse in 2012.
- c) The availability of pharmaceuticals remains high in Alabama. Reports indicate that abusers frequently have easy access to prescription medications through family and friends.
- d) The most commonly abused pharmaceuticals in Alabama have been reported as hydrocodone, oxycodone and alprazolam.
- e) Treatment centers in Alabama reported admissions for opiana (oxymorphone) abuse showed a significant increase in 2012.
- f) An increase in the number of pain management clinics in Alabama and the surrounding states have contributed to easy access for abusers of pharmaceutical drugs.
- g) Federal legislation is aiding area law enforcement in curtailing the utilization of the internet to purchase pharmaceuticals. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, pharmaceuticals were easily obtained without a prescription or consultation from a licensed physician via the Internet.

5. Marijuana

- a) Marijuana continues to be a widely abused drug in Alabama.
- b) Intelligence indicates marijuana remains a “gateway” drug for teens and young adults who are beginning to experiment with drugs.
- c) Vast rural areas throughout Alabama provide ideal cover and concealment to marijuana growers. This contributes heavily to the large quantities of marijuana produced in the state.
- d) Mexico-produced marijuana is transported into and through Alabama along primary transportation routes.
- e) Hydroponic and medicinal marijuana are being shipped via postal service from California to all areas of Alabama.
- f) Mexican DTOs are the primary distributors of marijuana in the local retail market. Recent shipments of marijuana from surrounding states provide additional availability for individuals within Alabama. The number of indoor marijuana grow sites has increased and is being cultivated by Mexicans utilizing seeds from Mexico.
- g) Modern indoor cultivation techniques have contributed to the production of a higher grade of marijuana.

6. Other Dangerous Drugs

- a) The availability of club drugs continue to show a slight increase in small quantities throughout the state, especially in university towns.

- b) Synthetic drugs such as spice have become more popular over the past year in Alabama, and are smoked as an alternative to marijuana.
- c) Bath salts such as Ivory Wave are consumed as a synthetic methamphetamine.
- d) The availability of MDMA (Ecstasy) is moderate across the state and is the most prevalent and popular of the “club drugs” in Alabama.
- e) Synthetic substances that mimic marijuana or other drugs, often referred to as “spice”, “bath salts” or various other names, are being created with chemical compounds which had not been identified and prohibited as controlled substances under state law.
- f) Alabama Act 201-717 referred to as the “Spice Bill”, was made law in 2012. This law regulates synthetic marijuana and other similar substances.

Attacking the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

Recently there seems to be a national discussion on how our country should be attacking substance abuse and the issues that are related to it. The argument seems to be centered on the issue of supply vs. demand. Beginning in the 1980’s, America began its “War on Drugs”. This effort was an attempt to begin ridding our country of illegal narcotics by attacking the supply of those narcotics and their path into our country. This model centered solely on the enforcement aspect of drug control. While this had an impact on the availability of illegal narcotics, it did nothing in the way of addressing the demand of these drugs in our country.

After 40 years, the United States’ war on drugs has cost \$1 trillion and hundreds of thousands of lives. About 40,000 people were in U.S. jails and prisons for drug crimes in 1980, compared with more than 500,000 today. Excessively long prison sentences and locking up people for small drug offenses contribute greatly to this ballooning of the prison population.

This serves as evidence that our current strategies are not completely addressing the problem. We must take steps to identify and solve the problem. What we do not need to do is continue failing strategies that cost huge sums of money and seemingly exacerbate the problem. Rather than continuing on the unsuccessful path of the war on drugs, we must identify what works and what does not in terms of real evidence and data.

While certain levels of enforcement are the first step in the process, we must identify ways to contribute to solving the drug addiction problem. A multi-faceted approach to the substance abuse problem is a proven method to make a real impact. This would include treatment, prevention, and intervention methods.

Treating drug addiction as a health issue could save billions of dollars, improve public health and help us better control violence and crime in our communities. Hundreds of thousands of people have died from overdoses and drug-related

diseases, including HIV and hepatitis C, because they did not have access to cost-effective, life-saving solutions. When it comes to drugs, we should focus on the goals we agree on: protecting our kids, protecting public safety and preventing and treating drug abuse and addiction.

Program Priorities

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program is the primary vehicle of federal criminal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions of Alabama. ADECA / LETS, as the State Administering Agency (SAA) for this program, ensures that JAG funds support a broad spectrum of stakeholder prioritized components of the criminal justice system. ADECA/LETS has consolidated and prioritized funding to the top three priorities identified as integral to a statewide effort to combat needs within the criminal justice system. These priorities are based on public and stakeholder input.

Most Pressing Issue: State Criminal Justice Systems			
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Corrections, Community Corrections/Re-Entry	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism	The Need For Diversion and Alternatives to Incarceration	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
Courts, Prosecution and Public Defense	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement
Juvenile Justice and Education/Academia	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement
Law Enforcement	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
Other/Concerned Citizen	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement
Social Services (Health, MH, SA, SS, Advocacy)	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	The Need For Diversion and Alternatives to Incarceration
Victim Assistance	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Access to Behavior Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism

Most Pressing Issue: Local Criminal Justice Systems			
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Corrections, Community Corrections/Re-Entry	Jail Overcrowding and Recidivism	The Need For Diversion and Alternatives to Incarceration	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
Courts, Prosecution and Public Defense	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
Juvenile Justice and Education/Academia	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement
Law Enforcement	Increased Drug and Gang Enforcement	Jail Overcrowding and Recidivism	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives
Other/Concerned Citizen	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	Jail Overcrowding and Recidivism
Social Services (Health, MH, SA, SS, Advocacy)	Increased Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Initiatives	Access to Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	The Need For Diversion and Alternatives to Incarceration
Victim Assistance	Increased Prevention, Education and Early intervention	Access to Behavior Health (Substance Abuse/Mental Health) Services/Initiatives	Jail Overcrowding and Recidivism

As evident in the statewide survey, Alabama has a variety of criminal justice needs at both the state and local levels. In an effort to better address the most pressing issues, ADECA/LETS staff plans to examine different program options over the next four years.

Priority #1

Among all survey respondents and across all purpose areas, a need for increased prevention, education, and early intervention initiatives was shown. This information tends to follow a nationwide push towards finding alternatives to the substance abuse problem by attacking the issue early and often. This can be achieved by establishing or supporting existing prevention/education initiatives in early childhood and elementary school settings. These types of programs can be school or community based approaches that use evidence-based programming in order to achieve positive results.

While enforcement is one approach to targeting drug users, it is often the time period after arrest where we begin to see a breakdown in the system. Arresting and re-arresting drug offenders for drug related crimes while never offering any type of treatment or mental health options is not going to solve the problem. Taking low-level/non-violent drug offenders out of the prison/jail setting can serve two purposes. First, it can lower the number of offenders that are taking up bed space in our prison and jails. Second, it can offer some type of assistance to those

individuals who would not receive any help otherwise. This can be achieved in a variety of ways. One in particular is supporting specialty courts for intervention purposes. These can be drug courts, veteran's courts, teen courts, etc...

Priority #2

Among local law enforcement respondents, the strongest support was seen for Law Enforcement Equipment Purchases with 46 percent of respondents selecting this as their highest priority. In the current economic environment, local law enforcement funding is already at alarmingly low levels. This, coupled with rising crime rates, shows an ever increasing need for law enforcement officials to have the proper equipment necessary to do their job.

Using the "Less than 10k" portion of the Byrne JAG funds, we can provide assistance to those communities in need. Common items in high demand are computer and technology upgrades, ballistic vests, weapons, body cameras, electronic citation systems, and radars for speed detection.

Another item identified in the law enforcement purpose area was law enforcement training. In an ever changing criminal world, it is important that our officers are offered training that will keep them abreast of the new crime trends and methods that are threatening our state and local communities.

The intent is to collaborate with the Institute for Criminal Justice Education (ICJE) to provide training courses to law enforcement agencies. These class offerings will be based on a survey of training needs to be conducted by ICJE and, based on that survey of needs, courses will be taught at various locations around the state.

ICJE is a nonprofit organization supporting law enforcement by developing and disseminating educational material relating to criminal investigation, management of law enforcement resources and effective use of technology in the criminal justice arena. This information is delivered primarily through lectures and publications, and is furnished to governmental agencies having a primary law enforcement function.

Beginning in 1997, when Alabama began requiring most of the state's law enforcement officers to receive at least twelve hours of continuing education to maintain their certification, a serious financial burden was imposed on the more than five thousand officers in medium and small departments. The problem was compounded by cutbacks in traditional no-cost training by federal agencies. The need is now being partially met through free training sponsored by ADECA/LETS through a subgrantee provider.

Until recently, this training was limited by geographical area and availability of instructors. While it was helpful to those officers receiving the training, a program with a much broader reach was urgently needed.

To meet this need, ICJE has formed an alliance (collaboration) with several universities in the state to provide quality Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POST) certified training throughout Alabama at little or no cost to officers or their departments.

Also identified as a need in the Law Enforcement Purpose Area were drug enforcement projects. ADECA/LETS has primarily supported multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional drug and violent crime task forces, their prosecution efforts, and statewide civil forfeiture projects for many years. This collaboration results in the streamlined process of interdiction and apprehension of drug and violent crime offenders by law enforcement personnel, followed by prosecution's efforts in conviction and asset forfeitures of these offenders.

Currently there are 28 task force groups operating in Alabama that receive funding from ADECA/LETS. Task force goals include providing expertise in drug interdiction, confronting drug smuggling, and cooperating with federal and State authorities in national anti-drug efforts. The task force groups that investigate and prosecute violent crime provide additional resources.

High crime rates resulting from illegal drug use, illegally acquiring funds to support drug addictions, and violent threats to public safety, are all major forces demanding that the justice system provide a positive response to illegal drug activities. While enforcement projects are just one approach to the drug problem, they can serve as an important piece of the overall strategy to prevent and reduce drug and violent crime.

Priority #3

Ranked as the third purpose area in need of limited funding, Prosecution, Court, Indigent Defense, saw strong support among those in the Service Provider, Courts and Law Enforcement communities. Within this purpose area respondents prioritized the following three project types:

- 1) Specialty Courts, (i.e., Drug Courts, Mental Health Courts, Veteran's Courts),
- 2) Specialized Prosecution Initiatives, and
- 3) Training Initiatives.

Within this purpose area, prioritized projects showed a balance between initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism/re-arrest and targeted enforcement. Research has shown specialty courts are effective at reducing recidivism, improving accountability and ultimately at saving taxpayers money by reducing future system expenditures. In addition, these courts have been shown effective with challenging populations and those populations with the highest likelihood of re-arrest.

Summary of Plan

Through priorities established as a result of this plan, ADECA/LETS will make a meaningful effort to address law enforcement and criminal justice needs through a more balanced approach. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be developed for those areas identified as having the most pressing needs. These RFPs will serve as a mechanism by which we can look at the best and most innovative approaches to mental health and substance abuse services, prevention and education, enforcement, and specialized prosecution and courts programs.

In the area of prevention and education, prior experience and contacts established in managing the Governor's Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program, which was a prevention based grant, funded through the US Department of Education, will help identify underserved populations in school systems across the state. This program allowed the state of Alabama to fund the best evidence based programs and practices towards preventing school aged youth from engaging in behaviors related to bullying, violence, and substance abuse. A similar RFP will be developed to attract programs from around the state to help in establishing a proven mix of these type programs.

The needs of mental health services will also be addressed by developing an RFP that will allow outside service providers as well as state and local partners to team up with law enforcement to better serve the needs of those individuals who are involved but do not have access to essential services (mental health services). There are limited options available in local lockup facilities and police departments when it comes to helping those who suffer from mental health problems. An RFP will announce grant funding opportunities to assist local departments in making a connection to service providers located in their community to help them when the need arises.

In an effort to help reduce recidivism and relieve the pressure in the state correctional system, an RFP will be developed to allow for programs that will serve as alternatives to incarceration. These can include specialized prosecution programs and specialty courts. Specialty courts can encompass variants such as drug courts and veteran's courts. While many of our judicial jurisdictions have already established drug courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will assist in gathering information regarding those jurisdictions that do not already have a specialized drug court.

A new approach to specialized courts that has become more prevalent in recent years is veteran's courts. Most veterans are strengthened by their military service, but the combat experience has unfortunately left a growing number of veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. Data indicates that one in five veterans has symptoms of a mental health disorder or cognitive impairment. One in six veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and

Operation Iraqi Freedom suffers from a substance abuse issue. Research continues to draw a link between substance abuse and combat-related mental illness. Left untreated, mental health disorders common among veterans can directly lead to involvement in the criminal justice system. We hope to develop a program through which funding is available for establishing veteran's courts in other jurisdictions that have a recognized need.

Over the years, Alabama's Byrne JAG program has been very heavily weighted toward the enforcement aspect of the criminal justice system. This approach has provided funding to multiple drug and violent crime task forces across the state. This approach has allowed law enforcement to partially rid communities of narcotics and violent criminals who deal in them. But the overall impact of this approach has led to a prison system and local jail system that is over 200% capacity. Our local jails are filled with defendants who were arrested on drug charges and are awaiting trial. The process from arrest to court to sentencing is taking 12 to 18 months due to a backlog of drug cases at the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences. In Alabama, drug cases cannot be sent to grand jury until certified forensic results have been received a state certified lab.

After a defendant has been found guilty they are sentenced. Judges have to follow state sentencing guidelines. These guidelines lead to lengthy minimum mandatory sentences for drug offenses. This often leads to scores of low level non-violent inmates who are serving lengthy sentences for drug crimes. These actions have led to prison overcrowding in Alabama.

We must to begin to shift our focus to a more balanced approach. While enforcement will still play a role in our overall plan, it will be at a reduced level to a level more in line with a more balanced approach to eliminating strains on our state's criminal justice system.

The state of Alabama continues its efforts to create a more efficient criminal justice system and provide a better response to rising crime rates. Through the support of the Byrne JAG program, ADECA/LETS will begin to support a variety of programs designed to address what stakeholders have identified as our biggest needs at both the state and local levels. A multi-faceted approach to crime prevention and reduction allows for a balanced and more collective approach to bettering Alabama communities.