



FRIENDS OF JUSTICE RESEARCH & STATISTICS

April 28, 2026

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Grace Meng, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rogers, Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Meng, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge the highest possible funding level in the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill for the **National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) within the Department of Justice. We ask that Congress appropriate \$42 million for NIJ and \$48 million for BJS.** These agencies collectively serve as the research and data-gathering arm of the Department of Justice, filling an important role in helping to understand and implement science-based strategies for crime prevention and control.

The nation's justice system has reached an inflection point as we work to balance the continued pursuit of effective strategies to prevent and control crime, support law enforcement personnel, and advocate for victims with the need to foster positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Now more than ever, it is critical to invest in criminal justice research and data collection to develop a rigorous evidence base that informs equitable and just policies. **Unfortunately, funding for these research and data collection efforts has steadily declined in recent years, including in the final FY 2026 appropriations bill where BJS and NIJ received cuts of 5.7 and 26.7 percent, respectively. While we greatly appreciate the financial limitations facing all discretionary spending in FY 2027, the most recent round of cuts has returned BJS to its lowest level since 2005 and NIJ back to its lowest level since 1990, not accounting for inflation.** This is not sustainable if the agencies are to continue to set the gold standard for criminal justice research and statistics.

As you prepare spending legislation for FY 2027, the justice research and statistics stakeholder community respectfully requests the Subcommittee take the following actions:

- (1) Appropriate **\$90 million for the Research, Evaluation, and Statistics account within the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs budget, which includes \$42 million for the National Institute of Justice and \$48 million for the Bureau of Justice Statistics.**
- (2) **Increase the Research and Statistics Set-Aside (Sec. 212) from 2% of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) programmatic budget to 3% in FY 2027.** This transfer provides BJS and NIJ with an



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important source of funding to evaluate existing OJP programs without taking away resources from each agency's primary responsibilities.

Additional information about the unique roles and needs of NIJ and BJS is provided below.

National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funds research, development, and evaluation projects at institutions nationwide to address the most pressing issues facing our nation's criminal justice system, including the drivers of domestic radicalization, addressing the drug epidemic, reducing violent crime, improving school safety, and fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Despite the nation's growing need for objective, science-backed solutions, NIJ's budget has been declining for over a decade. Funding shortfalls limit NIJ's ability to disseminate critical findings to law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders who need the most current information to improve policies and practices that promote public safety and equitable access to justice. The 27% cut taken to NIJ in the FY 2026 appropriations bill makes achieving NIJ's mission even more challenging.

An appropriation of at least \$42 million in FY 2027 is needed to restore NIJ's budget back to its FY 2018 level and allow the agency to support cutting-edge research that has real-world impact.

Bureau of Justice Statistics

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) produces high-quality data on many aspects of the United States criminal justice system, including corrections, courts, crime type, law enforcement personnel and expenditures, federal processing of criminal cases, Indian country justice statistics, and victims of crime. As the Department's principal statistical agency—one of 13 federal principal statistical agencies—BJS is bound by a unique set of responsibilities and standards that governs its role in producing data that is relevant, objective, trustworthy, and timely.¹

Despite growing demand from policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders for high-quality criminal justice data across an expanding array of variables, BJS has faced significant budgetary challenges over the past decade. Steady declines in funding have resulted in antiquated systems and staffing shortfalls, which can only be resolved through sustained investment.

Inadequate funding means major segments of the criminal justice system are without reliable data, including in areas like prosecution and sentencing including how fines, conditions of supervision, and mandatory treatments are applied; and data on mental health and substance use and their connection to incidents of crime; among others. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)—the nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization and the only federal estimate of crime not reported to law enforcement—has been forced to reduce its sample size in recent years. It has become increasingly challenging for BJS to support a robust NCVS without significantly compromising other BJS activities.

¹ <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24810/principles-and-practices-for-a-federal-statistical-agency-sixth-edition>



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An appropriation of \$48 million in FY 2027 would return the agency to its FY 2018 level and set BJS on a path toward right sizing its budget. It would allow BJS to modernize data collection and dissemination systems, hire necessary experts, and begin to develop the next generation of statistical products to keep pace with the ever-changing criminal justice landscape and fill critical knowledge gaps.

Thank you again for your consideration of this request. Please contact Kenzie Shelstad (kshelstad@cozza.org) at the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cornell University
Mad Learning Lab
Population Association of America
Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
University of Colorado Boulder