

Update: Local Law Enforcement Initiatives

The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative and ATF's illegal trafficking program provide a foundation of investigative information and resources for locally led enforcement efforts aimed at reducing youth and other violent crime. Generally, ATF's enforcement strategy calls for a balance between enforcing laws aimed at deterring and incarcerating armed felons, and enforcing laws relating to the illegal transfer of firearms. The following is a description of some of the enforcement efforts linked to the YCGII that are underway in YCGII cities:

Project Atlantis. In Atlanta, ATF in conjunction with the Atlanta Police Department (APD) and their academic partners at Emory University, with the support of the U.S. Attorney, review Project LEAD information to focus on the illegal supply of firearms to youths 24 years old and younger. Emory University provides information on shooting incidents, which is entered into a mapping system pinpointing high crime zones by Zip Codes. This information is matched with Project LEAD crime gun trace information to identify potential traffickers to youth and juveniles in these areas. In addition, the APD has formed a Gun Unit that assists on interviews, works on related cases and forms a focus list of crime gun possessors and potential traffickers. Each target on the list will be interviewed jointly by an ATF special agent and a police official.

Baltimore's Police Youth Violence Task Force (Strike Force). The Strike Force mission is to identify and target gang members and violent offenders age 24 and under and to aggressively seek their apprehension and incarceration. Once the strike force has linked a particular gang to homicides, shootings, and other violent activities, it will target them for investigation, and where possible, for prosecution under Federal laws. The strike force is working with the State's Attorney to identify which defendants will be prosecuted in Federal court. The strike force has strong partnerships with all criminal justice agencies: the State Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, school police, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. By working with the Federal government, the community, and the criminal justice system, the strike force lets young people know that their violent crimes will be dealt with aggressively. The Baltimore Strike Force is working closely with the Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative (described below) to develop trafficking

cases to reduce the illegal youth and juvenile gun supply.

The Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative. Maryland is in the process of implementing the Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative, a comprehensive state-wide initiative to reduce gun violence. This initiative targets illegal gun traffickers in an effort to intercept illegal firearms before they are used in violent crimes. Actions such as tracing every crime gun seized in Maryland, establishing an Office of Crime Gun Enforcement, targeting youth gun hot spots, and expanding awareness and enforcement of Maryland's Child Gun Access Prevention Law are all components of the initiative. Many Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies, as well as community institutions and organizations will be part of this initiative. Some of the participating agencies and organizations will include: ATF, the Maryland State Police, the State Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney for Maryland, the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area project (HIDTA), the Division of Parole and Probation, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the University of Maryland, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

The Boston Gun Project/Operation Ceasefire. In place since mid-1996, Boston's Operation Ceasefire is aimed at preventing youth homicide. It combines a local, State, and Federal effort to crack down on the illegal gun supply with a local, State, and Federal strategy to deter violence by youth gangs. Participants in the Gun Project met with gang members, juvenile inmates, and gang outreach workers to deliver the message: violence will not be tolerated in Boston; it will be met with a strong and coordinated interagency response. ATF agents, police, and prosecutors are also using comprehensive tracing, trace analysis,

and investigative techniques to identify and prosecute specific traffickers supplying gangs and other youths with firearms. Participants include the Boston Police Department, ATF, DEA, the U.S. Attorney, the Suffolk County District Attorney, the Massachusetts Department of Probation and Parole, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, school police, youth outreach workers, community groups, and academics from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Chicago's Anti-Gun Enforcement Program (CAGE). The CAGE program, operated by the Chicago Police Department and ATF, is a gun crime suppression strategy designed to prevent the illegal purchase and transfer of firearms. Every crime gun that is recovered in the city of Chicago is traced. When Project LEAD indicates multiple recoveries of crime guns associated with the same first purchaser, ATF notifies the CAGE team and the suspect is interviewed. CAGE works with the U.S. Attorney's Office and State prosecutors to prosecute a suspect under Federal or State law as appropriate. CAGE also investigates any gun incidents that are determined to be gang-related.

Gary's Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF). The VCTF was established in 1994 to combine State, local, and Federal law enforcement resources to target violent crimes committed with firearms in and around Gary, Indiana. Authorities concluded that an impact on violent crime would be achieved by identifying firearms traffickers who supply violent criminals. The first objective of the VCTF is proactive investigation of crimes committed with firearms and interdiction of the gun supply in the Gary area, with emphasis on illegal trafficking to juveniles. With the help of ATF, the NTC and Project LEAD, trace data are used to support investigations. The VCTF is composed of ATF and the Gary, Hammond, Portage, and Lake County Police Departments in collaboration with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Project LISA: New Jersey's statewide crime gun tracing system. ATF and the U.S. Attorney's Office implemented Project LISA (Locate, Identify, Seize and Apprehend) to establish a central

location and structure for producing, analyzing and utilizing firearms intelligence. LISA is a tracing and analysis program in which all law enforcement agencies participate— Federal, State, county and municipal, including all police departments, the State Police and all county prosecutor's offices. LISA aims to locate and trace recovered firearms, identify illegal traffickers, seize contraband firearms, and apprehend violators. Project LISA has resulted in identifying source States, types of firearms recovered, criminal activity involving trafficked firearms and gang activity, as well as documenting trafficking patterns and providing information in complex investigations. As a result, ATF has identified and the U.S. Attorney and local prosecutors have prosecuted, illegal gun traffickers and persons who have committed violent crimes involving the recovered guns. The New Jersey National Guard has been instrumental in providing manpower and computer training expertise. The participation by all law enforcement agencies State-wide is a key element of Project LISA's success.

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Detail. This unit was created in November 1997. The LAPD works with ATF to prevent illegal firearms trafficking to youth and to reduce the injuries and deaths that occur as a result of trafficking to that population. Los Angeles is a 1998 YCGII city, and criminal investigations of traffickers are currently underway.

Memphis' Youth Crime Gun Task Force. A Youth Crime Gun Task Force has been formed in an effort to reduce the violent crime rate. The Gun Control Act of 1968 generally prohibits youths from legally purchasing or owning firearms unless specifically authorized. Therefore, rather than prosecuting the juveniles found in possession of a gun, the Memphis Task Force aims to remove the gun from the juvenile and find any adult who illegally provided it. A member of the task force or a juvenile court investigator interviews every juvenile arrested with a gun. Information obtained in interviews has led to investigations and subsequent arrests of adults making illegal gun sales. Participants and supporters of the Memphis Youth Crime Gun Task Force include the U.S. Attorney for

the Western District of Tennessee; the Memphis Police Department; the Shelby County Sheriff's Office; and ATF.

Miami's Firearms Suppression Team. In Miami, a program was initiated that involves setting up meetings every two weeks with the Firearms Suppression Team (FAST). The team is composed of the Metro-Dade Police Department, the City of Miami Police Department, and ATF. Prior to the meeting, all the trace results are reviewed by ATF Special Agents and Metro-Dade officers to determine investigative merit. The results are then discussed at the meeting and plans for investigative follow-up are determined. Project LEAD is available at these meetings so that leads developed by the police departments can be checked against the ATF Firearms Tracing System. Some of the participating agencies and organizations include: Metro-Dade Police Department, the City of Miami Police Department, ATF, Dade County State's Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Philadelphia's Firearms Trafficking Task Force. The Philadelphia Police Department and ATF have formed the Firearms Trafficking Task Force, which has significantly enhanced and focused the collaboration between these agencies. The Task Force has a proactive mandate to identify, target, and shut down illegal sources of firearms in the city and their related distribution networks, and to promote the successful prosecution of firearms trafficking violators. The Task Force is identifying the source of illegal firearms sales, gathering intelligence on all crime gun recoveries, and coordinating their work with all relevant Federal and State agencies. Recognizing the importance of a firearms suppression strategy, the Mayor of Philadelphia has appointed a cabinet level position to coordinate the efforts and strategies undertaken to reduce firearms violence.

Richmond's Project Exile Task Force. The Project Exile Task Force is a multi-tiered program that was initiated on February 21, 1997. This initiative includes Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative mandatory tracing of all firearms recovered in Richmond, interviewing case defendants and juveniles to identify illegal sources of

firearms, and compiling intelligence information on youth gangs and open homicide cases. Project Exile's strategy is to prosecute in Federal court all individuals arrested for illegally possessing a firearm, because of the length of mandatory sentences and pre-trial detention provisions. Some of the local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies that work on Project Exile include ATF, the Virginia State Police, the Richmond Police Department, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the U.S. Marshals, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

St. Louis' Ceasefire Working Group. Members from several State and Federal law enforcement agencies and prominent civic groups have come together to form a "Ceasefire Working Group." The group is headed by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern Judicial District of Missouri. This cooperative working group meets once a month to discuss ideas concerning crime prevention and intervention, and to develop enforcement strategies in an effort to combat violent crime in the St. Louis area. ATF issues that are discussed are the YCGII, the Violent Crime Coordinator (VCC) program, and other efforts to curb illegal firearms trafficking. Some of the participating agencies and organizations include: the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Louis Sheriff's Department, St. Louis County Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, St. Louis Public Schools, the African American Clergy Coalition of Missouri, State and Federal Probation and Parole, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Tucson's Serious Incident Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART). A violent crime task force has been formed under the name of SMART. During the last six months, this task force has dedicated its efforts to reducing violent crime among Tucson area youths. Suspects are targeted for Federal prosecution for involvement in firearms trafficking and for illegal possession of firearms. Suspects are identified through firearms tracing. This initiative includes the following agencies: ATF, FBI, U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Border Patrol, DEA, the Tucson Police Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.