

## **City of Austin Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program Abstract**

Applicant: City of Austin  
Title of Project: City of Austin Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program  
Category: Category 1: Planning and Implementation

1. Rundberg Neighborhood Boundaries:

The geographic boundaries are: Research Boulevard/Anderson Lane to the south; railroad tracks (just west of Metric) and Lamar to the west; Interstate 35 and Cameron Road to the east; and, Rutland Drive, Braker Lane, Floradale Drive, and Applegate Drive to the north. (Please see Attachment 6, Map)

2. The cross-sector partnership includes:

City of Austin BCJI stakeholders are referred to as the Rundberg Revitalization Team. The team is currently comprised of multiple individuals from the City of Austin (Austin Police Department, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Public Works, and Solid Waste Services Code Enforcement); University of Texas (Department of Sociology and Population Research Center); Housing Authority of the City of Austin (privately managed housing authority); and Community Leaders. All partner agencies have committed time and resources for the duration of the three year project and will participate as members of the strategy teams.

3. The Fiscal Agent is the City of Austin Police Department.

4. The target neighborhood's need for the Implementation Grant:

The entire Rundberg area accounts for a high percentage of emergency 9-1-1 calls for service and 11% of violent crime, 7% of property crime, and 9% of Part II crimes citywide. Violent crime within Rundberg is highly concentrated, with less than 1% of blocks citywide accounting for over 7% of violent crimes citywide. While verifiable reentry data specific to Rundberg does not currently exist, APD was able to determine that approximately 188 offenders were recently released to addresses in the neighborhood and 178 are on the street or have outstanding warrants.

High levels of poverty, disinvestment, unemployment, and criminal activity within the neighborhood are indicative of the deep-rooted criminal element, discouraging redevelopment and stifling economic growth. The visibility of open-air drug markets, prostitution, nuisance property, and loitering on street corners, in parking lots, and around homes and businesses contribute to the unrest. Undocumented residents are reportedly fearful to contact the police as witnesses or victims of crime due to fear of deportation or other repercussions.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 30% of Rundberg Neighborhood residents are living below the poverty level and 19% of households receive food stamps. The racial makeup of the neighborhood is highly diverse, including Hispanic, Vietnamese, Black or African American, White, Latin American, Asian, American Indian, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander.

Approximately 64% of the population speak a language other than English, and of those individuals, 37% speak English very well and 63% less than very well. Unemployment across the census tracts ranges from 5 to 14%. Median earnings (for individuals over 25 who receive earnings) are \$21,189, with a majority of residents working in construction, the trades, retail, and restaurants. Of particular note, youth under the age of 18 comprise 30% of the neighborhood's population. The Austin Independent School District (AISD) manages four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school within the neighborhood. According to AISD, 95% of youth attending the six schools (approximately 6,000) are considered economically disadvantaged, 59% have limited English proficiency (over 30 different languages are spoken), and 75% are identified as at-risk for dropping out of school. The schools are not considered strong, the majority rated acceptable and one unacceptable.

#### 5. Program Goals

The goals of the City of Austin BCJI Program are to continue to improve public safety; to address social impacts including physical disorder, social economic status and resources, and collective efficacy; and, to ensure the long-term planning and implementation of revitalization strategies within the Rundberg neighborhood.

#### 6. A description of the strategies to be used / implemented

The efforts of this collaboration will result a continuum of strategies to comprehensively address the specific crimes of robbery, aggravated assault, other assaults, prostitution, narcotics, and weapons violations. The collaboration will also focus on strategies to address social disorder, language barriers, reentry, at-risk youth, nuisance abatement, and trust between undocumented residents and police. Identified evidence and research-based strategies include:

- Compstat
- Operation Ceasefire
- Drug Market Intervention
- Hot Spot Policing
- The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement (2010 research-based COPS guide); BJA Guidance for Building Communities of Trust (2011 BJA publication); Building Our Way Out of Crime, the Transformative Power of Police-Community Developer Partnerships (2010 COPS guide); and, Overcoming Language Barriers: Solutions for Law Enforcement (2007 COPS guide)
- A quasi-experimental research design that compares changes in reported crime, calls for service, and disorder in the Rundberg neighborhood to other high crime areas of the city and to citywide trends

7. The proposed project period is three years: October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2015

8. The City requests \$1,000,000 in federal funding