

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/cuts-to-federal-funding-jeopardize-criminal-justice-initiatives-nationwide-survey-finds>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Vital federal funding that supports a variety of crime-prevention strategies, treatment programs, and innovative initiatives in our communities has decreased by 43 percent since 2010, according to [a recent survey](#) conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) and National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA). The survey examines the impact those cuts have on essential programs and staffing levels across the nation.

The second annual survey of state and local criminal justice practitioners was conducted to gain insight into the impact of these budget cuts, both those enacted as well as those still to come. The survey received more than 1,200 responses from all sectors of the criminal justice community, including law enforcement, the judicial system, corrections and community corrections, juvenile justice and prevention programs, victim assistance programs, and social services. It found that more than 75 percent of respondents reported funding cuts that led to workforce reductions, salary freezes, and drastic curtailing of the services they provide. For example, of the 346 law enforcement respondents, 75 percent saw a cut in funding between 1 and 25 percent. Because of these cuts, 64 percent reported reduction in staffing, 63 percent reported a reduction in services provided, and 58 percent reported pay freezes.

Since 2010, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program has been cut by 34 percent, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring grants by 44 percent, in-prison drug treatment supported by the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners (RSAT) program by 67 percent, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) by 75 percent, and juvenile delinquency prevention initiatives under the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by more than 50 percent. With these cuts, these programs are at historically low levels of funding.

The survey also aimed to capture the personal stories that explain firsthand what these cuts mean. Compelling testimony from respondents show the adverse impact of reduced investments from the Department of Justice.

In addition to Veras work on this survey, we are working with NDD United (Non-Defense Discretionary United), an alliance of more than 3,200 national, state, and local organizations working to stop cuts to the non-defense discretionary part of the federal budget known as sequestration. NDD United recently released [a report](#) that goes sector by sector, from public health to education to workforce development, telling the stories of those who have been impacted most by federal budget cuts in recent years.

The real-life toll of these cuts, as shown in Vera and NCJAs survey, calls on us to find a way to invest in the vital programs that do so much to serve our communities.

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