



ATF Fact Sheet

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF-LED VIOLENT CRIME IMPACT TEAMS INITIATIVE

Purpose

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is the lead federal law enforcement agency in the Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCIT) initiative, which uses innovative technology, analytical investigative resources and an integrated federal, state and local law enforcement strategy to identify, disrupt, arrest and prosecute the most violent criminals in 29 U.S. cities.

The VCIT concept was modeled after Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) successes with additional ATF resources redirected from across the United States to target specific areas that had an unacceptable level of violent crime, particularly gun-related homicides, as compared to the national average.

Goals

VCIT's primary goal is to reduce the number of homicides and other violent crimes committed with firearms. The positive results of reducing a community's incidents of homicide and other violent crimes committed with firearms, through the removal of those responsible, will have a lasting effect in making that community safer.

Cities

The 29 cities are: Albuquerque, N.M.; Atlanta, Ga.; Baltimore; Baton Rouge, La; Birmingham, Ala.; Camden, N.J.; Columbus, Ohio; Fresno, Calif.; Greensboro, N.C.; Hartford, Conn.; Houston; Laredo, Texas; Las Vegas; Los Angeles; Mesa, Ariz.; Miami; Milwaukee, Wis.; Minneapolis; New Orleans; Orlando, Fla.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Richmond, Va.; San Bernardino, Calif.; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Tampa, Fla.; Tucson, Ariz.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Washington.

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Strategy

VCIT takes a six-point approach to reducing violent crime:

- Use technology and human intelligence to identify geographic areas within 29 cities with violent firearms crime.
- Identify the “worst of the worst” violent offenders, the criminal organizations that support them and armed career criminals.
- Use criminal investigations and investigative tools and resources to disrupt and dismantle criminal activity being perpetrated by the identified individuals and organizations.
- Arrest and prosecute the individuals and their associates in the federal or state jurisdiction that lends itself to the maximum penalty.
- Work with community leaders to cultivate solid and sustained commitment between the community’s residents and law enforcement.
- Evaluate results on a regular basis to assess VCIT progress toward achieving the initiative’s goals.

VCIT Composition

VCITs consist of federal agents and support personnel working with state and local law enforcement, and bring together the unique, interdependent assets and cutting edge technology of all participating agencies. The Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Marshals Service, federal and state prosecutors, state and local law enforcement officers and federal and state parole officers may participate in addition to ATF.

ATF Resources

In addition to its special agents, intelligence research specialists and investigative assistants, ATF expertise consists of:

- Violent Crime Analysis Branch;
- National Tracing Center;
- National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN);
- Regional Crime Gun Centers;
- National Laboratory Centers;
- Firearms Technology Branch;
- Explosives detection canines;
- Field Intelligence Groups; and
- Headquarters Field Intelligence Support Branch.

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VCIT Results

- Since the initiative's launch in June 2004 through the end of fiscal 2006, VCITs have arrested more 9,800 gang members, drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms and other criminals on local, state or federal charges.
- The arrested include more than 1,650 "worst of the worst" offenders.
- More than 11,100 firearms were recovered.
- Four cities were added to the VCIT program in FY 2007 (Mesa, Ariz.; Orlando, Fla.; San Bernardino, Calif.; and San Juan, Puerto Rico).
- *VCIT Best Practices*, published in December 2005, identified the specific practices that contributed most to the program's success and will be used to strengthen future VCIT deployments.

Southwest Border Initiative

- The Southwest Border Initiative, which began in FY 2006, is a broad-based ATF strategy, designed to focus ATF resources on firearms violence, violent offenders and firearms trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico Border.
- This initiative has led to the identification of violent criminal groups in Laredo, Texas, including the Mexican Mafia, Hermanos de Pistoleros Latino and the Texas Syndicate, which are responsible for murders, drive-by shootings, aggravated robberies and other violent criminal activity.
- ATF is working in conjunction with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to proactively investigate and prosecute these violent criminals with the goal of creating a measurable and sustainable impact on violent firearms-related crime.

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