

Office of Criminal Justice Programs

Annual Report

FY 2024

Prepared By:

Office of Criminal Justice Programs
Department of Finance and Administration
William Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, Suite 800
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1102

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP), a division of the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, is a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes, and manages federal and state grant funds. In collaboration with other public and non-profit agencies, OCJP utilizes these grant monies to support innovative projects locally and statewide to enhance the coordination of services and promote healthy and safe communities in Tennessee. OCJP uses collaboration, strategic planning, training, and technical assistance to empower communities to take an active role in addressing their local issues. In the state's fiscal year 2024, some of the major successes in combatting violent crime, breaking the cycle of trauma and violence, supporting victims of crime, and focusing on family and community are highlighted on the following pages.

In FY 2024, OCJP distributed \$179,462,916 in funding through 949 (more than a 50% increase from the previous year) grants to various state departments, local governments, and non-profit agencies for justice system enhancement, victim service, and family and community advocacy grants. The focus of the funding provided by OCJP centered on the following themes:

Promoting **evidence-based** programs/strategies in justice system approaches and direct victim services to ensure victim safety and offender accountability;

Promoting a **multidisciplinary team approach to a coordinated community response** to address domestic violence, sexual assault, crimes against children, elder abuse, and to improve the justice system's response to crime;

Promoting **data-driven funding decisions** based on population, crime rate, service availability, and regional topography;

Continuing and expanding **training opportunities** for professionals in the justice system and victim services field; continue providing comprehensive technical assistance;

Supporting **multijurisdictional Drug and Violent Crime Task Forces and Gang Task Forces** to decrease drug trafficking, human trafficking, and gang violence throughout the state;

Supporting **local law enforcement** through collaborative, equipment, and technology grants to enhance their ability to combat violent crime;

Sustaining **victim service programs**, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking programs, child advocacy centers, victim-witness coordinators, civil-legal services, court-appointed special advocates, and elder abuse services;

Expanding **data-driven, location-based strategies** to crime reduction and victim services, specifically for underserved and culturally specific populations, and in areas experiencing high crime rates.

OCJP continued to work closely with subrecipient agencies for the last several years to anticipate and prepare for forthcoming reductions in federal funding, especially with victim service funding. OCJP staff have engaged with agencies at every level, from boots on the ground to senior-level leadership, to help identify agencies' essential resources and services needed to continue their vital victim service and public safety missions. Our

strategic planning process empowers us to leverage state and discretionary federal grants to help supplement agencies' reduced victim service funding and build capacity. This past year, OCJP managed a significant reduction in federal funding by braiding new funding streams in with the current inventory of fund sources to support vital direct service provision. One of the more recent funding streams, the American Rescue Plan (ARP), ends in FY25. Thus, coupled with more significant pending reductions in VOCA funding, the FY26 outlook for victim services looks very challenging.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

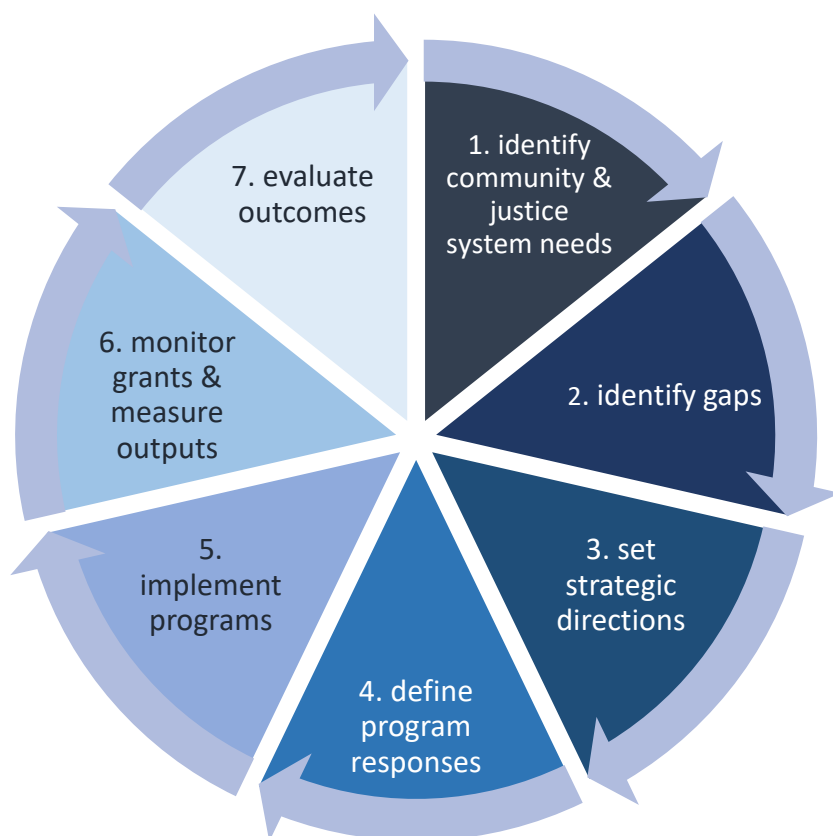
OCJP uses a year-round structured process that looks three to five years ahead of current grant programs to identify the changing needs of crime victims and Tennessee's justice system. OCJP tracks problems surfacing in the justice system, monitors trends in Tennessee's communities, assesses the condition of the state's resources, and measures the performance of OCJP-funded programs.

Funded projects are developed using a logic model approach. They are monitored by OCJP staff, who maintain frequent contact throughout the life of the grant to help ensure the successful implementation and execution of their project goals. Subrecipients are also encouraged to use the logic model to evaluate their project implementation.

Quarterly and annual data-driven reports are utilized to ensure that established outputs and outcomes are accurately tracked and fulfilled. In aggregate, these reports also help indicate the overall impact the project may be having on the intended issue or need.

For more information on these crucial components and more, please visit the [OCJP Grants Manual](#).

NOTE: This report represents a snapshot of OCJP's FY24 data as it is currently reported. Additionally, the numbers in this report may be aggregated from various reports. OCJP works closely with subrecipient agencies and other stakeholders to validate and refine reported data to ensure the ongoing integrity of our program funding and output data.



HEARING FROM TENNESSEANS:

OCJP gathered feedback from stakeholders, providers, and victims throughout numerous collaborative gatherings as part of our strategic planning process. Annually, OCJP convenes various advisory groups to gather diverse perspectives from a broad range of Tennessee stakeholders. The groups learn about successful programs, identify gaps across the system, and explore areas of greatest need. The ground-level insight provided by these groups provides the foundation for OCJP's annual strategic planning process, helping to clarify priorities and identify opportunities for focus.

- OCJP operates two advisory committees that are comprised of stakeholders who have experience in services to victims of interpersonal violence and are designated in statute to advise on the needs of domestic violence and sexual assault victims. The **Sexual Assault Advisory Committee** was established in TCA 71-6-303, and the **Family Violence Advisory Committee** was established in TCA 71-6-203.
- The State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) funding is authorized by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. No. 117- 159, 136 Stat. 1313, 1339); 28 U.S.C. 530C. The SCIP Advisory Board, comprised of experts from the justice system, mental health experts, and community leaders from across Tennessee, provides expertise to inform, guide, and ultimately approve the state's violent crime reduction programs/initiatives funded through Byrne SCIP. During FY24, OCJP worked with the **SCIP Advisory Board** to develop program guidelines for programs focusing on behavioral health deflection for those at risk to themselves or others, specialized court-based programs, and community violence intervention programs, recognizing that comprehensive, evidence-based practices funded under SCIP should all have a goal of lessening the prevalence of violence in communities by implementing specialty programs which divert, deflect, or educate individuals who impact the level of violence found within communities.
- The **Justice System Roundtable** meets annually and comprises a group of leaders in criminal justice, including Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, District Attorneys General, public defenders, judges, criminal justice practitioners, community corrections/re-entry practitioners, and victim advocates. The roundtable members represent all three grand divisions of Tennessee as well as urban, suburban, and rural areas of the state.
- OCJP's annual **Victim Centered Focus Groups** consisted of meetings with groups representing a variety of perspectives, classified as domestic violence advocates and survivors, system providers and non-profit partners, and underserved survivors and advocates. The groups reflected statewide representation, including rural and urban areas, and broad demographic representation of race, gender, victimization, and role within the justice system. The information collected through these sessions helps OCJP focus its future program descriptions, set its funding priorities, prepare its budget requests, and direct its limited resources into areas that promise the best return for the public's investment.

Keeping Tennesseans Safe

17 DRUG TASK FORCES

1,342 FELONY ARRESTS

1,608 INVESTIGATIONS CLOSED

~2X AMOUNT COCAINE SEIZED
IN FY23

160 LB FENTANYL SEIZED

INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST
CHILDREN

17,126 CYBERTIPS RECEIVED

2,814 INVESTIGATIONS

228 ARRESTS

659,343

VITAL SERVICES PROVIDED SUCH AS:

PERSONAL, FORENSIC, LEGAL, AND CIVIL
ADVOCACY

INFORMATION & REFERRALS TO OTHER SERVICES

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SUCH AS CRISIS
INTERVENTION, THERAPY, COUNSELING
HOUSING ASSISTANCE

SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE SUCH AS
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, CHILDCARE,
AND MUCH MORE....

117,692 VICTIMS SERVED

INCLUDES, BUT IS **NOT LIMITED TO:**

14,505 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

4,434 SEXUAL ASSAULT

2,291 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

139,676

NIGHTS OF TRAUMA-INFORMED,
SAFE SHELTER

13 FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS

17,474 VICTIMS SERVED

10,874 SAFETY PLANS

10,623 ASSESSMENTS

5,355 PROFESSIONALS TRAINED

11,667 COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED

186

POSITIONS SUPPORTED WITH ARP
FUNDING

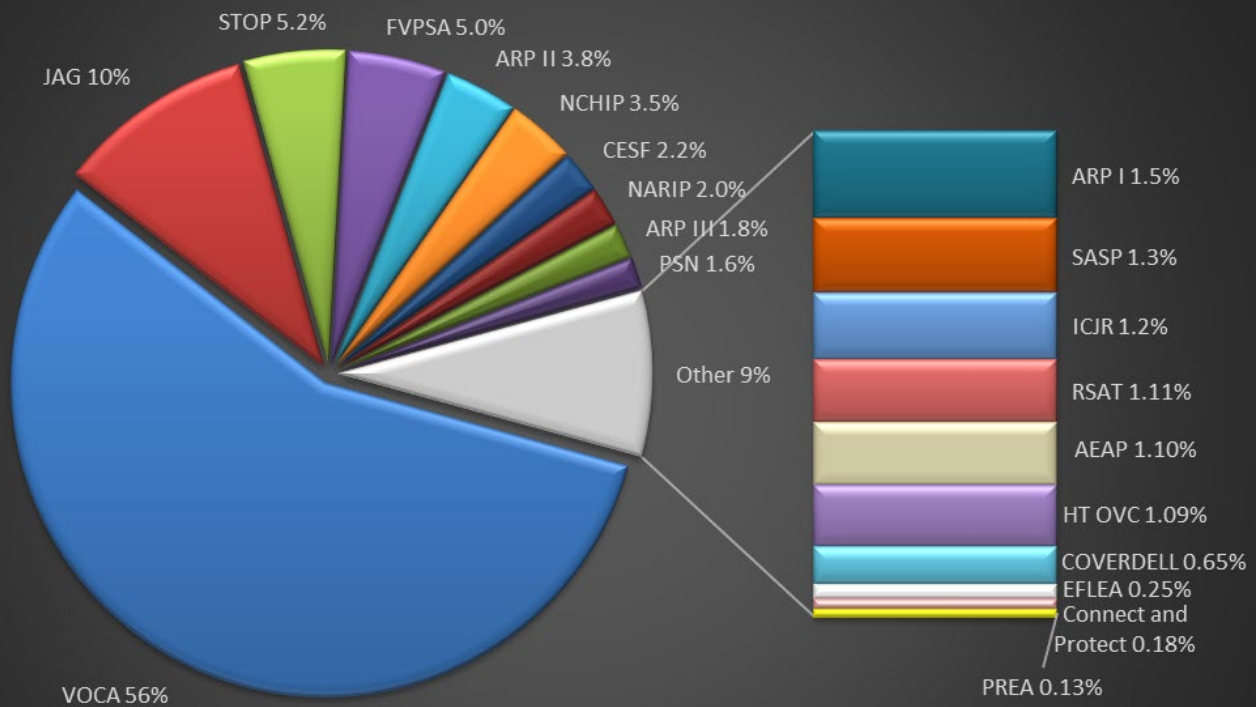
Supporting Tennessee Victims

FY24 OBLIGATIONS TABLE

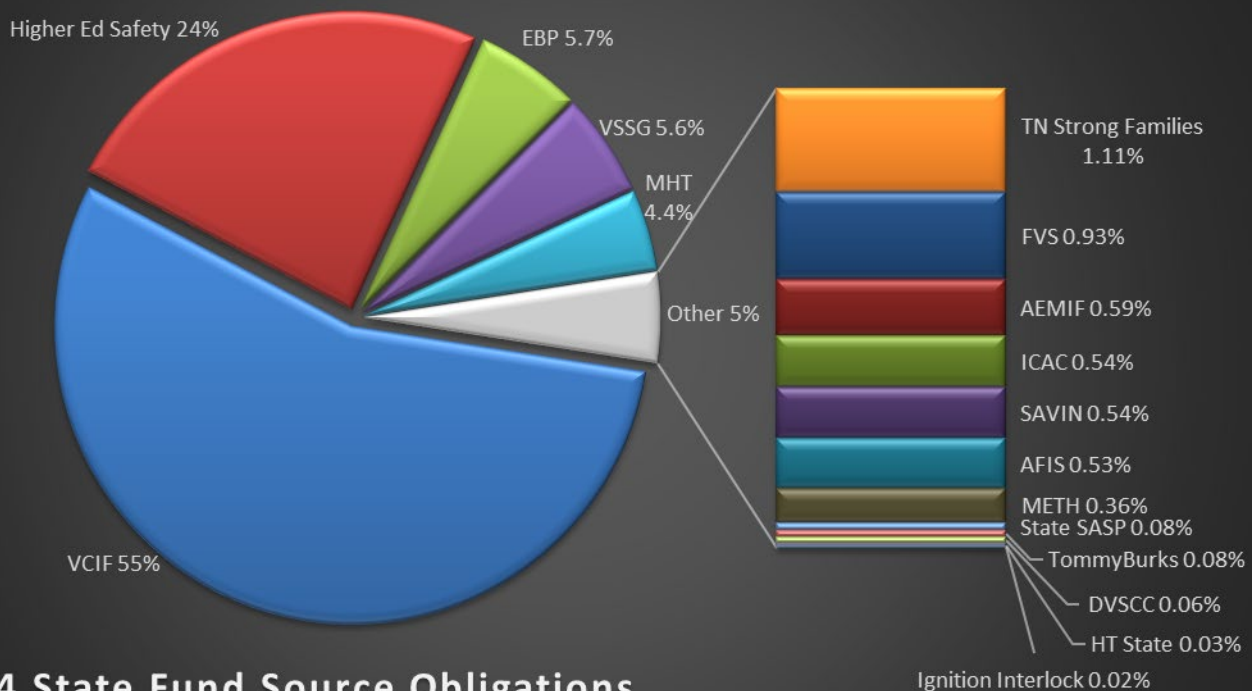
Fund Source Description	Fund Source Acronym	# of Grants	FY24 Obligations
Total Federal		394	\$ 55,150,364
Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program	AEAP	1	\$ 607,331
FVPSA American Rescue Plan I	ARP I	8	\$ 846,197
Workforce Support FVPSA American Rescue Plan II	ARP II	21	\$ 2,068,715
SA FVPSA American Rescue Plan III - SA	ARP III	16	\$ 996,042
Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding	CESF	1	\$ 1,199,190
Connect and Protect: Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response	Connect and Protect	1	\$ 100,923
Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program	COVERDELL	4	\$ 359,088
Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Program	EFLEA	2	\$ 138,385
Family Violence Prevention Services Act Programs	FVPSA	18	\$ 2,771,048
Services for Trafficking Victims	HT OVC	4	\$ 599,447
Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Grant Program	ICJR	2	\$ 644,030
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant	JAG	46	\$ 5,599,794
National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program	NARIP	2	\$ 1,109,274
National Criminal History Improvement Program	NCHIP	5	\$ 1,932,614
JAG Prison Rape Elimination Act	PREA	1	\$ 73,862
Project Safe Neighborhoods	PSN	18	\$ 871,664
Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program for State Prisoners	RSAT	2	\$ 611,914
Sexual Assault Services Program	SASP	5	\$ 717,519
STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grants	STOP	29	\$ 2,883,263
Victims of Crime Act	VOCA	208	\$ 31,020,064
Total State		558	\$124,312,552
Electronic Monitoring Indigency Fund	AEMIF	16	\$ 738,990
Automated Fingerprint Identification System	AFIS	1	\$ 662,372
Victims of Human Trafficking Fund	HT State	3	\$ 35,295
Family Violence Services	FVS	18	\$ 1,152,530
Higher Education Safety Grant	Higher Ed Safety	36	\$ 29,949,381
Internet Crimes Against Children	ICAC	3	\$ 677,000
Interlock Ignition Fee for Halfway House	Ignition Interlock	1	\$ 20,000
Methamphetamine Initiative	METH	6	\$ 449,300
Mental Health Transport	MHT	51	\$ 5,450,282
Sexual Assault Victims Notification	SAVIN	1	\$ 675,000
Domestic Violence State Coordinating Council	DVSCC	1	\$ 78,500
Evidence Based Programming	EBP	25	\$ 7,138,632
State Sexual Assault Services	State SASP	1	\$ 100,000
Tennessee Strong Families	TN Strong Families	24	\$ 1,377,758
Senator Tommy Burks Victim Assistance Academy	TommyBurks	1	\$ 100,000
Violent Crime Intervention Fund	VCIF	308	\$ 68,711,255
Victim Services State Grant	VSSG	62	\$ 6,996,257
TOTAL		952	\$179,462,916

Note: A total of 949 grants were executed but 3 of these had 2 different fund sources each, 1 federal and 1 state.

FY24 FUND SOURCE OVERVIEW



FY24 Federal Fund Source Obligations



FY24 State Fund Source Obligations

COMBATTING VIOLENT CRIME

Using Regional Collaboration to Keep Communities Safe

Using Violent Crime Intervention Funds (VCIF), the Sumner County region has implemented a digital, multi-jurisdictional, video and data integration platform that will increase partnerships within the community as well as community involvement and awareness, increase communication and sharing between jurisdictions, and provide an efficient video evidence collection system for the successful prosecution of violent crimes.

Hendersonville, Sumner County, and five other regional police departments have registered 1,946 staff, with 246 of them trained, on how to use Axon Fusus, a video and data-feed technology platform. This solution provides law enforcement real-time video access to participating citizens' and entities' locations and real-time lead generation, which minimizes the reliance on personnel from other jurisdictions. In addition, the platform offers sentry alert capabilities (where offender and vehicle descriptions are known), thus providing opportunities to apprehend wanted individuals and prevent violent crimes. For more information, visit the [website](#).



635 investigations used data collected from the platform

Helping Communities Target Local Crime Drivers

Two communities, both in the areas with the highest rates of homicide in Tennessee, used Violent Crime Intervention funding to implement Targeted Community Crime Reduction Projects (TCCRP). The recipients, the City of Memphis and the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, have developed collaborative partnerships with community-based governmental and non-profit agencies to assess the drivers of systemic violent crime problems in the identified high-crime areas. To do this, both have secured the assistance of local research partners to uncover the root causes of the crime in the identified zip code areas. Additionally, each community has hired a dedicated TCCRP Coordinator to organize community stakeholders, assess resources and gaps, facilitate the development of a strategic plan, and gather quantitative and qualitative data. The project plan strategies focused on:

- o prevention and intervention
- o enforcement
- o violent offender intervention
- o victim outreach

Published research demonstrates that these types of multidisciplinary, evidence-based strategies can reduce violence through tailored community-centered interventions. By engaging individuals, communities, and systems to disrupt cycles of violence and retaliation and cultivate positive relationships, these practices are shown to address trauma, provide opportunity, improve physical, social, and economic conditions that drive violence, and save the lives of Tennesseans.

Supporting Local Law Enforcement with Training and Technical Assistance

Across the state of Tennessee, local law enforcement agencies are experiencing problems with violent crime. These agencies need assistance in developing and implementing evidence-based strategies to combat violent crime. OCJP has provided funding to local agencies to assist with addressing violent crime within their communities and implementing reduction strategies. Beginning in FY22 and throughout FY23, The University of Tennessee (UT) Law Enforcement Innovation Center (LEIC) assisted these agencies by providing training and technical assistance in assessing the local violent crime problem, developing evidence-based strategies for violent crime reduction, and assisting agencies with grant application development and managing funds awarded by OCJP. Throughout FY24, UT LEIC continued to provide ongoing support and assistance, upon request, with implementing evidence-based strategies and programs, as well as providing free training for law enforcement agencies across the state addressing violent crime.



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE

Supporting Successful Re-Entry

The purpose of the Evidence-Based Programming (EBP) project is to provide funding to local jails to implement evidence-based programming for convicted felon inmates to:

- Improve access to knowledge and skills required for successful re-entry into local communities following release from incarceration
- Reduce recidivism rates among formerly incarcerated individuals

To achieve these goals, jails funded by the EBP grant must administer an approved, validated risk-needs assessment (RNA) to each inmate receiving programming. These assessments help corrections agencies determine the likelihood of an individual committing another crime or violating institutional rules, and they guide decisions about programming, support, and restrictions to improve public safety and optimize resource use.

After the OCJP staff identified the need for an accessible RNA tool for local jails implementing EBP projects, they convened and worked closely with the Davidson County Sheriff's Office (DCSO), County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS), Tennessee Corrections Institute (TCI), and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) to ensure all stakeholders agreed with the need and plan to develop a statewide RNA for local jails. Given that jails release ten times more inmates into the community than prisons [1], developing a low-cost, standardized, state-validated RNA is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of county jails.

¹<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/08/25/releasesbystate>



The flyer is titled "EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING GRANT" in large red letters, with the subtitle "Office of Criminal Justice Programs" below it. In the top right corner is the Tennessee Department of Transportation logo. The flyer is divided into several sections: "Funding Available Through State Fiscal Year 2027" and "Maximum Liability is up to \$2 for each contract" are in a grey box on the left, with a QR code and the text "APPLY HERE:" below them. To the right is the "Overview of Purpose" section, which describes the grant's goals. Below that is a "Testimonials" section with quotes from Polk, Dyer, and Rhea counties. At the bottom, there is a section titled "How can this benefit your local jail?" with a list of benefits, and a "Top 5 Most Popular EBP Classes Being Implemented in Participating Agencies:" section with a list of classes. The flyer has a red and black decorative border at the bottom.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING GRANT
Office of Criminal Justice Programs

Funding Available Through State Fiscal Year 2027
Maximum Liability is up to \$2 for each contract
APPLY HERE:

Overview of Purpose
The Evidence-Based Programming grant was created to provide funding to local jails to implement evidence based programming for inmates in effort to improve access to knowledge and skills required for successful re-entry into local communities following incarceration; to reduce recidivism rates among formerly incarcerated individuals; to increase meaningful collaboration between local jails and local community partners.

How can this benefit your local jail?

- ⇒ Reduces recidivism rates
- ⇒ Enhanced public safety
- ⇒ Cost savings for tax payers
- ⇒ Implementation of EBP classes help with obtaining TCI accreditations
- ⇒ Increases collaboration between jails and community partners

Top 5 Most Popular EBP Classes Being Implemented in Participating Agencies:

- ⇒ Moral Reconation Therapy
- ⇒ Seeking Safety
- ⇒ Thinking for a Change
- ⇒ Living in Balance
- ⇒ Nurturing Parenting

Testimonials

"This funding has been and will be a life changer for inmates."
-Polk County

"This funding has allowed Re-Entry staff to attend conferences and trainings relevant to reentry, recovery, and the criminal justice population."
-Dyer County

"This is an opportunity that many inmates have expressed interest in and are excited to participate."
-Rhea County

Family Justice Centers

A family justice center (FJC) is a multiagency, multidisciplinary service center where public and private agencies assign staff members on a full-time or part-time basis to provide services to victims from one location. Family justice centers are not merely co-located service buildings but rather serve as a vital coordinating entity in each community, facilitating collaboration among all agencies that address domestic violence, keeping domestic violence crime victims safe, and holding abusers accountable. Tennessee has 14 Family Justice Centers, with Henderson County opening in October 2024.

- **Domestic violence case review teams** have been established in Shelby, Scott, Sullivan, Putnam, Overton, Henderson, Hamilton, and Madison counties. These teams focus on high-risk domestic violence cases, bringing together law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, and key community partners. The case review meetings ensure that diverse perspectives are considered and strategic actions are taken to enhance the safety and well-being of survivors. The collaborative approach used in these counties strengthens the commitment to addressing and reducing domestic violence in their communities.

- Sullivan, Shelby, Washington, and Metro Family Justice Centers have a **co-located DCS liaison on-site** in the center. This position was piloted with OCJP resources and is now a DCS program.

- Family Justice Centers play a crucial role in the **Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)**. Hamilton County, Sullivan County, Washington County, and Shelby County centers serve as a partner in executing LAP by providing follow-up calls to victims who completed assessments with local law enforcement.

- The Sullivan County Family Justice Center is the first family justice center in Tennessee to feature an **on-site sexual assault exam room** for victims of sexual assault. Ballad Health announced a new staff position and exam room dedicated to treating victims of sexual assault seeking care at the hospital. The community recognized there was a need to implement trauma-informed care at Johnson City Medical Center when serving sexual assault victims. The Attorney General's office, the hospital's leadership, a domestic violence and sexual assault prosecutor, and Sullivan County's Branch House Family Justice Center all came together and identified the lack of dedicated services, resources, and space at the medical center as a crisis. Partnerships formed among these agencies and resulted in the health system staffing Sexual

Required partners:

- City or county governments
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Domestic violence victim service providers
- District attorney's office
- Civil-legal agency

Benefits to...

Victims:

- Reduces the # of times victims must tell their story
- Reduces the # of places victims must go for help
- **Increases access to services and supports** for themselves and their children

Communities:

- Allows stakeholders to **do more with less**
- **Reduces competition** between partner agencies
- **Decreases redundancies** among partner agencies

FY24 vs FY23:

- **65% more clients** served
- **46% more safety plans**
- **51% more needs assessments**

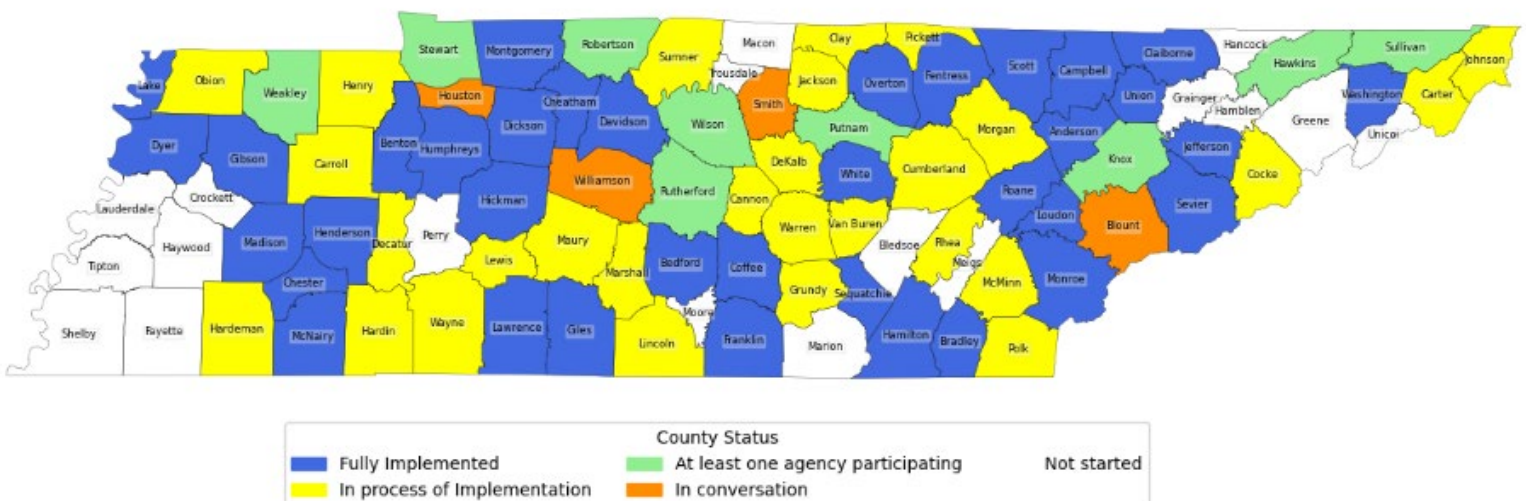
Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) in its emergency rooms. OCJP has been engaged with these partners through their coordinated community response team for over five years to grow the SANE program in the Tri-Cities area.

- Tennessee’s Family Justice Center model has become **a benchmark for other states**. Counties from Oklahoma and Georgia studied the Chattanooga FJC in order to learn some of the best practices.
- The Family Justice Center in Johnson City/Washington County, led by law enforcement, has launched the **Handle with Care (HWC)** Initiative from within the center. This program supports clients with school-aged children by allowing them to send a notification that the child has experienced or is experiencing some type of trauma.

Handle with Care

The goal of the HWC Initiative is a collaborative plan between the local school system and law enforcement to allow a notification to the school system to indicate that a child was exposed to trauma the previous night. This notification allows the school system to check in with that child in the morning and attend to their needs, whether that be physical or emotional. In Tennessee, an estimated 49% of children have at least one adverse childhood experience, and 24.1% have at least two. Nationally, those numbers sit at 45% and 20.5%, respectively.”¹ Ensuring schools have this information can limit or prevent additional exposure to trauma, mitigate the negative effects experienced by children when exposed to adverse experiences/trauma, and increase knowledge and awareness of this issue among community partners working to protect children. The HWC program model promotes safe and supportive homes, schools, and communities that protect children and help traumatized children heal and thrive. HWC in Tennessee began as an OCJP-funded pilot project, and now the initiative is led by TBI with continued support from OCJP.

Handle with Care County Status



¹Vance, Z. (2020, June 23). 'Handle with Care' awareness program coming to Johnson City Schools. Johnson City Press. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/news/local-news/handle-with-care-awareness-program-coming-to-johnson-city-schools/article_5be0d7d6-2711-5797-a627-0b3564a5e8d8.html

FOCUSING ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

TN Strong Families Grant Program

TN Strong Families (TSF) grant program is intended to improve access to maternal healthcare and boost critical resources for expecting mothers. As part of the Governor's Strong Tennessee Families initiative in FY24, OCJP administered 24 grants to local nonprofit organizations and pregnancy centers across the state. TSF funding supports these agencies by providing counselors, nurses, and caseworkers to help meet the needs of mothers, children, and families they serve. Funding is also used to support fatherhood programs and implement support groups.

Gaps in services for pregnant families were identified through a pregnancy needs assessment survey. The results were instrumental in developing the TSF program components. The survey determined housing, affordable childcare, and transportation were the greatest needs among expecting families. As a result, all TSF grant funds allow for specific assistance to meet these needs and more.



1,197 individuals served

6,198 services provided

Clients reported:

94% improved wellbeing for self & family

100% an increase in knowledge of and access to available services

100% satisfied with services

"A client came to us [...]. She had 4 children age[s 6 to 12]. [...] with baby number five [on the way]. She had recently become unemployed and was unsure and worried about how she was going to stay on top of her bills with the pending baby arrival. Our case manager [...] was able to help with rent to ensure the mother and her kids stayed safely housed. [The case manager] also organized back to school items for her older children and made sure they all had good food in the house. Now the new baby [] is here (almost two months old) and [the case manager] is coaching the client and helping her look for employment. The client said '[the service provider] have really helped me out a lot! I had [...] a painful recovery and I don't know what I would have done without [the case manager]. I was stressed about bills and my other kids' needs and she has helped me out so much. Thank you for everything!'"

Enhancing Safety on College Campuses

The Higher Education Safety Grant is designed to improve school safety to mitigate a mass casualty incident and is vital to our students' safety on campuses across Tennessee. Public Chapter No.4 of the 113th General Assembly's First Extraordinary Session 2023 authorizes OCJP to provide school safety grants to public and private institutions. These grants support Tennessee public and private institutions of higher education that invest in equipment, technology, and/or training that focuses on strengthening physical security and enhancing accountability in their respective safety protocols.

The \$30 million in state funding was offered to colleges and universities across Tennessee, including the Board of Regents (for all community colleges and TCATS), and 36 of those colleges and universities used the funds to support:

1. Building physical security improvements
2. Campus physical control improvements
3. Security / Monitoring / Communication improvements
4. Emergency notification improvements
5. Threat / Intelligence analysis
6. In-State Training
7. Construction or renovation to meet security needs

Grant recipients noted that the grant money greatly impacted their ability to enhance security across their campuses. Most stated that the security enhancement would not have happened were it not for the funding. In fact, many colleges and universities have added money in addition to grant funds to complete the desired upgrades to their school's security. These types of improvements to security will long outlive the life of the grant and promote the safety of Tennessee students for years to come.



SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF CRIME

Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking

Tennessee shares borders with eight neighboring states, and victims of domestic violence residing in these border counties are at increased risk due to offenders' ability to flee across the state border, making it harder to track them. These victims are in dire need of improvements in real-time coordination between jurisdictions across the borders. OCJP, together with Tennessee's 8th Judicial District, Scott County Shelter Society, other state and local agencies, and local victim service partners, piloted the Prosecutor Interstate Information Sharing Pilot project in FY24. The goal of the program was to increase victim safety and offender accountability by improving coordination between law enforcement jurisdictions and their neighboring cross-border counterparts. The project funded a domestic violence prosecutor and a project coordinator to help develop effective, evidence-based procedures and tools for sharing throughout the state. These tools and procedures include the creation of a cross-border collaboration team (reflecting a CCR model) specific to law enforcement and prosecution agencies addressing domestic violence. The collaborative team's active case review has helped:

- identify gaps and opportunities for partnership
- the development of an electronic tracking system that includes an up-to-date criminal history of pertinent info such as active warrants, probation and parole information, violations, orders of protection, etc.
- the development of training curricula on enforcement of orders of protection, cross-border collaboration, and other best practices

The TnCIS system, which is a records management system through the county clerk's office, offered a potential solution to enhanced electronic tracking and was implemented for the entire 8th Judicial District in FY24. TnCIS Web Inquiry Subscription Access will enable judicial districts to better track offenders across jurisdictions and will assist in closing the gap that exists due to Tennessee not having a unified web-based court system.

"In a Domestic Homicide case, the defendant was first charged with public intoxication while law enforcement continued gathering evidence. We were concerned about the possibility of the defendant being released on bond before homicide charges could be filed. A quick state-wide search on TnCIS revealed the defendant had a violation of probation hold from another county as well as a lengthy criminal history. This critical information influenced the judge's decision to deny bond, ensuring the defendant remained in custody."

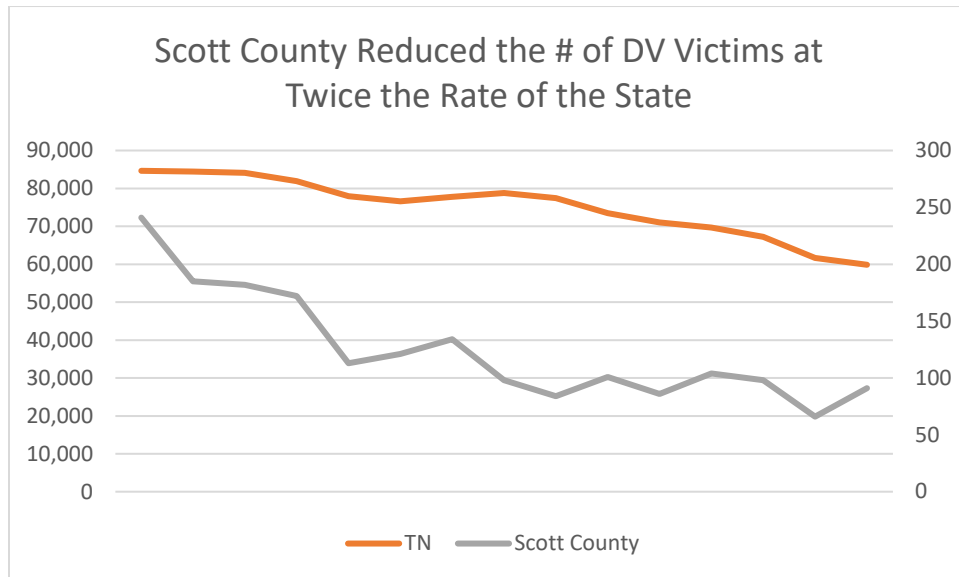
GRAHAM WILSON
Assistant District Attorney

"TnCIS is especially helpful in identifying repeat offenders in domestic violence cases. It gives me insight into the kind of individual the victim may be dealing with, which allows us to tailor our approach and provide the best possible support. Having this information at my fingertips is crucial for ensuring victim safety and holding offenders accountable. "

SABRINA PHIPPS
Law Enforcement Victim Coordinator
Claiborne County Family Justice Center

Bringing Stakeholders to the Table to Fight Domestic Violence

OCJP oversees two STOP-funded Domestic Violence Courts, one in Rutherford County and the other in Scott County. These programs allow for a dedicated docket for domestic violence cases, which aids in providing victim services and increases offender accountability. Services provided include court accompaniment, referrals, and advocacy for victims, as well as a Batterers Intervention Program for offenders. This project allows the same judge to oversee compliance, order of protection and criminal domestic violence cases. It also affords a designated prosecutor and trained domestic violence officer to be present for court.



“Since our inception, almost 5 years ago, we have had survivors tell us they feel safer, more supported, and heard. Offenders have reported that the compliance portion of court has made them remain engaged in treatment and BIP has taught them that their actions are not appropriate even though they may have been raised like that. Thankful that OCJP saw fit to fund us.”

Director, Christy Harness

Kathi Hall, a facilitator with Scott County's batterers intervention program, leading participants through an exercise on how to recognize the signs of anger in their bodies and stop it before they take it out on someone else.

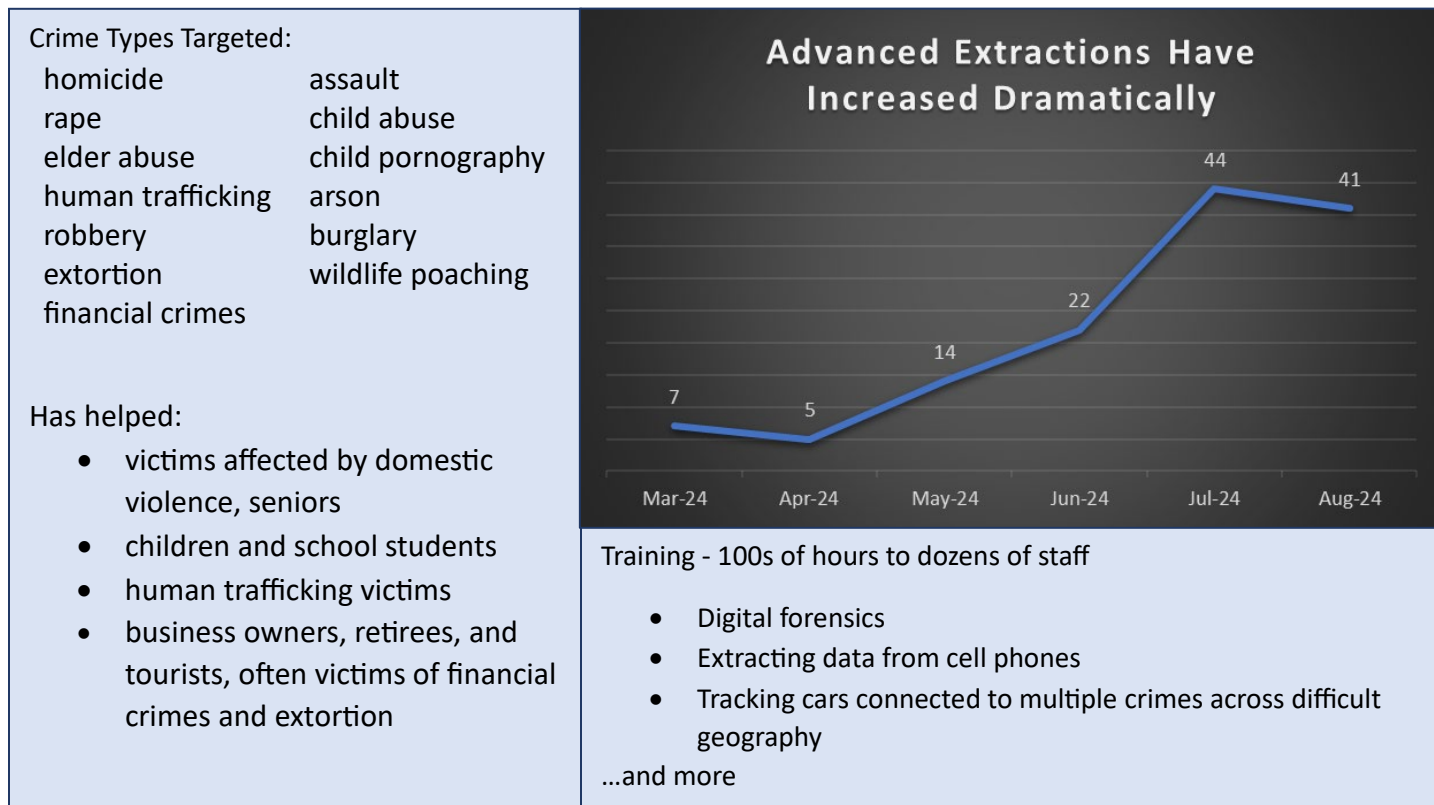
IMPACTS

Regional Solutions to Help Local Investigations

The East Tennessee High Technology Crimes Forensic Facility and Training Program provides regional law enforcement personnel with important digital forensic training and provides regional forensic investigators with access to cutting-edge forensic tools used during the collection and analysis of digital data from devices involved in local crimes. In East Tennessee, the biggest obstacle facing law enforcement agencies attempting to address violent crime is their inability to access forensic equipment fast enough to solve crimes. As a result, many smaller, rural agencies are forced to rely on TBI and their cadre of trained investigators to handle digital evidence related to violent and financial crimes. Prior to this project, sending evidence off to TBI to process could result in wait times of several months to over a year, delaying justice and increasing the risk of additional victimization.

For Jefferson County and its partners, solving this problem required increasing their capacity to identify, retrieve, search through, store, and prepare digital evidence for effective investigation and prosecution. Thus, Jefferson County and their East Tennessee partners developed an impactful program addressing local forensic equipment shortfalls as well as ensuring investigators, patrol officers, and district attorneys are trained to the level of forensic competence necessary to successfully investigate crimes and generate evidence that can lead to conviction.

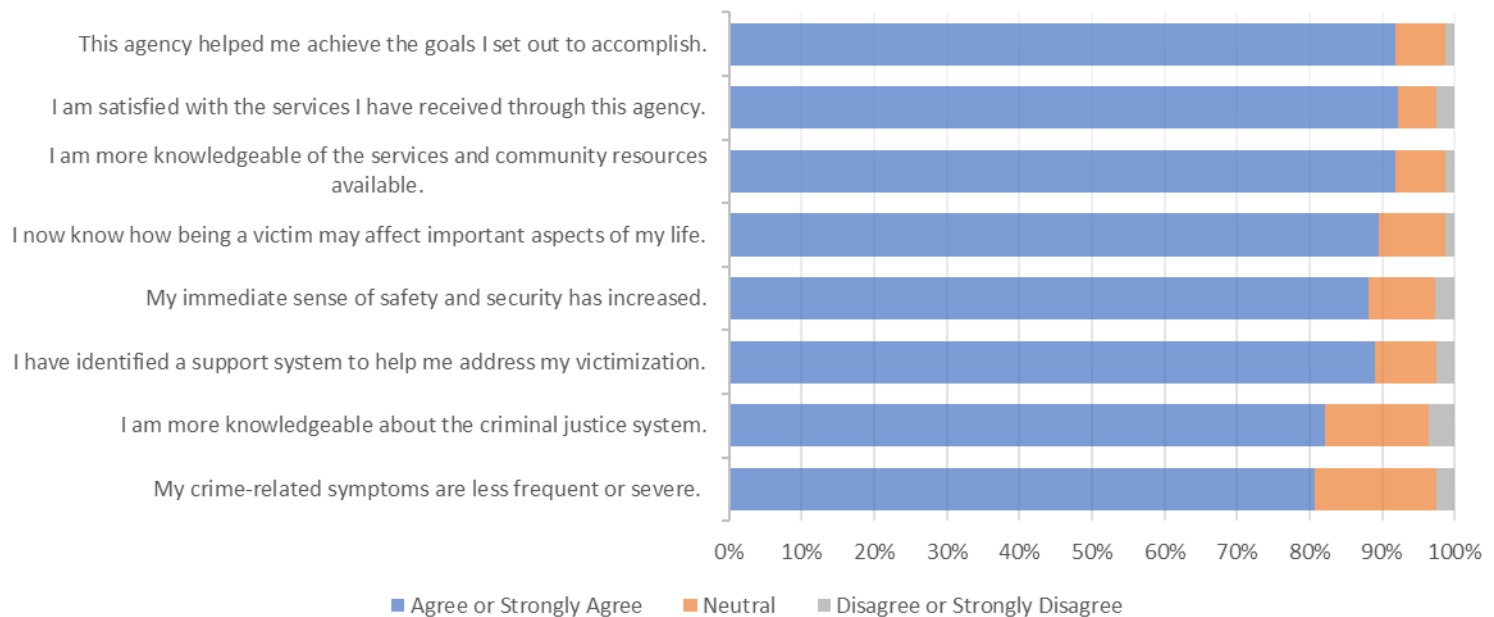
Since its inception, there has been a drastic reduction in time to process digital devices and obtain forensic evidence. Agencies can now process their own devices within hours or days which leads to faster arrests, thus protecting victims. **On one recent occasion, law enforcement was able to locate an individual on suspicion of manufacturing child pornography within eight hours of processing the digital evidence.** This turn-around time is unprecedented in rural East Tennessee. Officers can confirm they have the right suspect, identify additional suspects and/or victims, and document their case details properly for the evidence trail.



As investigators from multiple agencies now contribute at least one staff member to work in the same forensic facility, they can help each other with highly technical equipment and share knowledge on investigations and trends. This sharing of information helps each agency research and learn more about violent crime trends in the region to allow them to build a safer community. The overall success and growing enthusiasm of this program have spurred an outpouring of support from surrounding agencies who have signed on to join the project. Since its inception with seven total partners (including Jefferson County Sheriff's Office), the **collaboration now stands at 16 total agencies.**

Detective Walters, Greene County SO: *"Having this facility in East Tennessee where narcotics crime is high, is a major benefit to law enforcement due to the quick return of information gathered from extractions. [Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI)] gets overwhelmed with the number of agencies in the state of Tennessee all submitting evidence to their facility. Where it used to take us 6 months or so to get back what we need from TBI, we can now have evidentiary answers back the same day. I have extracted devices for overdose deaths, suicides, murders, and crimes against children, and for threats of mass violence at our schools in Greene County. Digital devices have become an everyday part of life which makes it easy for multiple individuals conspiring digitally to commit and organize crimes...Because this facility is open and available 24/7, my agency has utilized this program frequently. We are now seizing more devices and solving crimes in days instead of months. [The] reality, before access to the forensic facility and specialized training, was not having digital evidence available to solve the crime at all, much less in a timely manner. The facility is operated with very knowledgeable people who make every effort to keep up on the latest and greatest technology and [strive] to help myself and other officers get the most evidence for our cases."*

FY24 CLIENT OUTCOMES



OCJP is invested in evaluating the longer-term impact of grant-funded programs. To that end, OCJP subgrantees are required to annually report data on program outcomes, which are defined in each agency’s grant contract and are generally collected via a survey that is distributed to program clients during their experience with the grant-funded agency. Depending on the type of program, the surveys include a set of standardized, required measures, as well as additional optional measures that may be selected by the agency. The surveys capture the outcome measures using a Likert scale: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree).

Since the surveys are completed by the clients themselves, the purpose of the survey is to evaluate self-reported changes in the knowledge, perceptions, and feelings of each client, with the goal of improving and empowering the client through the program interventions.

Clients are also asked about their “crime-related symptoms” such as sleeplessness, nervousness, fear, and anxiety – symptoms known to be associated with a trauma response in many individuals. Clients are asked whether they experience these symptoms less frequently or less severely since becoming involved with the victim service agency. While research has shown that it often takes time for complex trauma response symptoms to decrease, this question serves as a potential foundation for measuring future progress toward clients experiencing some relief from the physical and psychological toll that their victimization might have caused.

WHAT WE ENVISION

OCJP functions as a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes, and manages federal and state funds for Tennessee while collaborating with other public and non-profit agencies. OCJP leverages these funds with other state and local resources to support innovative projects locally and statewide to enhance the coordination of services and promote healthy and safe communities in Tennessee.

In furtherance of this mission, OCJP implements a rigorous strategic planning process that includes continued collaboration with federal, state, and local stakeholders to identify needs, gaps in services, potential funding streams, and best practices in program development, implementation, and evaluation. For FY26, strategic planning has begun, and a 2026 addendum for the 2022 plan is currently being developed. OCJP will continue to find ways to support victim service provision in the face of decreased funding. Additionally, OCJP will continue to support re-entry programs and combat violent crime.

As stewards of these funds, OCJP staff maintains the highest standards of grants management through extensive technical assistance, grant monitoring, output and outcome reporting, and program evaluation. OCJP staff continues to work with federal agencies to draw down justice and victim services formula funds as well as secure competitive grant funds. These federal funds, along with several state appropriated and fee-based funding sources, allow OCJP to direct funding to the areas with the greatest need as determined from the strategic planning process. In general, and especially to mitigate immediate and ongoing victim service funding reductions, OCJP directs its limited resources into areas that promise the best return for the public's investment, and OCJP continues to positively impact the lives of citizens. The planning and management of these state and federal funds improves the quality of life for all Tennesseans by helping achieve OCJP's vision of a safer Tennessee.