



John R. Justice: Program Overview

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.

Current Administration

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.

Current Request

Remove JRJ as a carve-out from the Byrne JAG Grant Program and make sure the program is a **separate line item** in the FY24 Senate CJS bill (S. 2321).

Support increased funding **at a minimum of \$10 million** to return the program to peak funding levels.

Restore JRJ funding in the FY24 House CJS bill (H.R. 5893).

Funding Concerns

According to the 2023 BJA John R. Justice Allocation Report, the U.S. Department of Justice provided \$4,458,436 in grant funding for FY23 to 36 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 U.S. territories [1].

According to a U.S. News and World Report study, the average law school debt for a graduate was a staggering \$111,000 per student in 2023 [2]. A 2020 Lafayette College report found that the average starting annual salary for non-supervising prosecutor was **\$68,056** [3]. 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 [4].

[1] <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/fy23-jrj-allocations.pdf>

[2] <https://www.rainn.org/news/senate-moves-end-rape-kit-backlog>

[3] <https://wagner.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/wagner-applauds-house-passage-her-debbie-smith-act>

[4] <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/survey-finds-public-law-salaries-163056751.html?guccounter=1>

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