



NEWS RELEASE

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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
2008 GRANT AWARDS

From **2002-2008**, the Western District of Louisiana has received grant funds totaling **\$1,918,686.00**, which have been awarded to various entities promoting the goals and objectives of the Project Safe Neighborhoods and Anti-Gang Initiatives.

On June 17, 2008, the United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana and the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Task Force announced the availability of approximately **\$115,150** for grants. Of that amount, approximately **\$103,635** was designated for grants under the **Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative** to fund new and/or current comprehensive gun crime reduction strategies and/or gang violence reduction strategies. On July 1, 2008, a non-federal grant selection committee convened and selected

the recipients to be funded from the **2008 PSN Grant Initiative**. As of **October 2008**, the grant funds were received from the United States Department of Justice, and are now available for distribution to the selected recipients listed below:

- (1) **Lake Charles Police Department (LCPD)** was selected to receive **\$4,000.00** of the 2008 grant funds to assist in continuing its very successful program titled “Operation Trigger Time.” In coordination with federal and local agencies, LCPD is aggressively combating gun violence in the Southwest Louisiana Region.
- (2) **Shreveport Police Department** was selected to receive **\$12,000.00** of the 2008 grant funds to assist in continuing its program to identify and dismantle gangs and/or criminal organizations operating within the Caddo Parish area.
- (3) **16th Judicial District Attorney's Office** was selected to receive **\$12,140.00** of the 2008 grant funds for their PSN program including a PSN coordinator to assist law enforcement in recovering illegally-posessed firearms and to provide education programs on gun violence to schools, youth-based groups and businesses.
- (4) **4th Judicial District Attorney's Office** (Morehouse/Ouachita Parishes) was selected to receive **\$14,495.00** of the 2008 grant funds to assist in

implementing an anti-gang initiative/gun violence prevention strategy targeting children and youth ages 8-26 years in high risk crime areas and families with firearms in the home where there may be small children. Further, the program will also focus on increasing the number of arrests and prosecutions of street level gangs in the 4th Judicial District.

- (5) **15th Judicial District Court** was selected to receive **\$14,000.00** of the 2008 grant funds to assist in continuing its “Choose Life, End Violence, Earn Respect” (C.L.E.V.E.R.) Program. The C.L.E.V.E.R. program educates Lafayette Parish middle school students in both public and private schools on various issues including how to avoid dangerous encounters, all designed to reduce gun and gang violence, truancy, and drug use within Lafayette Parish.
- (6) **Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport** was selected to receive **\$25,000.00** of the 2008 grant funds to continue its youth outreach/mentoring program entitled “Operation Drop It Like It’s Hot.” This program comprises education and training workshops with adult mentors and college interns for youth and their parents with the goal of decreasing gang activity, gun-related violence and related criminal activity.

(7) **ThinkFirst of Ark-La-Tex** was selected to receive **\$22,000.00** of the 2008 grant funds to expand their Violence Impact Assemblies into other surrounding areas – Bossier, Webster and Desota Parishes – by providing both prevention and intervention components to sixth grade students. ThinkFirst currently presents its prevention program to over 5,000 Caddo Parish (Shreveport) sixth graders.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is designed to combat gun violence by establishing partnerships among local, state and federal entities to implement a multi-faceted strategy to deter and punish gun and gang violence. It is a nationwide commitment to reduce violent crime by networking local programs that target gun crime, and providing those programs with the tools and resources they need to succeed. The goal of this grant program is to create a comprehensive, strategic approach to effectively reduce local gun and gang violence by awarding programs who will address: (1) gang prevention and enforcement; (2) gun violence prevention, community outreach, and education; (3) enforcement, adjudication, and supervision programs; or (4) other innovative, related projects.

To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, robbery, car jacking, burglary, and drug trafficking.

The ultimate goal of these programs is to reduce violent crime and protect the public from criminals who use guns to commit crime and are involved in gang-related activity.

Since the program began in 2002, the number of firearms-related cases filed and defendants prosecuted federally on gun charges in the Western District of Louisiana can be summarized as follows:

- **Fiscal Year 2003** - The district filed 82 cases with firearms-related charges involving 96 defendants compared to 50 cases filed with 65 defendants in fiscal year 2002. During fiscal year 2003, 51 defendants were sentenced to prison.
- **Fiscal Year 2004** - The district filed 124 cases with firearms-related charges involving 138 defendants. During fiscal year 2004, 94 defendants were sentenced to prison.
- **Fiscal Year 2005** - The district filed 93 cases with firearms-related charges involving 108 defendants. During fiscal year 2005, 113 defendants were sentenced to prison.
- **Fiscal Year 2006** - The district filed 98 cases with firearms-related charges involving 113 defendants. During fiscal year 2006, 104 defendants were sentenced to prison.
- **Fiscal Year 2007** - The district filed 61 cases with firearms-related charges involving 71 defendants. During fiscal year 2007, 85 defendants were sentenced to prison.

For more information on PSN visit www.psn.gov .

This and other press releases issued by the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana can be found at our website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/law.