

John R. Justice Grant Program Process

Below are the steps that states need to take to apply for and administer the John R. Justice Grant Program for loan assistance for prosecutors and public defenders. The abbreviations used in the steps include:

BJA = Bureau of Justice Assistance

DSA = Designated State Agency

1. The governor designates a state agency. Up to 15 percent of the state award may be used for costs associated with administering the program. Consult the OJP Financial Guide for details on allowable and unallowable administrative expenses:
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/.
2. If appropriate, the designated state agency (DSA) may contract with non-profit organization to manage the state JRJ program.
3. Submit the application through OJP's Grants Management System. (Use descriptive file names for all attachments.)
 - a. Standard Form 424
 - b. Program Narrative (Attachment 1) (Format: maximum of 15 pages, double-spaced with at least one-inch margins; Use 12-point font with Times New Roman preferred. Number pages "1 of 15", etc.). Must include:
 - Description of proposed program activities for the one-year grant period.
 - Outline the state's outreach strategy to eligible beneficiaries reflecting an equal emphasis on outreach to both prosecutors and public defenders.
 - Brief overview to explain how beneficiaries will apply for loan repayment and how decisions will be made as to eligibility and awards including details about:
 - Evaluation criteria for applicants, including a list of factors and the corresponding weights.
 - General grant application process.
 - Technical application process (e.g., how will applicants submit their application?).
 - Attachments that applicants will be required to submit with their applications (e.g., loan documents, debt obligation data, proof of employment, income verification, transcripts, job evaluations, etc.).
 - Must include a statutory compliance plan that describes how the DSA will:
 - comply with the statutory requirement that priority consideration be given to those with "the least ability to repay" their loans.
 - ensure a fair distribution of funding based on geography and population density. States must ensure that funding is not isolated or heavily concentrated in any particular metropolitan area or geographic section of the state, but rather that distribution is as widespread as possible.
 - Discuss methods for collecting data for performance measures.
 - c. Budget and Budget Narrative (Attachment 2)
 - d. Governor Designation Letter, if not submitted before the application. (Attachment 3)

- e. Abstract (Attachment 4): Includes the applicant's name, goals of the project, and a description of the strategy to be used. (Format: Must not exceed one page and must be double-spaced.)
- 4. Conduct outreach to public defenders and prosecutors.
- 5. Select beneficiaries.
- 6. Provide the properly executed original service agreements to BJA.
- 7. Receive funding from BJA no later than September 30, 2010.
- 8. Make payments to the lenders (i.e., Federal Direct, lenders of Federal Family Educational Loans, etc.).
- 9. State agencies must keep on record, available for audit purposes, any record relied upon by the state agency to support its funding decisions, including:
 - (1) Applications received by the state agency.
 - (2) Income, debt, and loan data provided as part of each such application.
 - (3) Documentation of outreach efforts implemented to distribute funding amongst a wide range of employing agencies within the state.
 - (4) Documentation of decisional processes in the evaluation of an individual's ability to repay his/her loan obligations.
 - (5) Documentation of decisional processes in the evaluation of an individual's meritorious service (including military service) (if applicable).
 - (6) Proof of an individual's eligibility under the statutory definitions of "prosecutor" or "public defender."
 - 7) Proof of an individual's debt obligations under a "qualifying loan."

BJA maintains the right to request from the state administering agency any other records that are reasonably required to determine compliance with statutory obligations, and the state agency, in receiving funds, will agree to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in producing all such records.

- 10. Evaluate the state JRJ program: DSAs must annually assess, by engaging with prosecutor and public defender offices, the impact of the John R. Justice Grant Program on the recruitment and retention of prosecutors and public defenders in the state. This may be accomplished qualitatively, through surveys, leader interviews, a focus group or other methods.
- 11. Submit required reports to BJA: The DSA must submit quarterly financial status reports, quarterly performance metrics reports, and semi-annual progress reports.
- 12. Future years of JRJ funding: States may consider developing separate renewal forms for beneficiaries who receive benefits beyond the first year. Beneficiaries may be obligated to extend their service agreement beyond the initial required three-year term if they are selected to receive a renewal of their benefits.