



NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

THE VOICE OF AMERICA'S PROSECUTORS

Staff Contact: Frank Russo • 703-519-1655 • frusso@ndaajustice.org • www.ndaa.org

John R. Justice: Program Overview

Essential Items

1. Remove JRJ as a carve-out from the Byrne-JAG Grant Program and make sure the program **is a separate line** item in the FY20 CJS bill.
2. Support increased funding **at a minimum of \$10 million** to return the program to peak funding levels.

History

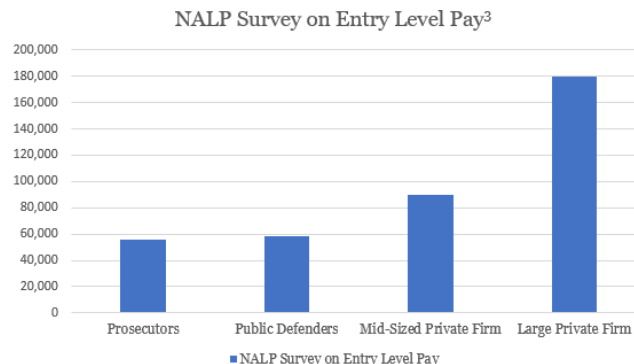
- First passed by Congress in 2008, the John R. Justice (JRJ) Grant Program provides loan repayment assistance for state prosecutors as well as state and federal public defenders. The JRJ program was created to encourage qualified attorneys to choose careers in public service through formula awards to state governments.

Mechanics of the Program

- The program is administered through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).
- A beneficiary may receive up to **\$10,000 a year** and may not receive more than **\$60,000 in total lifetime benefits** provided by the John R. Justice Grant.

Funding Concerns

- According to the 2018 BJA John R. Justice Allocation Report¹, the Department of Justice provided **\$1,817,067** in grant funding for FY18 to 42 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 U.S. territories.
- According to an *Above the Law and U.S. News and World Report* study, the average law school debt for a graduate was a staggering **\$112,776 per student** in 2017.²



- A 2018 NALP survey found that entry-level prosecutors earn an average of **\$56,200** while a new public defender earns **\$58,300** on average. In comparison, mid-sized private sector firms pay an average of **\$90,000** and large private sector firms pay an average of **\$180,000** to new hires.³

¹<https://www.bja.gov/Funding/FY18JRJAllocations.pdf>.

²<https://abovethelaw.com/2017/09/will-you-ever-be-able-to-pay-off-your-law-school-debt/>.

³<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/survey-finds-public-law-salaries-163056751.html>.