

OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Program Name: Indigent Defense Initiative --Answering Gideon’s Call

FY 2017 Request

Total Funding: \$5.4M
Vs. FY 2016 Enacted: +\$5.4M

Program Description

Purpose: To ensure that our criminal justice system is fair and equitable by improving public defense. As required by the United States Constitution, no person should face potential time in jail without first having the aid of a lawyer with the time, ability and resources to present an effective defense.

This program provides funding and resources to support changes in state and local criminal court practices:

- Direct hiring of defense attorneys;
- Specialized training and technical assistance to court-appointed counsel and public defenders;
- Support for creation of systems for delivery of public defense that meet the ABA’s Ten Principles of Public Defense Delivery Systems;
- Resources to support the Right to Counsel (R2C) National Campaign; and
- Support to build strong leadership in public defender offices around the country.

Administering Agency: Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

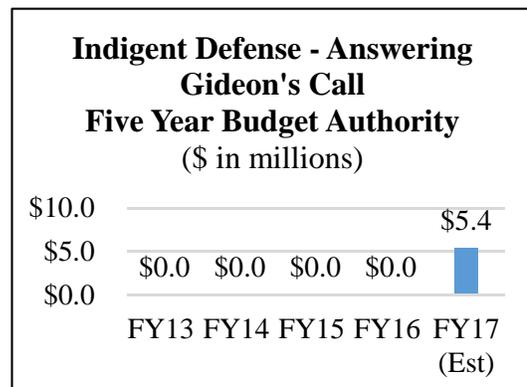
DOJ Strategic Objective 3.1: Promote and strengthen relationships and strategies for the administration of justice with law enforcement agencies, organizations, prosecutors, and defenders through innovative leadership and programs

Who Can Apply for Funding and How Funds are Distributed: Through a competitive process, BJA makes the following awards:

Activity	Who Can Apply for Funding	Award Type	Amount & Length
Smart Defense	State or local government agencies, independent boards or commissions, state or local public defender organizations, and other organizations, including nonprofit organizations (including tribal nonprofit organizations)	Grants	Up to \$400,000 for 24 months
Training and Technical Assistance	Private nonprofit organizations (including faith-based, and community organizations), public universities, and colleges	Cooperative agreements	Up to \$720,000 for 36 months

Program Goals:

1. Smart Defense. BJA funds state and local jurisdictions to work with researchers to build the knowledge base for providing and improving public defense services.
2. Training and technical assistance. BJA addresses public defense needs and gaps as they present at different levels in each state. BJA’s current defense initiatives are listed on the [BJA Adjudication webpage](#) (In the Overview, select “Read More”).



Accomplishments:

BJA is supporting reform in:

- Michigan, Nevada, Utah and Mississippi by engaging state Supreme Court judges and state legislators to assess what defense services are currently being provided and establish state standards on what is needed.
- Colorado, Wisconsin, and New Jersey by replicating the Kentucky Defender manual on pretrial advocacy with support from the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL). All of the public defenders in each state will be trained on how to advocate for pretrial release based on a validated risk assessment tool with the goal to improve public safety by getting the correct risk mitigation strategy for each defendant.
- Rhode Island and Tennessee by conducting workload studies to identify offices' needs in providing effective assistance of counsel.

Additionally, another BJA-funded partner, Gideon's Promise (GP), has recently:

- Partnered with public defender offices across the country to build a community of attorneys to drive public defense reform. The comprehensive model for change emphasizes client-centered values, ongoing trial advocacy training, mentoring, leadership development, and community building.
- Established the Law School Partnership Project, enlisting 19 top law schools to support graduates to work at public defender offices to transform their systems through a 3-year training and mentoring program.
- Trained chief defenders and senior lawyers from public defender offices in how to integrate the GP model into their offices/states. In 2015, 77 chiefs from across the country attended the program/training.

FY 2017 Proposed Policy Changes to the Program: N/A

FY 2017 Proposed Funding Changes to the Program: N/A

Application and Award History

(\$ in millions)	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Amount Appropriated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5.4 requested
Total Funding Awarded	\$1.3*	\$0.5*	\$0	TBD	TBD
Number of Applications	7	2**	0	TBD	TBD
Number of awards	3	2	0	TBD	TBD

*Funded under Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

**Supplements were given to current grantees based on quality and progress of work funded.

For additional information, please visit: [BJA Adjudication webpage](#).