Understanding State Level Data, Can Trends Be Found?

(Synthesizing State Level Data for Criminal Justice Grant Funding)

Office of Criminal Justice Programs|5/9/2021

The Approach to Criminal Justice Grant Funding

- Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP), State of Tennessee Finance and Administration, is a State Administrating Agency (SAA) for federal grant programs.

  - OCJP applies for and receives federal-level grant funding for various criminal justice grant programs.
  - Funding is distributed to sub-recipients through a competitive grant process.
  - Sub-recipients are varied, including victim shelters, police departments, cities, judicial districts, state agencies, and universities.
  - Multiple grant funding sources are available from the federal government.

Who we are

- State of Tennessee, Finance and Administration, Office of Criminal Justice Programs
  - The Office of Criminal Justice Programs is committed to a safer Tennessee for all its citizens. OCJP functions as a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes and manages federal and state grant funds for Tennessee. While collaborating with other public and non-profit agencies, OCJP utilizes these grant monies to support innovative projects statewide in efforts to reduce criminal activity, provide services for victims of crime and promote overall enhancement of the criminal justice system in Tennessee.
- Renee Tavares, QA – Program Manager
  - Responsible for cradle-to-grave organization and compliance with applicable rules and regulations for Federally-funded grant programs. Oversight of programmatic implementation, including the analysis of federal special conditions and certifications for funding pass-through to other state government departments, local governments, and non-profit sub-recipients. Management of department databases which is used to help with data analysis.

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OCJP and Federal Funding Sources

- OCJP works with the following fund sources and Block Grants
  - Family Violence Prevention Services Act Programs (FVPSA)
  - Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)
  - Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)
  - Violence Against Women Formula Grants (STOP)
  - Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
  - National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)
  - NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)
  - Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program
  - Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)

Lessons Learned

- Initial lesson:
  - State employees that work with Federal and State funding need to synthesize data more and more and to no only look at trends but to also help State leaders make informed decisions on what has happened in the past, what is going on in the present, and to help create a more transparent view of future strategic and funding plans and how the funds work.

Lessons Learned

- Lessons learned along the way
  - This project is 4 years in the making
  - At least 2 more years' worth of work will need to go into the project
    - Building out each sub-recipient to each fund source and contract along with reporting, obligations, and expenditures will still take time
      - This will help with not only monitoring, but also federal audits for quick retrieval
  - Question remains: How to geographically show all the data in time sequence, match to victimization rates, and matching VOCA Compensation data to show the Financial Costs of Crime Victimization
- Personally, I learned when to use County, Tracts, and Block Group Information

Data Challenge #1: No Centralized Data

- Data for funding programs was held in multiple places and not stored in one central location (Data: Apples and Oranges and how to analyze and work together)
  - Sub-Recipient Database
    - Data is separated by year for fiscal ease, but this programmatically creates a data disconnect.
  - Federal Reporting Platforms
    - Funding amounts were much lower 10 years ago and could be easily managed by a program manager and the data to that fund Source
    - Currently the funds have increased and created a difficult way to look at the data holistically
    - Reporting federal systems has been a barrier
      - Quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports requiring different data points to be recorded
      - Aggregate data can be housed on a calendar year, Federal Fiscal Year, or State Fiscal Year

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Solution #1: Capture Data in One Warehouse

- Data is now housed in one Place
  - QA Department was created to not only deal with compliance issues but also to work on Data Synchronization
  - The Database Warehouse contains the following:
    - DOJ Performance Management Platform (PMT)
      - JAG
      - VOCA
    - MUSKIE VAWA Reporting (PDF)
      - STOP
      - SASP
    - Formstack
      - Generic OCJP Reports
        » Client Survey (FVPSA)
        » DTF (JAG)
        » DV Annual (FVPSA)
        » FJC (VOCA)
        » Transitional Housing (FVPSA/VOCA)

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Solution #1: Capture Data in One Warehouse

- Data is now housed in one Place, con't.
  - Individual Databases (Fiscal and Program, specific Data is now combined for ease of review and analysis
    - Reporting Data can be linked to individual databases
  - Where Data Falls Short
    - Not all data is available to get to Birds Eye on Sub-Contract
      - i.e. – matching VOCA Compensation data to show the Financial Costs of Crime Victimization
    - Tennessee Incident Base Reporting System (TIBRS) data is not matched to Sub-Recipient only to County and Jurisdictional areas (not a one-to-one correlation)
    - Data reporting is a burden on sub-recipients with a struggle on data incongruencies of data reported on the Federal level.

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Challenge #2: Defining Who Benefits from Funding

- Federal Reporting Requirements
  - Output Data
    - Sub-Recipient versus Contract #
  - Reporting Platform
    - Multiple reporting platforms are used and again are not consistent on data.
    - PMT does not differentiate data based on type of program
    - PMT does not differentiate between types of services and quantities of service, so it is on the State Administrating Agencies (SAA) to make those determinations
  - Definitions don't match up from program to program.
    - Culturally Specific
    - Under-Served

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Challenge #2: Defining Who Benefits from Funding

- The Block Grants have different definitions of Culturally Specific and Underserved
  - VAWA Grants
    - "Underserved populations" is defined as "populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General."
    - "Culturally Specific populations" is defined as "American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics."

Challenge #2: Defining Who Benefits from Funding

- The Block Grants have different definitions of Culturally Specific and Underserved, cont.
  - VOCA and FVPSA
    - "Underserved" for the purposes of these Performance Measures is referring to underserved crime types and not ethnicity (victims of DUI/DWI crashes, survivors of homicide victims, assault, adults molested as children, elder abuse, robbery, and other violent crimes)
    - "Culturally Served" - LGBTQ and other marginalized populations

Solution #2: Map and Layer the Data

- Federal Reporting
  - Phase I: Pull data from the different funding platforms into one area, to have all years housed in one database.
  - Phase 2: A work in progress – all the data will get pulled into a visual page per Sub-Recipient.
    - Data will have yearly obligations with expenditures (Phase 3)
    - Agency Name:" Sub-Recipient 1"
      - Fund: "STOP"
      - Contract: "12345"
      - Contract Obligation: $100,000.00
      - Contract Expended: $100,000.00
      - Agency Area: MAP
        » Total Population
        » County Victim Population
    - TIBRS Data
    - Reporting Outputs

OCJP Management needs data readily to make funding decisions:

- When federal funding is plentiful, it is easier to distribute the funding across the state to ensure equal access to services/training/equipment
- As funding decreases, data assists the planning process to ensure funding is making it to the those in need
- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse which is a central theme for all states to consider when engaged in strategic planning

Conclusions

- Currently, Office of Criminal Justice has the ability to find demographic pockets if needed for strategic planning.

- Specific maps have been created for federal application and Strategic Planning
  - Economic and Community Maps (courtesy TNECD)
  - QOZ from Federal Solicitations
  - STOP Implementation Plan
  - OCJP Internal Maps/Data (10 years Internal Data)

Lessons Learned

- OCJP is halfway down the road, more work needs to be done, but this is what is on the horizon
    - Building out and associating each Sub-recipient to each fund source and contract along with reporting, obligations, and expenditures will still take time.
        - This will help with not only monitoring the use of grant funds, but also allow for fast data retrieval for federal audits.
    - The question remains of how to geographically show all data in a time sequence, match to victimization rates, and match grant compensation data across all funding sources to show the financial costs of crime victimization.

Story Boards

- Introduction to Tennessee
  - https://arcg.is/14j9i51

- Partner Geographies
  - https://arcg.is/19W08C0

- Maps (Birds eye – Pocket)
  - https://arcg.is/0nOr0m0