

# **2011 John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program “JRJ Grant”**

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One pressing challenge facing our criminal justice system today is the retention of those who serve everyday to ensure that our communities are protected and the rule of law is upheld—including our prosecutors and public defenders.

Student loan debt is consistently cited as the overwhelming reason why attorneys decline or leave positions as prosecutors and public defenders. The vast majority of law students borrow to finance their legal education and the rising costs have imposed staggering debt. Furthermore, public defender and prosecutor salaries have failed to keep pace with the escalating cost of education.

Acknowledging this challenge, Congress enacted the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act (42 U.S.C. § 3797cc-21), named for the late John Reid, Justice of South Carolina, to encourage qualified attorneys to choose careers as prosecutors and public defenders and to continue in that service.

The John R. Justice (JRJ) Program provides loan repayment assistance for local, state, and federal public defenders and local and state prosecutors who commit to continued employment as public defenders and prosecutors for at least three years.

Congress provided the first year of funding for the JRJ Program in fiscal year 2010. Arizona’s allocation for second year funding is \$149,076. The Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the Governor-designated entity administering the JRJ Program in Arizona.

The JRJ Program requires equal distribution of awards between prosecutors and public defenders. In fiscal year 2010, 29 attorneys serving as public defenders and 29 attorneys serving as prosecutors received funds through the JRJ Program. The AOC will strive to achieve similar award distributions for fiscal year 2011. Awards are renewable for two years, however all awards are subject to federal funding of the JRJ Program.

**To receive consideration, applications must be postmarked by  
Friday, October 28, 2011**