



Department of
**Finance &
Administration**

Office of Criminal Justice Programs

2025 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 as the [FY22 Plan](#).

In state fiscal year 2024, OCJP received additional state funding for law enforcement agencies to combat violent crime and to expand evidence-based programming within local jails with an emphasis on behavioral health. These additional state appropriations provided an opportunity to develop multi-year strategies and initiatives spanning through fiscal year 2027. This additional new State funding aligns with feedback from our strategic planning partners regarding the greatest needs and current gaps in programming as well as aligning with our overarching strategic plan and many of the initiatives that have been undertaken with our federal Byrne Justice Assistance Grant funding.

For state fiscal year 2025 (FY25), much of OCJP's planning and programming focus has been to address the overall reduction by the federal government in the Victims of Crime Assistance Fund (VOCA) since the federal 2018 award. The first reductions were felt in state fiscal year 2023. Additional reductions will continue through state fiscal year 2025 but the domestic violence and sexual assault programs have been supplemented by available federal American Rescue Plan funding. The ARP funding that helped to shore up the domestic violence shelter programs and the sexual assault programs given the reductions in VOCA funding between FY 2023 through FY 2025 will be ending at the end of FY2025 and then in state fiscal year 2026 those programs will experience the reduced VOCA and elimination of ARP funding.

The State Legislature provided one-time state funding for victim services to offset some of the impending federal reductions slated for FY 2024. This allowed those agencies facing cuts to have another year of planning and preparation for the federal VOCA reductions. Due to these reductions for FY 2025, the annual obligations by OCJP will be reduced by several million. Recent communication from the U.S. Department of Justice estimates the federal fiscal year 2024 (to be received in the fall of 2024; a year past its actual start) Victims of Crime Assistance awards to be approximately 41% less than the previous year's award, roughly \$16,000,000. 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 FY25 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 FY25 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 two forums were conducted, one group included individuals representing crime survivors ranging from domestic violence, sexual assault homicide, kidnapping, and child abuse, and the other victim advocates employed by domestic violence shelters, sexual assault centers, and family justice centers, as well as those who work to address victimization through city initiatives, non-profit programming, and the criminal justice system. 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. [FY25 Victim Focused Forums Report](#)
- **Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) Advisory Board Committee** – As a result of new federal block grant funding through the U.S. Department of Justice, SCIP funding requires each state to convene an advisory board to inform and guide the state’s related violence reduction programs and initiatives. The Advisory Board meets quarterly and is comprised of experts from the justice system and community from across the State of Tennessee and includes representation from two Tennessee Municipal Law Enforcement Chiefs of Police, two Tennessee County Sheriffs, a representative of the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts; a Community Member; two Tennessee State Prosecutors; a Behavioral Health Provider; a Victim Services Provider; Counsel from the Department of Finance and Administration Office of General Counsel; OCJP’s Director and select

staff.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 PLANNING PRIORITIES

Promoting Increased Access to Services

Over the last several years and through 2025, OCJP will continue its commitment to ensuring all Tennesseans have access to the support of the justice system. OCJP will continue necessary victim services to help victims to heal from the trauma of victimization and will promote public safety through evidence-based programming that seeks to ensure effective skill building and resource allocation to support positive change. OCJP has sought to further this work through a number of avenues across the criminal justice system. Below are just a few examples:

- Supporting corrections and reentry programs that seek to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals (recognizing that justice involved individuals are often disproportionately impacted by crime, violence, and victimization).
- Supporting continuing education for our law enforcement and prosecutorial partners to build evidence informed prosecution skills and tools to strengthen public trust and improve public safety outcomes, increasing trauma informed models of working with our most vulnerable populations and increasing resources and support for building relationships with and increasing access to services across all sectors of our communities.
- Ensuring that people with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities, among others, are aware of and have access to services, support and justice in a manner that meets them where they are and minimizing barriers that might otherwise inhibit them from seeking out these resources.

Outcome Focused Evidence-Based Programming

There is an increasing focus at both the federal and state level to ensure grant dollars maximize their potential impact. As a result, OCJP has been prioritizing, if not fully requiring, evidence-based programming in its solicitations and project designs. In collaboration with OCJP leadership, the Research and Evaluation unit completed an [Office of Evidence and Impact Program Inventory](#). This forward-facing tool is a one-stop shop for stakeholders, including the public and decision-makers, to gain an understanding of the impact of the funding OCJP administers. This inventory, updated annually, provides the structure of OCJP's programs and related interventions; outputs and outcomes and their results; and the evidence-based programs used in these interventions.

Advancing Training and Technical Assistance

OCJP has increased its commitment to providing superior customer service through a myriad of avenues. OCJP has increased the training and technical assistance it is providing to subrecipients through virtual and in-person training and site visits; enhanced onboarding for all new staff to support their growth and development and position them to support their customers. OCJP is instituting a technical assistance survey to get feedback on the support staff provides with the hopes of further enhancing what we do. Finally, OCJP continues to seek out technology enhancements and investments to improve how we work with our customers. All of the information collected through surveys will be used to inform our training and technical assistance provision forward.

VOCA Reductions

Although still the largest federal block grant received by OCJP, VOCA funding has significantly decreased since the federal fiscal year 2018 award as seen in the graph below. Despite an increase in the FFY 2022 award, the FFY 2023 award decreased by 5% and the FFY 2024 award is projected to drop by 41% (as seen by the red line and dot) as the federal budget is yet to be finalized. With additional reductions to the federal award on the horizon as the crime victims fund has failed to be replenished at the rate anticipated, victim service providers will continue to experience additional reductions in this federal pass-through grant funding.



OCJP has seen slight increases in its Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) federal block grants, STOP and SASP, over the past two years. Subtle increases such as these will help to offset the VOCA reductions

wherever possible.

FY 2024 NEW AND EXPANDED FUNDING

OCJP has been the recipient of additional state funding through new appropriations that began in 2024 and will continue through FY 2027, this includes Tennessee Strong Families, new state funding, and additional appropriations to the evidence-based programming for local jails and the violent crime intervention fund. Other new state appropriations included funding for school safety enhancements at higher education campuses and oversight of the alternative electronic monitoring indigency fund for devices other than interlock ignition.

Violent Crime Intervention Fund (VCIF)

Gov. Bill Lee and the General Assembly appropriated \$50 million in the State 2023-24 budget for the Violent Crime Intervention Fund (VCIF), for the purpose of providing grants to law enforcement agencies and judicial district drug task forces for violent crime intervention initiatives in the ten zip codes in this state with the highest number of homicides over a five-year period, from 2018 through 2022, based on CrimeInsight data from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, CJIS Division, Statistical Analysis Center. The eligible zip codes for this project are as follows: 38118, 38106, 38127, 38116, 38109, 38114, 38111, 38128, 38115 and 37207. Nine are located within the City of Memphis and one is within Davidson County.

The Hot Spot/Zip code VCIF Targeted Community Crime Reduction Project (TCCRP) grants seek to instill in each community a strong planning component which looks at the identified zip codes with the highest number of homicides in the city and works toward reducing violent crime and assisting the community with healing from the violence in the areas where they live and work. This is done through meeting regularly with community members and community leaders to research the root causes of the crime; assess and evaluate the resources available and what is lacking; and then developing evidence-based strategies to mitigate the problem through the advancement of government and private partnerships both inside and outside the criminal justice system.

Each TCCRP incorporates the following strategies into their overall project design, prevention and intervention, enforcement, violent offender intervention and victim outreach. Each funded agency will have an ongoing evaluation of each of its strategies and the overall impact of its project.

Evidence-Based Programming for Local Jails

Gov. Bill Lee and the General Assembly appropriated an additional \$10 million in state fiscal year 2024 for grants to eligible government agencies operating local jails that house TDOC inmates to support the implementation or enhancement of evidence-based programming to improve offender outcomes.

Evidence-based programming is defined as “a program or programs shown by scientific research to effectively reduce recidivism rates and increase an offender’s likelihood of success following release from incarceration, including programs focused on education, vocational training, mental health, substance abuse rehabilitation, or building healthy relationships.” Agencies intending to implement an evidence-based program are required to use recognized programs that are rated as “Highest Rated” or “Second Highest Rated” according to the [Results First Clearing House Database](#). Agencies intending to implement a vocational program can reference [TDOC’s list of vocational programming](#) currently offered in Tennessee prisons. TBR also has information available on [vocational programs offered through Tennessee College of Applied Technology](#) that may be available in many communities across Tennessee.

For the most recent solicitation, priority was given to applicants that were new to this fund source, those that intend to create or enhance behavioral health programming for inmates, with a priority for partnerships with Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse licensed providers, demonstrate they will prioritize evidence-based programming over work release, those that would utilize project designs that rely on best practice tools, including motivational interviewing and aftercare plans, and those that could implement at least one new EBP within 6 months of receiving the funding.

Higher Education School Safety

The Higher Education Safety Grant is authorized by section 58, Item 4 in Chapter 418, Public Acts of 2023, which earmarked funding for the sole purpose of providing school safety grants to public and private institutions of higher education in this state in the amount of \$30 million dollars. The Higher Education Safety Grant provides financial reimbursement to qualifying public and private institutions of higher education who invest in the purchasing of non-recurring equipment, technology, and/or training with a focus on strengthening physical security and enhancing accountability in their respective safety protocols. The funding is provided to implement enhancements through FY 2025.

Alternative Electronic Monitoring Indigency Fund

Subject to annual appropriations, there is established a grant program to assist local governments with up to fifty percent (50%) of the payment of eligible costs for alternative devices for persons found to be indigent

by a court. The department of finance and administration, office of criminal justice programs, was charged with developing and administering this grant program, pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated 55-10-419. Notwithstanding another law to the contrary, the eligible costs incurred to comply with a court order to use a functioning alternative device must be paid by the person ordered to use the device, unless the court finds such person to be indigent.

If a court determines that a person is indigent, then the court shall order the person to pay a minimum of thirty dollars (\$30.00) per month. The remainder of the costs must be paid from the fund. Providers of alternative devices shall submit claims and invoices for reimbursement to the respective local government for reimbursement from the alternative device account for an indigent person with eligible costs. A provider must be paid no more than two hundred dollars (\$200) per month for the eligible costs for a device.

Tennessee Strong Families

Governor Bill Lee and the General Assembly appropriated \$20 million in the state 2023-2024 budget to the TN Strong Families grant program. This is non-recurring funding for TN pregnancy centers and non-profit organizations providing perinatal care. Funding is to support the needs of the mothers, children and families they serve by improving access to maternal healthcare and boosting critical resources essential to vulnerable families experiencing pregnancy. Services start during pregnancy and can continue for 24 months post-delivery. The grant is administered by the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, OCJP, Family Advocacy Unit (“FAU”) and funding will continue through state fiscal year 2027.