

Applicants are encouraged to review the Civil Rights Compliance section under “Additional Requirements” in this announcement.

Weed and Seed Strategy

The Weed and Seed strategy aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity. The Weed and Seed initiative is a community-based, comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. It is designed for neighborhoods with persistent high levels of serious crime and corresponding social problems. Weed and Seed Communities (WSC) must be developed in partnership with many local organizations—including the United States Attorney’s Office (USAO)—to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in a community primarily through the redeployment of existing public and private resources into the community. WSC also help to address related social problems that without proper intervention often lead to violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity.

The strategy recognizes the importance of involving community residents intimately familiar with local community conditions and community decision-makers who have the responsibility, authority and control of existing community public and private resources. These groups must work together in identifying and solving the problems in their neighborhoods.

It is particularly important to emphasize the essential role of the faith-based community’s involvement, in all aspects of Weed and Seed strategy formulation at the local level. The President’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, which inform this guideline, recognize the critical role these organizations play in responding to the victims of crime and violence as well as the other problems within these high-risk neighborhoods.

Weed and Seed sites range broadly in size and population density, depending on whether they are rural (which may include multiple small towns and villages) or urban. The size and population density of a designated focus area should be of sufficient magnitude to present a clear and compelling problem that warrants the dedication and concentration of existing community resources. The average population in a Weed and Seed community is approximately 20,000 residents. CCDO will consider those sites with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. Given the limited funding available, CCDO is focusing on communities that exhibit the highest levels of crime, not necessarily those with a high proportion of crime compared to their population size. ***As an exception, CCDO will consider rural and Indian Tribe and Tribal Communities with a population of 3,000 or more.*** [Please refer to the “Definitions” Appendix].

Four elements make up the two-pronged Weed and Seed approach: law enforcement; community policing; prevention, intervention, and treatment; and neighborhood restoration.

- The “Weed” portion of the initiative focuses on crime control involving traditional law enforcement (e.g., tactics, undercover operation, stings), corrections-related ex-offender supervision activities (including probation and parole) and community policing (which is the bridge that links law enforcement to prevention, intervention, treatment and neighborhood revitalization -- or law enforcement personnel to community residents’ needs); and

- The “Seed” portion of the initiative focuses on community revitalization involving prevention, intervention, and treatment services provision and neighborhood restoration.

[See Weed and Seed Example Appendix for more information.]

We strongly suggest that every Weed and Seed community seriously consider, among activities/efforts, addressing the control and support of serious and violent ex-offenders returning to the Weed and Seed designated community. The returning ex-offender population presents a broad range of systemic issues that need to be addressed through enhanced and coordinated supervision. Community corrections, parole, law enforcement—as well as other aspects of the criminal justice system including the judicial (e.g., reentry courts) and victim/witness components—must work with community-based structures such as neighborhood associations. In addition, this population needs enhanced and coordinated support services related to housing, employment, remedial education, health and mental health, substance abuse and other welfare related services.

Reentry programs can satisfy both the "Weeding" and "Seeding" sides of the Weed and Seed strategy. Weed and Seed funding can be used for managing and supervising returning offender populations (through law enforcement, corrections, and judicial systems) as well as for development of “support services” within the context of intervention and treatment – to include those involving health and mental health, employment, substance abuse prevention, housing, welfare, faith-based, and transportation services.

Collaboration, Coordination and Community Participation = Resolution

Collaboration or working together for the common purpose of public safety is critical for the successful implementation of the Weed and Seed strategy. To be successful, however, it requires community participation. Collaboration must commence with those who are closest to the problem: the residents and those public and private decision-makers who manage the diverse services needed to transform a troubled community into a safe and desirable place to live. Collaboration requires organization and demands a clear and well-defined focus that articulates a specific problem and a corresponding response, including resources through which the residents and decision-makers can affect significant change. Example—truancy program: convene appropriate residents familiar with the problem together with the public and private school systems, faith-based and other community-based organizations, health, mental health, and welfare organizations to assess the extent of the problem and consider an effective response to ameliorate the problem.

Collaboration is closely aligned with coordination. **Coordination** involves organizing and positioning the necessary public and private resources in a complementary and mutually supportive manner, into a systemic response. Effective coordination also results in achievement of complementary goals among community organizations pertaining to types of services and methods of delivery (e.g., Safe Havens that focus on after-school programs) and complete services rather than competing, overlapping and duplicative services. Example—truancy program: developing a program focus involving community

education about the problem and its potential consequences, such as school failure and drop-out, and/or meetings with the parents with whom the problem is most acute.

Successful collaboration and effective coordination that involve **community participation** often create permanent channels of communication, good will and continuing partnerships among the residents, decision-makers and the participating organizations. It usually fosters similar strategic efforts in the target area and other parts of the community that are also impacted by crime and corresponding social problems that require effective prevention, intervention, and treatment activities.

A Weed and Seed Steering Committee comprised of decision-makers and residents can affect coordination community-wide both within and among participating public and private organizations. Steering Committees must:

- address their problems one at a time in a deliberative and open fashion;
- involve the appropriate residents and decision-makers from the outset;
- focus on effective practice to create new or revitalized services; and
- institutionalize the services quickly within appropriate existing community organizations.

Identifying and Redeploying Resources

CCDO disseminates funding to local sites to support their Weed and Seed strategies. These Federal funds are limited and inherently temporary in nature. This level of funding cannot possibly provide the entire amount of resources required to transform and revitalize an area experiencing persistent high levels of serious violent crime and social/economic decay, much less a single programmatic effort in its entirety. Grant funds should instead be used in concert with the pool of existing community resources that are being redeployed to address identified problems/programs in order to enhance overall impact and fill initial programmatic funding gaps.

Weed and Seed sites become adept in utilizing in-kind resources from Federal, state, and local agencies, foundations, and other organizations. Because of the fundamental strengths of a collaborative approach and the participation of key decision-makers, a Weed and Seed site is well-placed to capitalize on the numerous funding sources in both the public and private sectors. (See Appendix 11 *Weed and Seed Example*).

FEDERAL FUNDING SUPPORT

CCDO will award up to **\$1million** in Weed and Seed funding to each site over the 5-year eligibility period. The incremental funding distribution by year is as follows:

Year 1:	\$175,000	
Year 2:	\$250,000	
Year 3:	\$275,000	
Year 4:	\$200,000	
Year 5:	\$100,000	Total: \$1,000,000

Awards will be made pursuant to the achievement of performance measures set by the site and approved by OJP. **The number of WSC sites CCDO expects to award in Fiscal Year 2007 is subject to funding availability.**

DEVELOPING THE WEED AND SEED STRATEGY

Goals, objectives, tasks, implementation plans, and evaluation criteria should be developed for one Weed and one Seed program effort which relate to the component areas, as appropriate, during the pre-award development period. A community should devote roughly equivalent time, resources, and effort to both the Weeding and Seeding parts of the strategy.

The elements of a site's strategy should be inter-related and part of an overall strategy that will reduce crime, increase public safety, and improve the neighborhood. The Weeding strategy must be about addressing and reducing crime and it must complement the Seeding strategy. ***CCDO expects that at minimum two efforts (i.e., one Weed and one Seed) must be fully described and its sustainability accounted for at the end of the first two fiscal years of development by the Weed and Seed site through an existing community or state agency (e.g., reentry services managed by the community correctional center). Weed and Seed Site leadership should initiate a minimum of two new ventures by the beginning of the third year of funding for implementation throughout the second half of their tenure as WSC.*** The speed with which a site develops and institutionalizes further efforts will impact further funding decisions

Sites are strongly encouraged to have at least one Safe Haven (i.e., a multi-purpose human services center) in the designated focus area or indicate why it is outside the area. The Safe Haven is a mechanism to organize and deliver an array of youth and adult oriented human services in a setting such as a school or community center. CCDO believes the Safe Haven should be a central focus of coordinated, community-based prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts. [See Definitions Appendix for further information about Safe Havens.]

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM DESIGNATION AND APPLICATION

To receive a designation as a Weed and Seed Community, a site has approximately one year to prepare and submit an application. While limited technical assistance and training will be available, no financial support will be provided during this organizational pre-award development period. If an applicant is competitively selected it will then receive the Weed and Seed Community designation and initial funding. Continued funding will be dependent on meeting established Weed and Seed performance measures as approved by CCDO as part of the award process. Limited discretionary grant funding will be available for five calendar years on an incremental basis. The grant funding is finite in nature and should be considered as "temporary" assistance.

Annual grant award amounts available to Weed and Seed Community sites will be based on a bell curve design with increasing and decreasing amounts over a 5-year funding eligibility period. [See Appendices for a description of the bell curve funding distribution.] The purpose of this approach is to enable the communities an opportunity to develop appropriate program and management mechanisms to use the funds and replace them with other community resources as CCDO grant support diminishes.

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. ATTORNEY IN SITE PRE-AWARD DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

The U. S. Attorney (USA) for the applicant's jurisdiction will help create a core group of local officials to start the planning process, approve selection of the Weed and Seed site and identify potential Steering Committee members. The USA will also provide some support and limited funding for training opportunities. For a community to be designated as a Weed and Seed Community, the USA for the District encompassing the community must certify to CCDO's Director that:

- a) the community suffers from consistently high levels of crime or is otherwise appropriate for such designation;
- b) the Weed and Seed strategy proposed, adopted and implemented by the Steering Committee has a high probability of improving the criminal justice system within the community and contains all elements required by the CCDO Director;
- c) the Steering Committee is capable of implementing the strategy appropriately; and
- d) the community agrees to formulate a timely and effective plan to independently sustain the strategy (or, at a minimum, a majority of the best practices of the strategy) when CCDO funding is no longer available.

STEPS TO DESIGNATION

The application process to be designated a WSC has 10 steps. Applicants are required to execute a series of activities, and then complete the application to inform CCDO in its designation decision-making process.

PRE-AWARD DEVELOPMENT PERIOD ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

Step 1: **Submit a Notice of Intent**, notifying CCDO of interest in applying for designation as a competitive site. This notice should indicate USA support, describe the conditions that warrant consideration, and include **proposed** street boundaries encompassing the **proposed focus area** and a map. *(See appendices for a sample Notice of Intent)*

Step 2: **Organize and convene a preliminary Weed and Seed Steering Committee**, the core group of local officials and community representatives assembled to begin the planning process of Weed and Seed. This group will be responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy.

Step 3: **Conduct a problems/needs assessment of the area**, which will be used to create a community's compelling case for designation and assist in finalizing or refining the designated focus area.

Step 4: **Select the designated focus area**, within the parameters set forth in this guideline.

Step 5: **Select the resources that should be mobilized to address focus area problems** drawing on existing streams of Federal, state and local funding currently available to the community as well as new resources.

Step 6: **Identify goals, objectives, and implementation activities**, which effectively address those conditions determined through the above-mentioned analysis of the community.

Step 7: **Develop Performance Measures** for the primary areas of focus upon which program evaluation and success will be based.

Step 8: **Develop an implementation schedule**, which is realistic and that takes into account programmatic “spin-off” and placement in community organizations.

Step 9: **Begin program implementation** and tracking.

Step 10: **Execute assessment** of pre-award development period program activities.

MAINTAINING BEST PRACTICE AND PROVIDING TRAINING

Technical assistance/training/information materials will be provided regularly for the sites during pre- and post-designation activities to guide their development of new programs and enhancement of existing programs that are effective and responsive to the specific crime and social problems identified.

Weed and Seed Communities (WSC) will be provided guidance through focused training, technical assistance and information dissemination in the selection of programs that reflect best practices to improve program impact and enhance coordination in planning and implementing their Weed and Seed strategy. Sites will be encouraged to develop a sustainability strategy which involves the use of other existing local, state, and/or Federal resources to maintain these best practice programs.

As sites develop and hone their skills they may be encouraged to provide training for other sites in a mutually acceptable manner – through regional networking -- by hosting visits by members of new and developing sites seeking training; identifying personnel who conduct training at regional and/or national Weed and Seed training conferences; or by hosting regional training conferences to which other sites will be invited. Each site may also be asked to give training in the Weed and Seed strategy to other neighborhoods in its local area, upon request, to help those other neighborhoods to replicate the Weed and Seed strategy.

ACHIEVING EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COORDINATION OF OTHER RESOURCES

Identification and coordination of existing community resources is an essential part of effectively sustaining Weed and Seed programs for the long term. Weed and Seed applicants that demonstrate coordination from the outset with other Department of Justice programs that may be underway in their locality will generally be more competitive. This is particularly true for DOJ programs such as Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, and the Attorney General's anti-gang and anti-methamphetamine initiatives. The strategic plan should also encompass related community development efforts, Federal funding sources (e.g., Department of Justice, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education); as well as state, local, and private resources. *[See Appendix 15 for more information.]*