
STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF ALASKA STATE TROOPERS



**EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL
JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM
APPLICATION**

PROGRAM NARRATIVE - SUPPLEMENTAL

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2008

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PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The State of Alaska proposes to use the funding received from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program to support the continuation of the Statewide Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force and Prosecution program.

Statewide Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force and Prosecution Program

Alaska's Statewide Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force and Prosecution program is a cooperative law enforcement and prosecution effort involving several criminal justice agencies with jurisdiction over different areas of the State, sharing the common goal of addressing drug control and violent crime problems in Alaska. The program enables law enforcement and prosecution agencies in different jurisdictions to work together as a single entity with the ability to improve communication, share intelligence, and coordinate activities. This allows for more efficient use of resources and targeting of offenders whose activities cross over jurisdictional boundaries.

Under the leadership of the Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Enforcement (ABADE), the goals and objectives of this program are to:

- Coordinate the efforts and resources of law enforcement through a statewide multi-jurisdictional task force to interdict and seize controlled substances and alcohol that are illegally distributed throughout Alaska and investigate and apprehend distributors of controlled substances and illegal alcohol;
- Provide training, technical assistance, and support to local agencies in their narcotics investigation efforts; and
- Provide special prosecution support to multi-jurisdictional task force efforts throughout the State to prosecute and convict mid and upper-level drug traffickers.

Additionally, the State proposes to use JAG funds to continue to support the State's efforts toward criminal justice records improvement.

ANALYSIS OF NEED

The critical crime problems continuing to face the State of Alaska are violent crime, juvenile involvement in violent crime, and domestic violence. Members of Alaska's law enforcement community and other criminal justice professionals have long known that the greatest contributing factor to violent crimes – including domestic violence and sexual assault – is the abusive use of drugs and alcohol. Thus, the activities that further the availability of illegal alcohol and drugs are also recognized as critical crime problems for Alaska.

These crime problems were identified as critical through an analysis of Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data at the national level and through information obtained from alcohol and drug task forces.

Violent Crime

The national UCR data for the State of Alaska reflects that between 2005 and 2006 the number of murders, aggravated assaults, forcible rapes, and robberies increased 9.9 percent, from a combined total of 4,194 in 2005 to 4,610 in 2006.ⁱ

In comparison to crime data available for the United States for 2006, Alaska's violent crime data per 100,000 people for the same year was higher than the rest of the nation.ⁱⁱ This was particularly true for the number of forcible rapes, which was 146.0 percent greater in Alaska, and for the number of aggravated assaults, which was 79.6 percent greater. The overall crime index total in Alaska was 12.7 percent greater than the rest of the nation, and was 45.3 percent greater for violent crime. These figures represent an increase in both the overall crime index total in Alaska from 2005 when it was 8.82 percent greater than the rest of the nation, and the violent crime index total when it was 34.7 percent greater than the rest of the nation.

As a result of these comparisons, the conclusion is made that violent crime in Alaska continues to be a major issue. Although juvenile arrests for violent crime continues to decrease from 15.2 percent of the arrests in 2003, 12.0 percent of the arrests in 2004, and 11.9 percent of the arrests in 2005, to 10.8 percent of the arrests in 2006,ⁱⁱⁱ juvenile involvement in crimes of violence, continues to be a concern in the State.

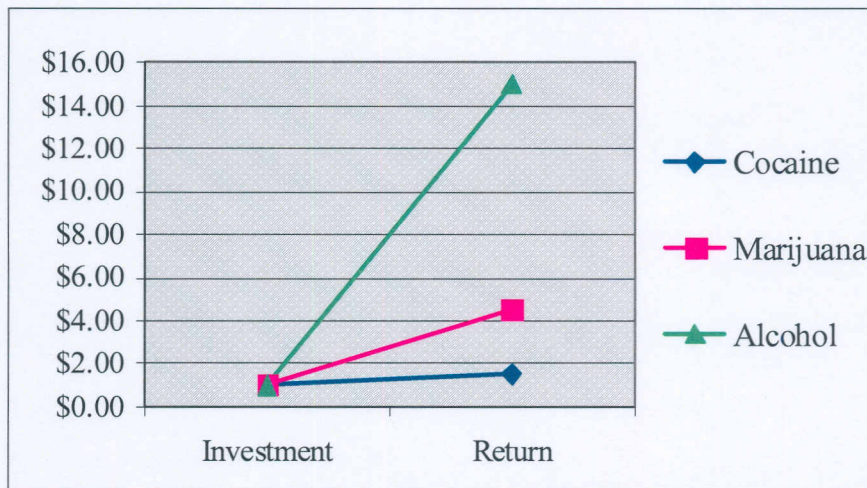
Illegal Alcohol and Drugs

Alaska has one of the highest per capita uses of controlled substances, partially attributing to the equally high per capita incidence of alcoholism, forcible rape, and suicide compared with the rest of the United States.^{iv} In 2006 1,701 arrests were made for drug abuse violations, of which 254, or 14.9 percent, were juveniles under 18 years of age. During the same year 1,940 arrests were made for liquor law violations, of which 293, or 15.1 percent, were juveniles under 18 years of age.^v Of all cases initiated by the Alaska State Troopers in 2006, 43 percent involved drugs and/or alcohol.^{vi}

Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and pharmaceuticals have been identified as the primary substances of abuse in Alaska and are the focus of most law enforcement efforts.^{vii} Alaska's criminal justice professionals recognize that of these substances, alcohol is the greatest contributing factor to violent crime, suicides, and accidental deaths, particularly in rural areas of the State.

In an effort to reduce and prevent these alcohol-related occurrences, Alaska law allows communities to restrict the sale, importation, and even possession of alcohol through the local option election process. Currently over 100 communities have voted in favor of prohibiting the sale, importation, and/or possession of alcohol. However, because alcohol is legal in other parts of the State and is easily transported to these communities via the U.S. Postal Service, local air carriers, private aircraft, and express mailing services, bootlegging alcohol has become a very lucrative business in rural Alaska.

The economics of the illegal sale of alcohol is staggering. A bootlegger can purchase a 750-milliliter bottle of alcohol legally for approximately \$10 in an urban liquor store, and sell it for \$50 in Bethel, Kotzebue, or Barrow. In the more remote communities, the same bottle can easily sell for between \$150 to over \$300, depending on supply and demand. The initial purchase for the bootlegger involves a minimal cash investment and a maximum cash return, with little risk of being caught or criminally charged.



As the chart above illustrates, the profit margin for this illegal activity greatly exceeds the profit margin experienced by even the shrewdest of drug dealers. The death and destruction visited upon these communities as a result of illegal sale, importation, and/or possession of alcohol of alcohol is immeasurable.

Enforcement of local option laws is difficult, primarily because most of the villages are not accessible by road. Aircraft, boats, or snowmobiles transport everything into these villages, including U.S. Mail. While some of these shipments arrive via commercial couriers such as scheduled flights or scheduled barges/ships, a great deal of alcohol is also imported via private aircraft, small watercraft, and snowmobile.

According to a February 2007 report based on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Alaska has the highest rate of illegal drug use.^{viii} Estimates of past-month use of any illicit drug

ranged from a low of 5.9 percent in Iowa to a high of 12.2 percent in Alaska for all persons age 12 and older. Any illicit drug use includes marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or any prescription-type psychotherapeutic used non-medically.

Marijuana is the most abused and widespread drug in Alaska.^{ix} The same SAMHSA report referenced above found that Alaska had the highest rate in the nation for both past year use of marijuana and past month use of marijuana for all persons aged 12 or older. Due to its exceptional tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content, demand for Alaskan-grown marijuana is great. Almost all of the marijuana grown in Alaska is harvested from indoor growing operations. It is not unusual for growing sites to be located in homes with hidden or underground rooms specifically designed for the cultivation of marijuana. These are often extremely sophisticated growing operations equipped with surveillance cameras and state-of-the-art timers controlling temperature, lighting, water, and humidity. Although Alaska is considered a marijuana exporting state, in 2006 ABADE was successful in dismantling an international marijuana smuggling operation that was responsible for bringing thousands of pounds of marijuana referred to as "BC Bud" into Alaska from Canada. Despite this, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's 2007 Fact Sheet for Alaska indicates the availability of BC Bud smuggled from Canada continues to increase in the Anchorage area.

According to its 2006 Annual Drug Report, ABADE reports the most significant trend in Alaska continues to be the use and manufacture of methamphetamine. The methamphetamine problem in Alaska has certain peculiarities depending upon the region of the State in which the problem is located. The Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Kenai Peninsula, and Fairbanks areas have a considerable problem with clandestine laboratories that produce methamphetamine for local consumption. Southeast Alaska, specifically the communities of Ketchikan and Juneau, tends to have relatively large amounts of methamphetamine mailed or shipped to the area in its processed and usable form. The same tends to be true for coastal commercial fishery related communities.

During 2006, ABADE seized 18 methamphetamine labs and 7,971 grams of methamphetamine. The number of meth labs seized represents a decrease of over 50 percent from 2005 which can be attributed to the combination of increased enforcement efforts coupled with newly adopted pseudoephedrine restrictions. Even so, ABADE has seen an increase in the amount of methamphetamine being imported from source cities.

Cocaine is readily available in most areas of the State and continues to be a productive drug for sale and use in Alaska. Cocaine is brought into Alaska from the lower 48 states concealed on passengers or in luggage through ports of entry such as the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. It is also shipped through the U.S. Postal Service or commercial parcel companies such as FedEx or UPS. Due to the State's remote location, outside trafficking organizations are able to resell cocaine in Alaska at grossly inflated rates.^x

The growing abuse and trafficking of prescription drugs such as OxyContin, Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, and Methadone in Alaska continues to be of concern. Methods use to obtain and subsequently abuse or sell prescription drugs include doctor shopping, pharmacy shopping, forgery, and purchasing via the Internet. In Alaska, prescription drugs have been linked to homicides, assaults, prescription fraud, and home invasion thefts.^{xi} Pharmacy burglaries are prevalent throughout the State.

PRIORITIES AND PLANNING

Parallel with the National Drug Control Strategy's priority of disrupting the market for illicit drugs,^{xii} the State of Alaska has identified the priority for JAG funding for enforcement and prosecution programs that continue to increase efforts toward the interdiction and trafficking of illegal alcohol and drugs. The State has identified the following three priority areas to be addressed:

1. The current level of violent crime and juvenile involvement in crimes of violence;
2. The high levels of domestic violence and sexual assault; and
3. The availability of and the demand for illegal alcohol and drugs.

Priority One

Determining that the abusive use of alcohol and/or drugs by young people is the primary causal factor in many violent crimes, the State has identified the need for early and consistent intervention to avoid the development of lifelong patterns of substance abuse and criminal behavior among its young people.

Aware of the high correlation between substance abuse and incidents of violent crime and the importance of providing young people with the abilities for avoiding such abuse, the State plans to continue to support programs that strengthen enforcement and prosecution efforts to provide early, consistent, and meaningful system intervention.

By targeting street and alcohol drug sales, making police officers available to enforce the State's controlled substance laws as well as local ordinances, and making prosecutors available to assist with the enforcement investigations and to prosecute cases, the system will be delivering interventions which are immediate and consistent.

Priority Two

The high levels of domestic violence and sexual assault, particularly in the rural communities, continue to be a priority issue for Alaska. The State recognizes that the greatest contributing factor to these acts of violence is the abusive use of alcohol and drugs. Further, it recognizes immediate and uniform intervention is necessary for addressing this issue.

The highest incidents of domestic and family violence take place in the State's rural communities where there is also a high rate of violent crimes involving illegal alcohol abuse. Given this, the State plans to continue to support programs which provide immediate and intensified illegal drug and alcohol enforcement and prosecution, increasing focus on illegal alcohol distribution to rural communities, and increasing offender accountability.

By supporting enforcement programs which interdict and seize illegal substances and prosecutor programs that assist with investigations and obtain convictions with sentences that include jail time with other punitive sanctions for illegal drug/alcohol distributors, thereby making drugs and/or alcohol scarce and expensive, the system will interfere with the availability of illegal substances that contribute to domestic and family violence.

Priority Three

In light of the fact that substance abuse is frequently involved in incidents of violent crime in the State, the availability of and the demand for illegal alcohol and drugs is a priority issue.

As a means of reducing the availability of drugs and alcohol and the resulting violent crime, the State plans to continue law enforcement and prosecution efforts that interdict illegal alcohol and drugs as well as disrupt the markets for these substances.

By strengthening enforcement and prosecution, targeting all levels of trafficking, interdicting shipments, seizing illegal drugs and alcohol, and prosecuting offenders with results that include jail time and forfeiture of assets, the availability of illegal alcohol and drugs will be interrupted as well as the resulting violent crime.

By concentrating on these priorities, the State aims to reduce violent crime and juvenile involvement in violent crime, to reduce the high levels of domestic violence and sexual assault, and to reduce the demand for and availability of illegal alcohol and drugs, as well as to prevent, to the greatest extent possible, accidental and suicidal deaths associated with drug and/or alcohol abuse.

COORDINATION EFFORTS

To address illegal drug and alcohol activity as well as the resulting violent crime problems in Alaska, the State plans to coordinate efforts involving Byrne Justice Assistance Grant funds with efforts involving related justice funds. These efforts support approaches that include prevention, enforcement, adjudication, corrections, and treatment.

In the area of prevention, the State provides the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in the rural and urban communities of the State through a combination of funds from the private sector and Federal discretionary grant sources. To maintain the availability of officers as instructors, training is also provided for local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers as well as Village Public Safety Officers.

In the area of enforcement and prosecution, the State utilizes the statewide multi-jurisdiction enforcement and prosecution task force approach to target the major offenders and the mid-level distributors as well as street level dealers, in addition to traditional enforcement and prosecution efforts. This is the core of the State's drug control effort. The task force approach brings together the efforts and resources of local, State, and Federal agencies. This effort is supported through Federal DEA Marijuana Eradication funding as well as local and State funding.

In conjunction with the task force approach, the State has initiated an effort that focuses on the interdiction of alcohol bound for communities where alcohol is prohibited by local ordinance. These are primarily rural villages in western Alaska located near the hub cities of Bethel, Nome, and Kotzebue. In addition to an emphasized law enforcement and prosecution approach, this effort includes a community-policing component. Currently, the community policing effort involves State law enforcement officers regularly meeting with the residents of these rural villages to increase awareness in addressing illegal alcohol and drug activity in their communities. This effort is supported through a Federal discretionary grant and State funding.

In addition to these two approaches for illegal alcohol and drug activity enforcement and prosecution in the State, the statewide regional multi-jurisdiction task force, and the emphasized alcohol interdiction program, a third program is one that provides needed resources to the State's drug enforcement and prosecution efforts. This program allows the State to increase its efforts to address marijuana production and clandestine methamphetamine laboratories as well as unsolved drug related felonies statewide. The program is supported with Federal discretionary funding.

The State's effort in the area of corrections and treatment is the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) for State Prisoners program. This effort seeks to break the cycle of drug use and violence by reducing the demand for, use, and trafficking of illegal drugs and alcohol by using the therapeutic community model as an approach to treating the most seriously addicted inmates. RSAT is supported with Federal formula grant funds and State funds.

SOURCES

ⁱ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2006, Table 4*, September 2007:
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_04.html

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2006, Table 69*, September 2007:
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_69.html

^{iv} U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *Alaska State Fact Sheet, 2007*, June 2007:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/states/alaska.html>

^v Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2006, Table 69*, September 2007:
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_69.html

^{vi} Alaska State Troopers Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Enforcement, *2006 Annual Drug Report*:
<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/AST/abade/docs/2006%20Annual%20Drug%20Report.pdf>

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *State Estimates of Substance Use from the 2004-2005 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health*, February 2007:
<http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k5/state/pdf/2k5state.pdf>

^{ix} U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *Alaska State Fact Sheet, 2007*, June 2007:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/states/alaska.html>

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Alaska State Troopers Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Enforcement, *2006 Annual Drug Report*:
<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/AST/abade/docs/2006%20Annual%20Drug%20Report.pdf>

^{xii} Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy*, February 2007:
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/policy/ndcs07/ndcs07.pdf>