



Department of
**Finance &
Administration**

Office of Criminal Justice Programs

2024 Addendum

to

OCJP 2022 Five Year Strategic Plan



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OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS MISSION STATEMENT:

The Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP) under the State Department of Finance and Administration functions as a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes, and manages federal and state grant funds for Tennessee. While collaborating with other public and non-profit agencies, OCJP utilizes these grant monies to support innovative projects statewide in efforts to reduce criminal activity, provide services for victims of crime and promote overall enhancement of the criminal justice system in Tennessee.

INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Program's (OCJP) five-year strategic plan began in state fiscal year 2022 and will continue to be the overarching guide for the agency throughout its duration. In order to provide the most current information related to OCJP's ongoing planning process, each year OCJP briefly outlines updates in our strategic planning process and program priorities. All annual updates will be in the form of an addendum to the five-year strategic plan, from this point forward referenced only as the [FY22 Plan](#).

For state fiscal year 2024 (FY24), much of OCJP's planning and programming focus has been to address the overall reduction in the Victims of Crime Assistance Fund (VOCA) since the federal 2018 award. The first reductions were primarily felt by the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault programs in state fiscal year 2023. Additional reductions to those programs continue through state fiscal year 2025 but have been offset by available ARP funding. The VOCA reductions however span multiple years of federal funding, leading to significant reductions in other areas of victim services in state fiscal years 2024 and 2025. OCJP remains committed to the strategies outlined in OCJP's five-year strategic plan and looks forward to continuing our work promoting public safety and services to victims of crime.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Hearing from Tennesseans

To inform our FY24 priorities, OCJP conducted a number of strategic planning activities between the time of publication of our FY22 5-year strategic plan and the publication of this FY23 addendum. In addition to ongoing taskforces and statewide advisory groups, these activities include:

- **FY24 Criminal Justice Roundtable** – OCJP’s standing roster of roundtable participants serve three-year terms and meet in the fall to discuss topics including innovative projects, essential priorities, and ongoing community and organizational support. The participants include Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, Judges, District Attorney Generals, Public Defenders, Executive Directors of community-based victim service organizations, and other experts in the field of criminal justice and victim service work in Tennessee.
- **FY24 Victim-Centered Forums** – Facilitated by OCJP subrecipient agency, Tennessee Voices for Victims, this year’s three forums were conducted over the course of several weeks and included individuals representing crime survivors, justice-involved individuals, underserved populations, domestic violence and sexual assault victim services, family justice centers, and local law enforcement and prosecution. Each group was guided through a two-hour long discussion exploring what is currently working within the criminal justice and victim service systems and should be replicated, as well as gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- **Tennessee Rural Victims of Crime Forums** – Expanding on the work of the Elder Abuse Forums through the discretionary VOCA funding, these forums were part of a broader statewide needs assessment conducted by OCJP’s VOCA-funded Victim State Liaison project. Three forums were conducted over several weeks in December, discussing resources, issues, innovative ideas, and recurring needs among local and state government agencies and community-based organizations that serve rural victims of crime. The prevailing themes from all three forums will be included in a survey tool that will be distributed to stakeholders as part of the statewide assessment and will inform technical assistance efforts by the Victim State Liaison in FY23 and FY24.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 PLANNING PRIORITIES

VOCA Reductions

VOCA funding provides grant funds to state agencies, local governments, non-profits, and universities for direct services to crime victims. This includes projects for Child Advocacy Centers, Domestic Violence Shelters, Family Justice Centers, and Human Trafficking agencies. These projects focus on child abuse victims, domestic violence victims, sexual assault victims, and underserved victim populations such as rural victims, elder victims, homicide victims and victims of drunk driving.

Prior to federal fiscal year 2015, OCJP received approximately \$8.5 million VOCA dollars annually, which accounted for 40% of all federal funding received. As federal VOCA funds increased culminating in the FFY 2018 award, OCJP increased VOCA allocations through state fiscal years 2016-2022 to help local agencies build infrastructure and capacity to enhance services to crime victims. As a result of the increase, on average, over the last 7 years, VOCA accounted for 65% of all federal funding received by OCJP.

However, for the period of FFY 2018 to 2021, VOCA's awards have been decreasing by approximately 25% each year. The FFY 2022 award increased minimally, but the FFY 2023 award is anticipated to have approximately a 5% reduction.



Although OCJP has been forced to reduce annual allocations, through thoughtfully planned and structured reductions over the next three years, OCJP will help agencies navigate these extreme

fluctuations in funding.

New Funding

OCJP has been the recipient of additional state and federal funding through new appropriations and discretionary awards. This new funding aligns and supports the Five-Year Strategic Plan of the office, enhancing OCJP's efforts towards combating violent crime in Tennessee. The funding will enhance the following goals OCJP implements:

- coordinated approach to apprehension and prosecution of drug offenses & violent crimes;
- supporting data-driven, location-based strategies to crime reduction;
- enhancing the continuum of services for those incarcerated or under community supervision (juvenile and adult);
- promoting coordinated community responses that bring together community leaders to leverage resources to cultivate the greatest impact;
- enhancing basic infrastructure needs such as training and equipment to ensure Tennessee professionals stay abreast of the latest evidence-based programs and practices and have the tools to most effectively do their jobs; and
- promoting a trauma informed response throughout the criminal justice and victim service system at every level of interaction.

OCJP has received discretionary funding through the Connect and Protect: Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program. This funding supports law enforcement-behavioral health cross-system collaboration to improve public safety responses and outcomes for individuals with mental illness (MI) and co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse (CMISA) issues. OCJP has collaborated with NAMI TN to improve behavioral health crisis assistance in Cookeville through the planning and implementation of a CAHOOTS motivated pilot that shifts crisis response toward more safe and effective interactions among law enforcement, behavioral health providers and individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, and their families and communities.

Additional discretionary funding was received through the Office of Victims of Crime to support services for victims of all forms of human trafficking. The Tennessee Justice-Involved Human Trafficking Services Program will enhance services to victims of human trafficking (HT) who are currently incarcerated in Tennessee prisons or have recently been released to community supervision. The grant will be administered by the TN Office of Criminal Justice Programs and

implemented through subawards to three community-based human trafficking agencies: Community Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CCAHT), serving east TN; Thistle Farms, serving middle TN; and Restore Corps, serving west TN.

Federal Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP)

The Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Crisis Intervention Grant (JAG-CI) Program; authorized by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022, provides formula funds to States to implement state crisis intervention court proceedings and related programs such as Behavioral Health Deflection for Those at Risk to Themselves or Others, Law Enforcement-based Programs, Training and Technology, and Local Government Applications for partnerships to implement Community Violence Intervention Programs. The current federal legislation has this block grant funding slated for a duration of five federal fiscal years. OCJP looks forward to planning for this new funding.

State Violent Crime Intervention Fund (VCIF)

Governor Bill Lee and the General Assembly appropriated \$100 million in the State 2022-23 budget for the Violent Crime Intervention Fund (VCIF), which provides grant funds for local law enforcement agencies to implement evidence-based programs, technology, and strategies that will reduce violent crime in our communities.

In August, the Office of Criminal Justice Programs and the Department of Commerce and Insurance co-hosted three virtual roundtables with leaders from local law enforcement agencies representing each grand division of the state. OCJP staff posed questions and facilitated a discussion among Chiefs and Sheriffs on topics listed below with the goal of making the Violent Crime Intervention Fund responsive and relevant for prospective applicants. The feedback and guidance from these experts were shared in summary format with the leadership of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP) and the Tennessee Sheriffs Association (TSA) for additional guidance and feedback.

Based on the guidance received from the afore described stakeholders across the state, the Violent Crime Intervention Fund grants will support:

- Implementation of programming based on proven effective violent crime intervention models;
- Hiring and training of specialized violent crime investigative units;
- Purchase and application of new technology and equipment; and

- Law enforcement led partnerships with community organizations of their choice to directly disrupt or prevent violent crime.

To support broader access to these funds the state is collaborating with the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service to provide technical assistance directly to law enforcement agencies seeking to apply. Applicants were strongly encouraged to work with the Institute to access training and technical assistance in crafting their VCIF grant project designs, submitting their applications, planning and implementing grant activities, and evaluating the impact of their programs. VCIF funding will begin in State fiscal year 2023 and continue through 2025 based on local project design.