

Funding Opportunity FY22: Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes Solicitation Webinar Transcript

- All right, I think we're ready. It's recording. All right. Hello and welcome to this webinar where we are going to learn about a funding opportunity for fiscal year 2022, within the Second Chance Act Programs of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This grant is the Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcome Solicitation, and this is the webinar describing that solicitation. We appreciate you taking the time to join us today, to learn more about these funding opportunities. Next slide, please. Today you'll be hearing from two speakers, myself, Ruth Delaney, Associate Director at Unlocking Potential at the Vera Institute of Justice, and Andre Bethea, Policy Advisor from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. Today, we're going to do a quick overview of BJA and the Second Chance Act followed by a review of the available funding opportunity that this webinar focuses on, and a quick section on additional information. The link to the solicitations is here on the right. Each of the programs we will talk about and the program that we will very specifically get into has its own solicitation. The solicitation document will outline the key information on eligibility, required components, deadlines, and instructions about the application process. We encourage you to read the applications closely for a full understanding of what is expected. All questions about solicitations will need to be directed to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, or NCJRS, as you may hear us refer to it later to ensure applicants all have access to the same information and answers. As a note, applications will have two deadlines, one to register and one to submit. So please read those deadlines carefully. Here's our agenda. We're going to have an overview. We're going to talk about all of the 2022 Second Chance Act Grant Programs. And then as I mentioned, we're going to get into the specifics of the 2022 Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes Grant, then we're going to offer you a little bit of additional information. And here I'll hand things over to Andre to give us an overview of BJA.

- Thanks, Ruth. My name is Andre Bethea, and I'm the Policy Advisor here at the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, while working at the unit that deals with corrections, reentry, and justice reform. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is located within the Office of Justice Programs or OJP. OJP provides a wide range of services to the criminal justice community in the forms of grants, training, technical assistance and research. Although our focus today is on BJA funding opportunities, there are other OJP offices shown on the slide that offer additional grants and programs to support our shared public safety missions. The COPS Office and the Office on Violence Against Women are two other DOJ components that provide important research resources for the criminal justice community. Next slide. Here at the Bureau of Justice Assistant or BJA, our mission is to provide leadership and services and grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support local state and tribal law enforcement in achieving safer communities. Next slide. Today's grant programming that deals with improving reentry education and employment outcomes is a part of the Second Chance Act suite of programs. The Second Chance Act was signed in 2008 and was reauthorized in 2018. This is the funding to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for youth and adults leaving detention and incarceration to return to their communities. To date over \$500 million in grants to develop, implement, and test strategies has been administered to state, local and tribal governments as well as nonprofits. Next. So through Second Chance Act Funding BJA provides grant funding, which is used as seed money for grantees to think about proof of concept or to expand or enhance existing programmatic activities. In addition, through Second Chance Act Funding, BJA provides training and technical assistance to grantees, and that allows them to do the work with fidelity in line with the latest research and also provides project management and content expertise. The National Reentry Resource Center supports all of the Second Chance Act training and technical assistance providers and the reentry field. Next slide. I just wanted to make sure we have a plug for that particular clearing house. The National Reentry Resource Center is currently housed at the American Institutes for Research. The primary mission of the NRRC is to advance the knowledge base of the reentry field. Back to you, Ruth.

- Thank you, Andre. As I mentioned, I work at the Vera Institute of Justice and Vera is a training and technical assistance provider to grantees of BJA that focus on implementing education and employment training. And as Andre mentioned, as part of the Second Chance Act structure, grantees get access to this support as well as funding to pursue their grants. This includes assistance to grantees, as I mentioned, focused on education, employment and reentry. And it also includes connecting grantees to peer networks, best practices and resources. In this work, we are joined by our partners, RTI International, who provide subject matter expertise to the grantees with which we work. They are a firm of subject matter experts in

secondary and post-secondary education as well as evaluation. And they can provide content expertise, research-based solutions and objective and multidisciplinary analysis. We're now headed in to the next part of this webinar, where we will be providing an overview of the current solicitations available and more specifically getting into the Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes solicitation. Andre.

- Thanks Ruth. So let's dig in. Before we dig in, actually let's look at the suite of Second Chance Act Funding opportunities provided at fiscal year 2022. Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes Program is just one of the many SCA grant programs that you or your jurisdiction can actually apply for in fiscal year 2022. Next slide. All right. Second Chance Act, Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes. In this solicitation, the Bureau of Justice Assistance seeks applications for funding reentry services and programs focused on strengthening education and employment outcomes for individuals returning from incarceration. The Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes Program is designed to improve correctional educational and employment programs that serve individuals during incarceration and throughout their period of reentry into the community. It promotes an evidence-based and data-informed approach that will provide meaningful opportunities, interrupt the cycle of unemployment, and promote reentry success for formerly incarcerated adults. So there are two deadlines, The Grants.gov deadline, is June 7th, 2022 at 8:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Let's emphasize that. Years past it used to be later than this, we're now cutting things off at 8:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. The second deadline, right? There's a two-pronged process. So the JustGrants deadline is June 13th, 2022, again at 8:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. We will repeat both deadlines quite a few times in this webinar. Next slide. So the purpose of the solicitation is to enhance correctional systems' ability to implement and expand education and employment programs that serve individuals during incarceration and throughout their period of reentry into the community. Programs funded under this solicitation should emphasize strong partnerships with corrections, parole, probation, education, workforce development, and reentry service providers. Programs should be focused on serving individuals during the three-year period before release, as well as providing ongoing service provision throughout the participants' period of re-entry into the community. These programs will work to reduce recidivism, promote re-entry success, enhance employment prospects for incarcerated adults re-entering the workforce and improve overall public safety and public health. Next slide. So let's talk about eligibility. Well, city or township government, county governments, Native American tribal governments that are federally recognized. Nonprofits having a 501 status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, state governments. So eligibility seems to be just about everyone. State, local, tribal governments, as well as nonprofits having a 501 status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education. BJA will consider applications under which two or more entities would carry out the federal award. However, only one entity may be the applicant, the others must be proposed as subrecipients or subgrantees. Next slide. Additional eligibility requirements. Should you choose to apply for this funding opportunity, there is an Executive Order that talks about advancing safe policing for safe communities. Again, Executive Order 13929 Safe Policing for Safe Communities. The Attorney General determined that all state, local and university or college law enforcement agencies must be certified by an approved independent credentialing body or have started the certification process to be eligible for fiscal year 2022 DOJ discretionary grant funding. Certification requirement also applies to law enforcement agencies receiving DOJ discretionary grant funding through a subaward. To become certified, the law enforcement agency must meet two mandatory conditions. Number one, the agency's use-of-force policies adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws. And number two, the agency's use-of-force policies prohibit chokeholds except in situations where use of deadly force is allowed by law. For detailed information on the certification requirement, please visit the link that you see in this slide. Back to you Ruth.

- Thank you, Andre. So this solicitation has two categories and I'm going to walk through some information about what is the goal and the objectives, and some other information related to these two categories. So starting with category one, which is improving correctional education. As you can see, the goal is to improve the educational and vocational education programs available to individuals incarcerated in prisons and jails and upon reentry to the community. Services should begin prior to release from incarceration and continue throughout a participant's period of re-entry. The objectives of this grant are to implement or expand educational and vocational programs for incarcerated adults that result in improved educational outcomes as measured by literacy attainment, high school equivalents, high school and higher education diplomas, certifications, and other credentials. The other objective is to demonstrate increased collaboration between educational providers and corrections, community supervision providers, and other reentry stakeholders. The deliverable for category one, as well as category two, you'll see this twice. There are two deliverables, the

first is the development of an action plan with input from BJA and an assigned technical assistance coach, which should be submitted within six months of receiving final budget approval. And the second deliverable is the final report at the end of the project period. For category one, there are seven awards available, and the amount of each award could be up to \$900,000. The period of performance, meaning when the grant would start, would be October 3rd, 2022, very specifically at 12:00 AM. And the period of duration is three years or 36 months. In category one again, improving correctional education, there are statutorily allowable uses of funds, and these are to establish, improve, or expand educational and vocational programming and services for incarcerated adults, including competency-based learning over a range of services from literacy, high school diploma or equivalency higher education, to labor market needs-informed vocational education. Getting into category two, the goal is to provide career training, including subsidized employment when part of a training program, to adults incarcerated in prisons and jails and upon reentry to the community. Services should begin prior to release from incarceration and continue throughout the participants' period of reentry. It should also remove regulatory employment barriers for incarcerated individual adults returning to communities. The objectives of this category are to implement or expand job readiness assessments, individualized case plans, and employment-related services for incarcerated adults that result in improved job readiness, employment attainment and retention. Also to articulate and implement a robust vision for reentry employment with transitional supports and a focus on employment. As with category one, the deliverables are to develop an action plan with input from BJA and an assigned technical assistance coach as I mentioned before, within six months, and a final report at the end of the project period. There are also a couple of additional requirements for category two. These include that eligible category two applicants must commit to restrict internet access to people in prison as appropriate to ensure public safety and facility security, that would also apply to any incarcerated person in whichever setting they might be in. Statutory priority areas are that in category two applicants can receive priority consideration for applications that provide assessment of local demand for employees in the geographic areas to which incarcerated individuals are likely to return, as well as job training grants that look at the local labor or job markets in communities where individuals leaving incarceration are returning. Conducting individualized reentry career planning upon the start of incarceration or post-release employment planning for each individual served under the grant. To demonstrate connections to employers within the local community and to track and monitor employment outcomes. These are the priority areas. Finally, this 2022 grant opportunity will award up to 17 awards with a dollar amount of up to \$900,000 per award. The performance period starts as with category one, on October 3rd, 2022, and the period of performance, which is the length of the grant would be 36 months or three years. In category two, there are statutorily allowable uses of funds. This is a list that you can consult in the solicitation. These include establishing, improving or expanding career training programs. Continually assessing local demand for employees in a geographic area. Developing partnerships with local employers to increase the quality and quantity of training, skills-building and pre-apprenticeship programs available to incarcerated people. Conducting individualized reentry career planning programs, subsidizing wages or other employment costs as part of a career training program. Training corrections and service provider leadership. And tracking and monitoring employment outcomes. For more specific information, please read these details in the solicitation. Andre.

- Thank you, Ruth. So now we're going to talk about requirements for all categories. This is both category one and category two. So let's start off with correctional partner, Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding, we usually say MOA or MOU. Non-profit organizations and non-correctional government applicants must include as an attachment an Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement that clearly demonstrates in an established, collaborative relationship between the applicant and the correctional agencies, that number one, oversee the specific facility or facilities from which the applicant proposes to recruit the target population, reentering population, number two, oversee community corrections, that's probation and/or parole for the target population. So the MOAs, MOUs must include the following information, the roles and responsibilities for staff from both agencies involved in the program. That means this specific program. That means for fiscal year 2022, Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes Program, not an MOA/MOU that was already established for previous work. You must have an MOU that speaks specifically to the grant. Number two, terms of access to the correctional facility or facilities for program staff. If applicants are unable to conduct in-reach into correctional facilities, the application should explain the reasons why such access is not practicable. Information on pre-release programming and interventions provided by the correctional agency to each participant. The MOA/MOU should also include the data elements and performance measures that the partnering agencies will provide or assist the grantee in obtaining for the purposes of measuring the impact of grant activities. Lastly, the

MOA/MOU must describe the evidence-based programming and/or intervention for the target population. Next slide. Again, with requirements for all categories, we're looking at pre-release access. Participants are expected to be screened, assessed, and identified for program participation pre-release. During the post-release phase of the reentry program, participants will receive case management services and be connected to evidence-based programming designed to assist in the transition from prison or jail to the community so that it is safe and successful. Where feasible, case management services and evidence-based programming should begin during the pre-release phase. Tribal Authorizing Resolution. This is only for those applicants that are tribal nations. An application in response to this solicitation may require inclusion of tribal authorizing documentation as an attachment. If applicable, the applicant will submit the tribal authorizing documentation by uploading it as an attachment in JustGrants. See the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for information on Tribal Authorizing Resolution. Again, requirements for all categories. All right, budget information, applicants must budget funding to travel to DOJ-sponsored grant meetings. Applicants should estimate the cost of travel and accommodations for teams of three to attend two meetings for three days each in Washington, D.C.. Also, as we're discussing the budget, should you be awarded to funding, you will be awarded only \$100,000 initially until your action plan is actually approved by BJA during the first six months of the grant period. All right, so let me just say that again. If you are awarded, you will only receive up to \$100,000 in the beginning, and that's purely for planning and for you to complete the action plan along with your technical assistance coach, who will help you work through the action plan, and when it is approved by BJA, then you will have access to the other funds. So since we're talking about budget, let's talk about unallowable uses for award funds. In addition to the unallowable cost identified in the DOJ Grant Financial Guide, award funds may not be used for the following, prizes, rewards, entertainment, trinkets or any type of monetary incentive. You cannot use the funding for client stipends. You may not use the funding for gift cards. You may not use the funding to purchase, lease, finance a vehicle. And lastly, you cannot use any of the funding for food and beverage. Next slide. So, Ruth mentioned statutory priority considerations. Now, I'm going to talk about current Office of Justice Programs, priorities considerations for supporting Executive Order 13985, which is Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. In support of Executive Order 13985 OJP will give priority consideration to applications that include projects that will promote racial equity and the removal of barriers to access and opportunity for communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized and adversely affected by inequality when making award decisions. To receive this consideration, the applicant must describe how the proposed project will address potential inequities and barriers to equal opportunity, and/or contribute to greater access to services for underserved and historically marginalized populations. In support of Executive Order 13985 OJP will also give priority consideration to applicants that can demonstrate their capabilities and competencies for implementing their proposed project are enhanced because the applicant, or at least one proposed subrecipient that will receive at least 30% of the requested award funding as demonstrated in the budget worksheet and budget narrative identifies as a culturally specific organization. So to receive this additional priority consideration, applicants must describe how being a culturally specific organization or funding the culturally specific subrecipient organizations will enhance their ability to implement the proposed project and should also specify which culturally specific populations are intended or expected to be served or to have their needs addressed under the proposed project. Also let's emphasize again, that's 30% of the final budget that you receive that priority consideration as relates to culturally specific organizations. All right, let's go into some additional information. Again, earlier you heard me mention the dual deadlines, it is a two-step process. So all applications will be submitted to DOJ in two steps. Step one, the applicant must submit by the Grants.gov deadline, which is June 7th, 2022, 8:59 PM Eastern standard time. The required application for federal assistance standard form, or we call it SF-424 and a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form when they register in Grants.gov. Again, the link is provided. To register in Grants.gov, the applicant will need to ensure that it's System for Award Management or SAM registration is current. Therefore applicants, if you are considering before, long before the June 7th initial step one deadline, you should check your SAM or System for Award Management registration, make sure it's current. Step two in this application process, the applicant must then submit the full application, including attachments in JustGrants at JustGrants.usdoj.gov. To be considered timely, the full application must be submitted in JustGrants by the JustGrants application deadline, which is June 13th, 2022 at 8:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. OJP encourages applicants to review the How to Apply section in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide and the JustGrants website for more information, resources and training. Again, two-step process, dual deadlines. Grants.gov deadline, June 7th, 2022, 8:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Then there's a JustGrants deadline, June 13th, 2022, 8:59 PM Eastern Time. All right, BJA has also provided an application checklist. So let's go through it. Confirm that your System Award Management or SAM registration information. Register in

Grants.gov, find the funding opportunity and access the application package. Submit the application for Federal Assistance standard form the SF-424 and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form in Grants.gov, that's June 7th, 2022. And then submit the application in JustGrants by June 13th, 2022. The DOJ application submission checklist is another resource to help remind you of the different pieces within this application checklist. So let's just go through some of the content of the application submission. The critical application elements are your Federal Assistance standard form, the SF-424 clearly is important that's my third time saying it. Your proposal abstract. Then you have a proposal narrative, that's the one that's 20 pages. Then you will have a budget worksheet and budget narrative, it's web-based. The form is provided and you can cut and paste and put in your actual narrative on the form. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Correctional Agency, if in fact, you, the applicant are not a Correctional Agency. So that goes for not only non-profit organizations that are applying for this funding, it also goes for government entities that are not correctional agencies. You must have a Memorandum of Understanding with the correctional agency. Budget and associated documentation. Only if this is applicable to you, there's an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that must be provided. There's a financial management and system of internal controls questionnaire. There's a disclosure of process related to executive compensation only if it's applicable to you. Next slide. Some of the other content of application submissions, the additional application components again, will win all the tribal authorizing resolutions only if this is applicable to you. There is a Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity statement that must be submitted. There's a request and justification for employee compensation or waiver only if this applies to you. Then we have some disclosures and assurances. Again, this is about I'm mentioning again, the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, that form must be completed. Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items. There's a DOJ Certified Standard Assurance. There are DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters, and a certification that promotes free workplace requirements. Applicant Disclosure and Justification, if in fact, you have been labeled as a DOJ high risk grantee. If that applies to you must submit a statement requirement. Now let's look at the applicant review information. So BJA reviews applications including the peer review process. Different weight is given to each section of the narrative and supporting materials. The requirements for each section are detailed in the solicitation, so please review closely. You'll also see how the attachments like timelines and resumes count towards particular sections. Other important considerations for BJA includes geographic diversity, strategic priorities, available funding, past performance, if you were a grantee previously, and the extent to which the budget worksheet and budget narrative, which are all web-based at this point, accurately explain project costs that are reasonable, necessary, and otherwise allowable under federal law and applicable federal cost principles. Now we're going to talk about JustGrants. JustGrants offers a streamlined end-to-end process, enabling applicants and grantees to move seamlessly through the full grants management life cycle. JustGrants gives applicants and award recipients, new ways to manage their own entity information and that of users in the system. JustGrants Support. Where we have the recorded application sessions to provide applicants with information on how to submit an application for funding to DOJ. These include an overview presentation, as well as a walkthrough of the application process, starting with submitting an application at Grants.gov through submitting an application package in JustGrants. More specifically, the sessions ensure that applicants know how to navigate and use JustGrants, including how to access and utilize DOJ's new grants management system to apply for funding. I will search and find open DOJ funding opportunities. The steps actions that are necessary that applicants need to take prior to applying for funding. Like again, your SAM registration. The JustGrants different roles, meaning entity administrator, the application submitter, those are all different roles needed to ensure users are prepared to take the necessary actions to submit an application. Also, the JustGrants Support training is there to help you navigate and use the system and find resources, including training materials and job aids. Again, all this is being provided for you in preparation for you submitting an application in JustGrants. Next slide. Thank you. So we have additional JustGrants Support. Again, all this is available at justicegrants.usdoj.gov, where you will go through frequently asked questions, user support, resources, news, and updates. Next slide. There are some additional resources available to applicants, particularly those who are new to this process. BJA created a grant applicant education webinar series, It's found at the link on the screen. It can help you walk through the process of applying for a BJA Award. We previously recorded webinars designed to assist potential applicants interested in applying for BJA funding opportunities. We also want to go through a list of the recommended resources on the web. You have the OJP Funding Resource Center, the DOJ Grants Financial Guide, the OJP Grants Financial Management and Grant Administration training. The OJP Grant Application Resource Guide, the National Reentry Resource Center, as well as the National Institute of Justice's CrimeSolutions.gov, which provides information on an array of evidence-based practices, interventions, as well as other best practices. Lastly, on this page, you will find important contact

for grants.gov and NCJRS.gov. We've got Grants.gov information, JustGrants information, as well as the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, which you heard me reference as NCJRS. All three will be crucial for you and two you and your entire team as you move through this application process. All right, we're at the end of the webinar, again, my name is Andre Bethea, I'm a Policy Advisor here at the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. I think, I'm sending special thanks to my colleague, Ruth Delaney, over at the Vera Institute of Justice. And we're signing off, with the Second Chance Act solicitations are available at this link. Application deadlines vary for each program, so please read carefully.