

**P R O J E C T** ★ ★  
**SAFE** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**NEIGHBORHOODS** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
America's Network Against Gun Violence



T O O L K I T



**U. S. Department of Justice**

Office of the Deputy Attorney General

Associate Deputy Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Project Safe Neighborhoods Partner:

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking both new and existing local programs that target gun crime and then providing them with the tools they need to succeed. The President himself has described this initiative as a top criminal justice priority of his administration, and the Attorney General is directing each newly appointed United States Attorney to implement this strategy in his or her district.

To be truly successful, however, Project Safe Neighborhoods needs your partnership and support. Federal, state, and local law enforcement and the community must all pull together to effect a significant and sustained reduction in the level of gun crime. It is for precisely this reason that the first element of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative is "Partnerships." These partnerships must strive both for cooperation among agencies and coordination among initiatives.

Each of your organizations has provided valuable contributions in the development of Project Safe Neighborhoods at the national level. The task before us now is to deploy this initiative in each community so that we may strive to create a safer and more secure America.

The attached Implementation Guide for PSN Partners provides valuable tools to assist the implementation of the initiative across the country. The materials in this guide were adapted from a manual prepared for the 93 new United States Attorneys, who will be expected to work closely with their peers in the law enforcement community to craft comprehensive and coordinated gun violence reduction programs. As the initiative progresses, more information will be available at [www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov](http://www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov).

Thank you for participating in this important initiative. Working together, we can create a lasting reduction in gun crime in America.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Wray

Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General

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Letters to U.S. Attorneys  
from the President of the  
United States,  
the Attorney General  
and the Director  
of the Bureau of Alcohol,  
Tobacco and Firearms



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 27, 2001

Dear United States Attorneys:

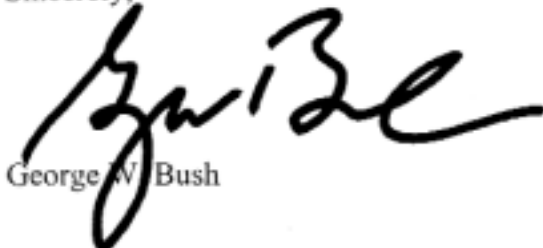
Although progress has been made in fighting violent crime, America remains far too violent with a violent crime rate among the highest in the industrialized world. Nationally, there were 12,658 murders in 1999, two-thirds of which were shooting deaths. For every fatal shooting, there were roughly three non-fatal shootings. A teenager is more likely to die from a gunshot than from all natural causes of death combined. This is unacceptable in America. For our children's sake, this Nation must reclaim our neighborhoods and streets.

We need a focused national strategy to ensure that every community vigorously combats the problem of gun violence. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an integral part of that strategy. It will establish a network of law enforcement and community initiatives targeted at gun violence and will involve an unprecedented partnership among all levels of government. It will increase accountability within our system, and it will send a clear message to criminals – you will do hard time for gun crime.

To reduce gun violence, we must vigorously enforce existing gun laws. Project Safe Neighborhoods incorporates and builds upon successful programs all across America. This Administration is devoting nearly a half billion dollars over the next two years to hire new Federal and state prosecutors to support investigators, to provide training, and to develop and promote community outreach efforts. As newly appointed United States Attorneys, each of you will certify to the Attorney General that a new comprehensive gun violence program has been implemented in your districts and report regularly on its progress. Your leadership and commitment are essential to the initiative's success, and I thank you in advance for your dedication to this important effort.

By bringing together Federal, state, and local law enforcement, Project Safe Neighborhoods will play a key role in reducing gun violence in America, and those who commit crimes with guns will find a determined adversary in my Administration.

Sincerely,



George W. Bush



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D. C. 20530

November 8, 2001

Dear United States Attorney:

On May 14, 2001, with the support of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, President George W. Bush announced Project Safe Neighborhoods: America's Network Against Gun Violence. Project Safe Neighborhoods renews gun crime enforcement efforts across America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing them with the additional tools necessary to succeed in reducing gun violence.

Project Safe Neighborhoods will promote heightened coordination among federal, state and local agencies in a unified offensive. I am directing every United States Attorney in each of the 94 federal judicial districts across America to serve as the agent of change to make this national initiative a success. To succeed in this important mission, each United States Attorney will work with local prosecutors and police departments to establish a task force consisting of federal and local officials. This task force will develop a comprehensive strategic plan to fight gun violence and will review and prepare gun cases for prosecution in the most appropriate forum. Community and law enforcement leaders from across America have been invited and urged to be involved in these local task forces. The rivalries and competing agendas that can exist among law enforcement officials must give way to strategic partnerships focused on public safety.

The new United States Attorney will serve as the catalyst to bring together all law enforcement agencies and the community to ensure a uniform and comprehensive approach to reduce gun violence. Good examples of this type of strong, coordinated partnership include Project Exile in Richmond, Virginia, and Operation Ceasefire in Boston, Massachusetts. The success of these programs is due in large part to the strength of the partnerships established.

But partnership in this endeavor is not enough -- there must also be provision. The Administration will seek to commit \$558.8 million to this effort over two years, including \$233.6 million already available in 2001. This funding will be used to hire new federal and state prosecutors, support investigators, provide training, and develop and promote community outreach efforts. These resources, combined with unprecedented partnership among all levels of government, seek to dramatically reduce gun crime throughout the nation.

I am grateful for the support of the ATF, the National District Attorneys Association, and many other state and local law enforcement agencies who have participated in developing this important initiative. Together in strong coordination with law enforcement and communities across America, we can help break the deadly link between guns and crime and keep gun wielding criminals off our streets and out of our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Ashcroft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

John Ashcroft





DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20226

NOV 16 2001

Open Letter to the United States Attorneys  
on ATF's Role in Project Safe Neighborhoods

At the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), we look forward to combining our experience and resources with yours to effectively address gun crime in your communities. ATF's role in Project Safe Neighborhoods is specific, and it has several components.

Virtually every firearm starts out legal and leaves an extensive paper trail. By following that trail, ATF can identify and target traffickers. Through a combination of Federal violent offender statues that provide mandatory sentencing, the tracing of illegally trafficked firearms, and the ability to analyze recovered crime guns, ATF brings to the table opportunities that enhance the efforts of all Project Safe Neighborhoods participants.

These components work because of ATF's commitment to working with other agencies at all levels, especially with local law enforcement. By building a framework, and exchanging best practices with the entire law enforcement community - local and Federal, police and prosecutors, we can take a stronger, united stand against crime and criminals.

ATF already participates nationally in taskforces, violent offender and youth outreach programs, and Project Safe Neighborhoods serves to enhance these efforts. With the intensive training ATF has developed and will deliver, and with partnerships with the Department of Justice, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National District Attorneys Association, this initiative can further our collective efforts nationwide.

Together we can protect and serve this Nation, its citizens, and our neighborhoods. When ATF can help you, please call on us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bradley A. Buckles".

Bradley A. Buckles  
Director



**Attorney General John Ashcroft**  
**United States Department of Justice**  
**May 2001**

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# I. Introduction

On May 14, 2001, President George W. Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft unveiled **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a new, comprehensive, strategic approach to gun law enforcement – an approach that targets gun crime and violent offenders in an effort to make our streets and communities safer. The Administration’s plan calls upon each United States Attorney to implement this national initiative, working in partnership with communities and state and local law enforcement agencies. The plan envisions an invigorated enforcement effort that either builds on the successful programs already in place or, through new resources and tools, creates effective gun violence reduction programs.

Now is the time to act. Despite an overall decline in the number of gun homicides during the last fifteen years, the incidence of gun violence remains intolerably high. National crime figures reveal a disquieting picture. In 1999, guns were involved in over a third of one million violent crimes, 10,128 people were murdered with guns, and 41 of the 42 law enforcement officers killed in the United States died from gunshot wounds. The scourge of gun violence is not limited to murder but includes non-fatal assaults; for every fatal shooting, there are roughly three non-fatal shootings.

The impact of gun violence is particularly severe on our children and young adults. A teenager is more likely to die from gunshots than from all natural causes of death combined, and for African-American males between the ages of 15 and 19, homicide involving a firearm is the leading cause of death.

Juvenile access to firearms is troubling. In 1998, 3,930 students were expelled for bringing a firearm to school. Sixty percent of students in grades 6-12 said they could “get a gun if they wanted.” In a 1996 National Youth Gang Survey, youth gang members were reported to have been involved in 2,364 homicides in large cities, and 561 homicides in suburban counties. In a 1997 study of juvenile drug sellers who owned a firearm, 42 percent admitted to using a gun in

a crime; among juvenile gang members, 50 percent admitted using a gun in a crime.

The problem of armed criminals is particularly acute in small and mid-sized cities — in those areas the homicide rate has increased while national rates have decreased. For example, since 1996, the homicide rate in cities with populations between 500,000 and 1,000,000 has increased approximately 25 percent. A 1998 National Street Gang Survey Report conducted by the Department of Justice’s National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) found that gangs were active in 85 percent of the jurisdictions surveyed, over 80 percent of the gangs were involved in violent criminal activity or illegal drug trafficking, and gangs are migrating to other cities and to smaller and more rural communities.

The effect of firearms violence is a significant national crime problem. The psychological toll on a community is great when armed drug dealers terrorize parts of our cities, many citizens live in constant fear, and police officers must face this danger every day. The toll this fear places on the citizens and law enforcement personnel is incalculable. The security of our communities demands a comprehensive and strategic approach to address the problem of criminals who possess and use guns.

Spurred by innovative federal programs, individual cities and states have begun to implement such an approach with increasingly encouraging results. Model firearms programs such as Project Exile in Richmond, Virginia, and Operation Ceasefire in Boston, Massachusetts, are achieving success in many large cities throughout the country. It is this Administration’s task to expand upon these successes by giving all new United States Attorneys (USAs) both a mandate and a framework for creating an effective gun violence reduction program. This new initiative, called Project Safe Neighborhoods, is an expanded, comprehensive, bold approach needed to combat illegal firearms and gun violence — one which synthesizes and supplements existing initiatives.

Project Safe Neighborhoods includes funding for 113 new federal gun prosecutors in fiscal year 2001, plus funding for an additional 93 federal gun prosecutors in fiscal year 2002, \$75 million to provide grants to state and local authorities to hire between 300 and 500 local gun prosecutors in high gun violence areas, and additional resources to assist the mission of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). In total, Project Safe Neighborhoods seeks to commit more than \$558 million over two years to reduce gun violence in America. This unprecedented investment will increase the capacity of federal, state, and local law enforcement to mount an intensified approach to firearms law enforcement and violent crime reduction. This investment will also help strengthen relationships among federal prosecutors and agents and their state and local counterparts.

The Administration believes that tough and smart enforcement of existing state and federal gun laws will create a lasting reduction in gun crime and increase

the safety and security of our citizens. The various crime reduction initiatives in the past decade have taught us that to have a truly significant impact, the federal government must do more than just increase its arrest and prosecution numbers. Our efforts must be comprehensive. We must build effective partnerships with our state and local counterparts. We must enhance our capacity to obtain and analyze crime and other data that should guide our strategies and afford us the opportunity to measure the impact of our efforts. We must maintain an edge in the attack on gun violence by providing expansive and comprehensive training for federal, state, and local law enforcement officers and prosecutors. We must convey the priorities, message, and results of our efforts to the media and community members. And we must build a powerful and lasting coalition with our citizens – one that empowers them to be agents of change in their own communities. Project Safe Neighborhoods is that comprehensive approach.

## II. Recent History of Firearms Enforcement Initiatives

In 1989, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh directed all federal prosecutors handling firearms cases to charge the most serious, readily provable offense(s) consistent with the defendant's conduct. Prosecutors were to engage in plea bargaining in a manner that strictly avoided Sentencing Guideline manipulation, and all firearm charges arising from the use of a firearm in a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime were to be pursued unless they could not be readily proven or warranted a sentence reduction due to a defendant's substantial assistance in a case. This emphasis on prosecution of firearms cases was followed by the creation of Project Triggerlock in March 1991.

Project Triggerlock required each USA to establish a task force of prosecutors to design a strategy for the identification and apprehension of the most violent offenders. Using federal firearms statutes such as 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g), 924(c) and (e), Triggerlock was expressly designed to complement, not supplant, state and local efforts to purge each community of the most dangerous offenders.

To assist this effort, Attorney General Thornburgh designed the Violent Crime Task Forces (VCTF), composed of agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), ATF, and state and local law enforcement agencies, to work together to investigate major offenders. These Task Forces represented pilot projects and were incorporated into the "Weed and Seed" strategy in many communities — removing violent offenders from target areas, then following up by encouraging housing renewal and enterprise zones in the target areas.

In 1991, the first year of Triggerlock, 6,454 defendants were prosecuted, compared with 3,060 in FY 1990. As of July 1992, more than 8,200 defendants — 10 percent of all federal prosecutions at that time — had been charged under Project Triggerlock. Armed career

criminals received an average sentence of 18 years without parole.

In 1990, ATF created Project Achilles, an initiative established to target armed career criminals and offenders who used or carried a firearm during a crime of violence or a drug trafficking crime. ATF's ongoing initiative, the Armed Violent Criminal Apprehension Program, evolved from ATF's former Project Achilles and seeks to identify, investigate, and prosecute individuals involved in violent criminal activities or drug trafficking while using firearms. The Armed Violent Criminal Apprehension Program also maximizes the intelligence-gathering potential yielded from the arrests of numerous armed career criminals and armed drug traffickers who can provide valuable information about the sources of crime guns and other firearms-related crimes.

In October 1993, Attorney General Janet Reno informed federal prosecutors that they were now free to charge and plea bargain based upon an individualized assessment of each firearms case. The Administration indicated that it was shifting away from what it perceived was Triggerlock's focus on street-level criminals to a focus on major gun traffickers.

In March 1994, the Anti-Violent Crime Initiative was introduced and included a gun enforcement component targeting gun trafficking and illegal possession cases through federal, state, and local task forces. The Initiative also included the designation of a Violent Crime Coordinator in each federal district and focused on building strong partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies. It did not expressly mention Triggerlock as part of its firearms component, but did make reference to Achilles, Triggerlock's ATF counterpart.

After receiving criticism from Congress for a decrease in gun crime prosecutions, the Clinton Administration issued a Presidential directive in March 1999, requiring each federal district to develop a Firearms

Violence Reduction Strategy tailored to each district's needs. While Triggerlock was not officially discontinued during the Clinton Administration, it was effec-

tively superseded by the 1994 Anti-Violent Crime initiative and the 1999 Firearms Violence Reduction initiative.

### III. Model Programs

At present, all United States Attorneys' Offices have developed an individualized gun crime strategy. Project Safe Neighborhoods combines the core elements from the most comprehensive and effective strategies and applies them nationwide. The following sections briefly describe a few of the successful strategies currently in place.

**Project Exile**, originating in Richmond, Virginia's, United States Attorney Office (USAO), linked federal and local prosecutors, ATF agents, local police officers, state troopers, and an FBI agent to create an Exile Task Force. The Task Force reviews every local gun arrest to determine whether it should be prosecuted federally or locally.

As part of the Exile model, the USAO has provided training to local police on federal firearms statutes as well as search and seizure issues. To expedite handling of cases, the police firearms office was electronically connected to ATF to facilitate immediate tracing of seized firearms. Both the Commonwealth Attorney and the Virginia Attorney General detailed a staff prosecutor to the United States Attorney's Office for assistance in firearms prosecutions.

A major component of the project has been the innovative outreach/education effort through various media outlets, including television ads, billboards, bus wraps and bumper stickers to convey the message of this initiative. The United States Attorney successfully formed a coalition of business, community, and church leaders to promote the project. The outreach and education efforts are funded by a non-profit foundation established for that purpose.

Project Exile has been enormously successful, reducing the number of homicides by 40 percent and armed robberies by 30 percent in its first year (mid-1998), with further decreases in the subsequent two years. Since its inception, Exile has yielded over 500 convictions for gun crimes for a total incarceration time of 27,861 months, or more than 2,320 years.

The federal Virginia Exile program has been successfully replicated in other federal districts, including the Western District of New York (Rochester), the Southern and Western Districts of Texas, the Northern District of Indiana and the District of Colorado. Each jurisdiction consulted with the United States Attorney in Richmond and implemented the same or similar task force approach, referral process, training, and coordination. Denver's Exile also includes an intensive focus on the prosecution of gun dealer violations, Brady Act/National Instant Background Check System (NICS) denials, and comprehensive gun tracing and identification of violent crime "hot spots."

Similar to Exile, **Project ICE** (Project Isolating the Criminal Element), which originated in the Northern District of Alabama, bases its success on its vigorous prosecution of federal firearms offenses in partnership with the Birmingham police department, ATF, and local district attorneys' offices. Project ICE also includes a training program for local law enforcement as well as a community outreach component. The project is complemented by a crime gun tracing program under ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Operation Safe Home, a task force targeting violent crime in public housing.

Another successful gun crime initiative, replicated in several jurisdictions, is Boston's **Operation Ceasefire**. Driven by careful research and analysis, Ceasefire resulted in reductions in Boston's violent crime rate well in excess of national declines. The initiative targeted repeat youthful (ages 24 and younger) violent offenders who were responsible for the majority of gun crimes. Ceasefire took its message directly to the community to forewarn gangs about the severity of federal consequences flowing from gun crimes. The targeted deterrence strategy was balanced with intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youths. Ceasefire was implemented in 1995, and at the end of the first year there had been a 68% decline in homicides for victims 24 years old or younger. By the end



of the second year, there had been a 70 percent reduction in gun assaults for all ages.

Authorities in Camden, New Jersey; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee; High Point and Wilmington, North Carolina; Stockton, California; and the District of Columbia replicated Ceasefire by emphasizing deterrence of youth gun violence in selected “hot-spot” neighborhoods. For example, the Memphis Operation Ceasefire program locates gun crime hot spots with the assistance of researchers from the University of Memphis and emphasizes its zero tolerance policy for firearms possession in school zones. Stockton Ceasefire targeted street-level youth gang violence, reducing the youth homicide rate by 75 percent in 1998 alone. Conducting its own internal crime mapping, the District of Columbia found success through focusing efforts on youth gang violence and prosecuting criminal groups as “organized crime” matters involving gun violence.

Other federal approaches integrate many of the components of Exile, ICE, and Ceasefire. The Southern District of Florida (Miami-Dade) gun law enforcement effort utilizes the Weed and Seed strategy and youth crime gun tracing, and targets Brady Act/NICS denials and identification of illegal gun sales at pawn shops and gun shows. **Operation Target** in the Western District of Pennsylvania obtained the assistance of Carnegie Mellon University in securing gun tracing data and crime mapping. The United States Attorney and ATF use this information to work with federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to detect illegal trafficking and deter “straw purchases” (a “straw purchase” occurs when the actual buyer of a firearm uses another person, the “straw purchaser,” to execute the paperwork necessary to purchase firearms from a federal firearms licensee). Operation Target also emphasizes suppressing the use of firearms by probationers and parolees.

## IV. Project Safe Neighborhoods: A Comprehensive Enforcement Plan

There are five essential elements required for a vigorous and successful gun violence reduction plan: 1) Partnership, 2) Strategic Planning, 3) Training, 4) Community Outreach and Public Awareness, and 5) Accountability. Mindful of the varying problems facing each district, this initiative does not mandate a “one-size-fits-all” approach that supplants effective strategies already in place in each district. Instead, these elements will be tailored to the needs of each individual district and the gun violence problem therein. Through Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Administration will build on past successes in gun violence reduction by expanding and intensifying the crackdown on criminals with guns, and deterring others from engaging in acts of violence.

The goal is straightforward and clear — to disrupt gun violence strategically and comprehensively, using all available enforcement and prosecutive tools; uniting federal, state, and local efforts; and leveraging new resources at all levels. To enhance this ambitious mission, this initiative brings substantial new federal resources, including over 113 new federal prosecutors devoted to gun law enforcement, \$75 million to fund between 300-500 new local gun prosecutors, plus

funding for 94 additional federal gun prosecutors in the FY 2002 budget. Additional resources are being sought by the ATF for new agents, inspectors, and the development of crime gun tracing and ballistics technology. Enhanced training will also be provided for federal and local prosecutors as well as agents and police officers. These resources demonstrate the Administration’s commitment to an all-out assault on gun violence.

To deploy effectively the substantial resources dedicated to this effort, each U.S. Attorney’s Office will designate a Project Safe Neighborhoods point of contact to serve as a project coordinator for the office and help streamline communication about the initiative. Each United States Attorney is also encouraged to create a specialized unit within his or her office to target the most significant gun crime problems within the district to maximize the impact of this initiative and help ensure the safety of our nation’s communities.

The five elements essential to a vigorous and successful gun violence reduction plan are outlined on the following pages.



# Partnership

Materials included in Resource Guide:

How to Create a Local Gun Violence Task Force or Join an Existing One that Already Works	Section 3
Community Gun Violence Prosecution Program Award Recipients	Section 4
Existing National Initiatives and Task Forces	Section 5

# 1. Partnership

To implement Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Attorney General has asked each United States Attorney for a commitment to assume a leadership role for coordinating this effort and heightening awareness and involvement at the local level. The United States Attorney will partner with the intersecting participants in a district to create a task force that can help ensure a uniform, tactical approach that yields a major impact on the community.

## A. The Task Force's Coordination Role

### **(1) Coordination Among Agencies**

Coordination is an indispensable ingredient in any crime-fighting effort. However, too many crime-fighting agencies are divided in their operations. In many cities there are numerous federal criminal and civil enforcement agencies working in various areas of overlapping as well as exclusive jurisdiction. Not every agency knows the extent to which other agencies are conducting parallel investigations. Targets, witnesses, and evidence may overlap, yet the agencies may never detect the connection between their cases. This failure to capture invaluable information through coordination detracts from the ability to make significant and lasting progress in crime reduction.

Using a panoramic view of all ongoing law enforcement activities, each local task force must develop a coordinated strategy designed to fight crime across agency and jurisdictional lines, to join each federal law enforcement agency with local prosecutors and local law enforcement, and to assemble an affirmative, proactive attack on gun violence in the district.

Effective collaboration includes a full partnership between federal and local prosecutors and federal and local law enforcement. The efforts of this partnership

can be enhanced through receiving increased familiarity with federal and state firearms laws. A procedure must be developed to allow immediate review of new gun arrests to determine eligibility and priority for federal prosecution vis-a-vis local prosecution. Violent offenders facing tough sentences must be systematically debriefed to ensure that vital intelligence is gained and disseminated.

To accomplish this task, the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative encourages making debriefing a condition of all pleas to gun charges. Additionally, regardless of the specific charges, it is important that prosecutors and agents interviewing cooperating defendants and witnesses remember to explore fully any such individual's source of firearms and share such information with other members of the Project Safe Neighborhoods task force. Working together, officers and agents from all organizations can share data and resources, secure witnesses and evidence, interview cooperative subjects, and thereby provide a comprehensive response to criminal incidents and local requests for assistance.

United States Attorneys will ensure that all federal agencies taking firearms into custody fully trace those firearms through ATF and will work with ATF to encourage state and local partners to do the same. Comprehensive tracing of firearms recovered by police allows ATF to provide to the community an essential vision of patterns of crime gun activity and the sources of those guns.

### **(2) Coordination Among Initiatives**

Another critical aspect of the task force's role is to unify existing law enforcement initiatives, most of which touch upon gun violence. Federal and local law enforcement agencies operate a myriad of programs, task forces, and initiatives within many judicial districts.

It is essential for each partnership to survey all the existing initiatives and task forces that involve firearms enforcement and gun violence reduction, both inside and outside the law enforcement community. Very often, task forces coexist with little or no awareness of one another's investigative activities. To the extent possible, the Project Safe Neighborhoods partnership will unify these existing initiatives to create a more strategic, focused, and effective district-wide gun violence reduction initiative.

In early 1990, Boston, Massachusetts, was experiencing historically high murder rates. As a result, Boston began a series of innovative public safety strategies that focused on violent youth and illicit gun markets. Using a problem-solving approach, a broad coalition of federal, state, and local government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, clergy and others developed several programs to address the escalating number of juvenile homicides. This strategy, known as Operation Ceasefire, became a model for other districts throughout the country experiencing increased youth gun-related violence.

Ceasefire targets gun criminals with an emphasis on the youthful offender (ages 24 and under) and brings federal prosecution against the most violent of this target group. Ceasefire also integrates a public education campaign whereby law enforcement collaborates with community leaders to hold community meetings with probationers and potential offenders and places them on notice of the severity of federal sanctions for gun violence. After the second full year of Boston's Operation Ceasefire, there had been a 71 percent decrease in homicide offenders for ages 24 and under and a 70 percent reduction in gun assaults by all offenders.

Similarly, ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) focuses on identifying and preparing for prosecuting those offenders who traffic firearms to youths and juveniles, as well as on illegal possessors between ages of 18 and 24. The initiative, which includes

comprehensive crime gun tracing by participating state and local law enforcement agencies, is currently in effect in 50 sites.

Another community-based program that includes a gun violence component is the Weed and Seed initiative, begun by the Department of Justice in 1991 to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to law enforcement and community revitalization. Weed and Seed utilizes United States Attorneys as the key conveners of government, the private sector, and community groups. It was specifically designed to prevent and control violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in target areas, and to restore the neighborhood through social and economic revitalization. To achieve these goals, Weed and Seed integrates law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration efforts.

Today, over 200 communities participate in the Weed and Seed approach — many of which focus on preventing and combating gun crime. Because Weed and Seed is directed toward removing violent, armed offenders from communities, local task forces should become familiar with the ongoing Weed and Seed efforts in their district and attempt to integrate their gun violence reduction strategy with those efforts.

## B. Federal vs. State Prosecution

To complement the law enforcement partnership, each United States Attorney's office and local prosecutors' offices must establish a protocol to ensure that all firearms offenses are met with the most effective and vigorous prosecution tools available. To accomplish this goal, the United States Attorney's Office, local prosecutors, and the ATF Violent Crime Coordinator must hold regularly scheduled meetings jointly to review cases and make tactical determinations regarding the most appropriate jurisdiction for each case.

Although it is impossible to prosecute all gun cases federally, the threat of federal prosecution can be a powerful tool for prosecutors. In some jurisdictions, state prosecutors offer violent gun criminals the option of receiving a higher-than-usual state sentence in lieu of federal prosecution, which may carry an even higher sentence. Under that approach, the possibility of severe federal sanctions can be used as an incentive for a defendant to accept a strong state plea bargain. In other jurisdictions, federal officials craft prosecution guidelines directing that only the most violent offenders will be targeted for federal prosecution, such as armed career criminals and armed drug traffickers.

One benefit to having cases prosecuted federally is the strength of federal bail laws. Federal pre-trial detention law, which permits detention without bond where the community's safety is at risk, oftentimes proves more successful in detaining firearms defendants. Similarly, federal suppression law can be more favorable than controlling state law. Combined with tougher sentences, persons charged federally with firearms violations often face substantial incarceration. After assessing the relative strengths of state and federal gun laws, every gun crime defendant's criminal history should be thoroughly examined to determine the appropriate forum for prosecution.

Another effective means for ensuring prosecution in the best forum is cross-designation, whereby a local prosecutor is designated a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) for purposes of prosecuting federal gun cases in the district. Additionally, at a local district attorney's request, United States Attorneys may consider assigning a federal prosecutor to the local district attorney's office to assist in the prosecution of criminal cases involving the use of a firearm. Regardless of the approach adopted, federal and state prosecutors must determine the applicable statutes and which jurisdiction provides the most potent punishment, taking into account the nature of the crime and the defendant's criminal history.

The close cooperation between federal and state authorities in bringing prosecutions for violation of both federal and state gun laws may implicate the Department of Justice's dual and successive prosecution policy, otherwise known as the "Petite Policy." The purpose of that policy is to vindicate substantial federal interests through appropriate federal prosecutions, to protect persons charged with criminal conduct from the burdens associated with multiple prosecutions and punishments for substantially the same act(s) or transaction(s), to promote efficient utilization of Department resources, and to promote coordination and cooperation between federal and state prosecutors.

The Petite policy precludes the initiation or continuation of a federal prosecution, following a prior state or federal prosecution based on substantially the same act(s) or transaction(s) unless three substantive prerequisites are satisfied: first, the matter must involve a substantial federal interest; second, the prior prosecution must have left that interest demonstrably unvindicated; and third, applying the same test that is applicable to all federal prosecutions, the government must believe that the defendant's conduct constitutes a federal offense, and that the admissible evidence probably will be sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction by an unbiased trier of fact. Finally, the prosecution must be approved by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General. As always, the traditional elements of federal prosecutorial discretion continue to apply.

The Petite policy applies only to charging decisions; it does not apply to pre-charge investigations. However, federal prosecutors should be aware of the requirements of the Petite policy when consulting with state and local counterparts to determine the most appropriate single forum in which to proceed to satisfy the substantial federal and state interests involved. Further information about the Petite Policy appears in the United States Attorneys Manual.



# Strategic Planning

Materials included in Resource Guide:

Attorney General Memorandum for All U.S. Attorneys on Enforcing the Nation's Gun Laws	Section 6
Data and Analysis Resource Guide	Section 7
Traditional Investigative Methods for Gathering Crime Gun Information	Section 8
ATF's Firearms Tracing and Ballistics Comparison Services	Section 9
Crime Mapping	Section 10

## 2. Strategic Planning

After establishing or rededicating themselves to the relevant partnerships, the next step for task force members is to create and deploy coordinated, strategic gun violence reduction plans. The federal enforcement component of those strategic plans will reflect the priorities of the national initiative — aggressive enforcement of federal laws against violent organizations (such as gangs, drug trafficking groups, and organized crime), illegal gun traffickers, and persons prohibited from possessing firearms — and will also be responsive to the particular gun violence problems in each district.

### A. The National Focus

District task forces have a vast array of enforcement weapons to use in developing their strategic plans to address gun violence. The federal tools can have a significant impact on violent crime. The enforcement mix will depend on the specific causes of gun violence in the community, the availability of law enforcement resources, and the expected outcome of each approach. Although the specific approach to combating gun violence will accordingly vary from district to district, Project Safe Neighborhoods asks each United States Attorney to incorporate three national priorities in the federal enforcement component or the strategic plan. Those priorities are as follows:

- increased prosecution of violent organizations using federal conspiracy, racketeering, narcotics, and all other available laws aggressively to attack and punish violent drug traffickers, violent street gangs, and violent robbery rings;
- heightened enforcement of all federal laws against illegal gun traffickers, as well as corrupt federal firearms licensees that supply them, with an emphasis on those gun traffickers who supply illegal firearms to violent organizations and to juveniles; and,
- renewed aggressive enforcement of federal firearms laws against those persons prohibited from possessing firearms or who use firearms in furtherance of illegal activities, including those persons denied under the Brady Act.

#### **(1) Dismantling Violent Organizations**

United States Attorneys have been asked to increase their efforts to prosecute significant, large-scale organizations, such as violent drug trafficking groups, street gangs, and robbery rings through the aggressive enforcement of applicable federal statutes, including federal conspiracy, racketeering, and narcotics laws. By using these powerful tools, the United States Attorney is able to address gun violence by: (1) combining historical and proactive evidence under an "umbrella" organizational offense to charge and disable a large number of violent defendants in a single case; (2) bringing in a single prosecution adult and juvenile racketeering and/or overt acts (so long as a defendant continued and ratified membership in the conspiracy after reaching 18 years of age); and (3) exposing members of violent organizations to substantial penalties under federal law (e.g., under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the calculation of a sentence will generally be controlled by the quantity of drugs distributed by the narcotics organization and by sentencing enhancements for possession of a firearm, supervisory role, and/or drug-related murder).

In those districts where state penalties are not sufficient to punish members of violent organizations, and where such prosecutions can have a significant impact on the gun violence problem, the PSN task force should coordinate efforts to implement a protocol for screening the most serious violators and prioritize these cases for federal prosecution. The specific



criteria for prosecuting these cases will vary in each district and will depend on the nature of the firearms violence problem in the district as well as applicable state penalties. For example, where violent drug traffickers use firearms to protect and further their illegal trade, a proactive strategy should include prosecution of armed drug dealers in federal court using 18 U.S.C. § 924(c), given the five, seven, and ten-year mandatory minimum penalty applicable to an offender who possesses, brandishes, or discharges a firearm during a drug offense.

### **(2) Stopping Illegal Gun Traffickers**

United States Attorneys have been directed to emphasize the prosecution of illegal gun traffickers, primarily those gun traffickers who are supplying illegal guns to violent organizations and juveniles in their districts. A key challenge is to identify the sources of the illegal supply of firearms, the types of traffickers and the predominant types of trafficking channels. ATF has committed significant personnel and analytic resources to that effort. ATF traces firearms, analyzes crime gun trace information, conducts trace studies, provides mapping of recovered crime guns, gathers intelligence to identify significant illegal firearms traffickers and has increased its enforcement efforts. By partnering with ATF, United States Attorneys and their state and local partners can target their resources and pursue prosecution of serious trafficking offenders.<sup>1</sup>

### **(3) Enforcing the Law Against Prohibited Persons**

Finally, United States Attorneys have been urged to vigorously enforce the law against persons who illegally possess firearms. One important component is enforcement of federal laws against those persons who attempt to purchase firearms in contravention of the Brady Law. United States Attorneys are encouraged to consult with the FBI and ATF to review National Instant Criminal Background Check System

(NICS) referrals of offenders who unlawfully attempt to purchase firearms to ensure that the most significant violent offenders are identified for investigation and prosecution.<sup>2</sup>

## **B. Responding to the Particular Gun Violence Problem in Each District**

Although each strategic plan should reflect the three national priorities, the individualized district plans, like the specific gun violence problem, will vary from community to community. For example, in one district, a proactive plan to target domestic violence may be appropriate, while in another district, a strategic plan to target armed robberies may be more productive. The goal of each district's plan is the same — to reduce the levels of gun crime — but the solution will vary depending on the particular problems facing each district.

Creating a tailored strategic plan requires several steps. First, the task force must assess the nature and scope of gun-related crime in the district and/or the major metropolitan areas within the district. Only by understanding the specific dynamics of the local crime problem can the task force effectively deploy resources to make a lasting reduction in crime in its district.

That process will require each PSN task force to gather and analyze police department data, crime gun tracing data, NICS denial information and other data. The following list provides examples of the kind of information the task force should be collecting and reviewing:<sup>3</sup>

- **Police Department data**  
*Violent Crime Incident Data.* Data on violent crime incidents, in particular on homicides, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on ATF's tracing and ballistic comparison services, see Appendix 9.

<sup>2</sup> On June 28, 2001, the Attorney General issued a memorandum on enforcing the nation's gun laws to all United States Attorneys. As part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Attorney General directed the United States Attorneys to make it a priority to enforce the law against those persons who attempt to subvert the legitimate crime prevention objectives of the Brady Act by falsifying information on the required background forms. See Appendix 6.

<sup>3</sup> For a full list of relevant data, see the "Data Analysis and Resource Guide" included in the Project Safe neighborhoods material at Appendix 7. The resource guide provides a list of data that will be most helpful to district task forces as they create their strategic plans, describes where that data can be found, and furnishes a list of data and analysis resources.

*Gun Crime Data.* Information on any crime in which at least one of the associated charges explicitly involved firearms, including information on victims, offenders and settings.

*Gun Confiscation Data.* Information on the number of guns confiscated and traced.

- **Tracing data available from ATF and local police**

*Crime Guns Traced.* The types, manufacturers, models, calibers, patterns in crime gun purchase and recovery locations and, in some cities, the most frequently traced crime guns.

*Information on Possessors.* The age group and crimes of the crime gun possessors, relationship between possessors and purchasers, and whether the possessor or the purchaser is associated with other traced crime guns.

*Gun Trafficking Indicators.* The time-to-crime and geographic sources of crime guns, associations between recovered crime guns, multiple sales information, location of last retail sale, and percentage of crime guns with obliterated serial numbers.

*FFL and Interstate Theft Information.* Data on thefts and losses from interstate carriers, thefts and losses from licensed gun dealers and manufacturers, source areas of stolen firearms, types of firearms most frequently stolen, FFLs reporting multiple thefts, recovery locations for stolen firearms, and a record of the modus operandi of reported thefts.

- **Other data**

*Crime surveys and intelligence reports from federal agencies (FBI and ATF).*

*Crime surveys and intelligence reports from state law enforcement agencies.*

*ADAM Surveys of Arrestees for selected metropolitan areas.<sup>4</sup>*

*FBI/POC reports of NICS denials.*

*Department of Corrections data.*

*Probation data.*

*Demographic and Socio-Economic Data.*

*Public health data on gun injuries and deaths.*

In addition to collecting information from local police and the ATF, members of PSN task forces should utilize traditional investigative methods for gathering information on gun crime in the district. For example, all prosecutors should consider debriefing arrestees and cooperating witnesses and using conditioned plea bargains to obtain information about unlawful acquisition, possession, use, sale, and trafficking of firearms.<sup>5</sup> Task forces should also avail themselves of the crime mapping technologies available in many local police departments and through the ATF's Crime Gun Analysis Branch.<sup>6</sup>

Whenever possible, PSN task forces should collect the most up-to-date data available. Additionally, the data collected is only as reliable as the quality of the information that underlies it, and to that end the task force should take whatever steps are practicable to ensure that the statistical information on which they rely portrays an accurate snapshot of the gun crime problem. Finally, only by measuring data in a consistent manner can the task force accurately track trends in gun violence and gun crime. Each task force should identify the data resources most helpful in measuring the gun crime problem in his or her district and use the same data sources consistently.

After collecting relevant information, the next step is to identify the significant gun crime problems in the district. The data may reveal, for example, that the majority of gun violence in the district is related to particular crimes, such as drug trafficking or domestic violence, or to particular groups, such as local gangs, organized crime, or parolees. Crime mapping may

<sup>4</sup> The ADAM survey is discussed in Appendix 8.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of traditional investigative methods for gathering crime gun information, please see Appendix 8.

<sup>6</sup> Crime gun tracing and ballistics matching, and the capabilities of the ATF's Crime Gun Analysis Branch, are detailed in Appendix 9. For a detailed explanation of crime mapping and how it can assist the task force in formulating a strategic plan, please see Appendix 10.

identify two or three “hot spots” of gun-related activity within the district. Tracing information may suggest that gun trafficking is an important issue, or interviews with arrestees may indicate that straw purchasing is a significant problem. Regardless of the nature of the gun-crime problems, the task force must understand the sources of gun violence before creating a plan to address them.

Once the most significant problems are identified, the PSN task forces can develop focused strategies aimed at reducing gun-related crime. That process must begin with an understanding of the current prosecution strategies employed in the districts. In 1999 all federal districts were required to create a firearm violence reduction strategy and those plans should be evaluated to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The task force should also review gun crime prosecution information — both at the federal and state levels — to assess how resources are currently allocated. Finally, both federal and state prosecutors should review the criteria for referring gun cases for prosecution in state and federal court. This process will require close coordination between federal and local prosecutors.

Once that review is complete, the PSN partnerships and their partners can create a comprehensive, strategic plan for reducing gun crime that is tailored to the particular local problems they have identified. The plan should be specific about its goals and the means for achieving those goals. All partners must then work together to implement the plan. Rarely will one agency, acting alone, have a significant and lasting impact on gun crime and violence. Experience shows that the most successful plans are those that utilize the skills of each member of the partnership for a comprehensive and coordinated response to the identified local problems.

Once the plan is implemented, it must continually be re-evaluated to determine whether it is having the desired impact. That evaluation must include a regular review of police department, ATF, and prosecution data. If the plan is not producing its intended results, it is critical to then reexamine the plan and the data to determine what about the plan should be modified. Conversely, if the data indicate that the plan is having a positive impact, the United States Attorneys and their partners can ensure that the necessary resources continue to be expended on the effort.

Consistent review of data also allows the partnership to identify emerging trends in the nature and scope of gun violence in the district. If the data reveal a significant shift in local issues, the plan should be retooled to respond to the new problems. In short, after implementation of the plan, consistent and timely feedback is essential. By creating and maintaining a data-driven plan, the partnership can ensure it is effectively allocating resources and targeting the most serious problems.

### **C. Reporting Successes and Challenges**

Each United States Attorney will be responsible for reporting to the Attorney General on the successes achieved and challenges faced during implementation of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative.<sup>7</sup> A significant component of that report will consist of a description of the gun violence problem faced by the district, the plan enacted to address it, and its results. Accordingly, each United States Attorney should ensure that adequate records are kept at each stage of the strategic planning process — data gathering, analysis, plan creation, implementation, data review, and plan modification.

<sup>7</sup> More information on the reporting requirement is contained in the Accountability section and a brief description of the Department of Justice's expectations for these reports is attached at Appendix 15.



# Training

Materials included in Resource Guide:

Catalogue of Firearms Training Programs in Support of PSN	Section 11
Index of Useful Federal Firearms Publications	Section 12

### 3. Training

To achieve the goal of an enhanced, coordinated gun law enforcement effort, this initiative includes the mandate for a more expansive and comprehensive approach for training of federal, state, and local law enforcement agents and prosecutors. The Department of Justice partnered with ATF, the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), and various other prosecutorial and law enforcement organizations to conduct specialized training on gun law enforcement and prosecution. This training will be conducted primarily on a regional basis, as well as through courses offered at the National Advocacy Center.

This training program will utilize existing training instruction, as well as newly developed curricula. Many existing ATF courses will be integrated into the training strategy, including Integrated Firearms Violence Reduction Strategies, Firearms Identification and Tracing Techniques, Firearms Trafficking Techniques, and others. These courses will be designed for all levels of law enforcement, including state and local police. Topics will also focus on several high-technology crime fighting weapons, including ATF's On Line LEAD system and ballistics technology.

The NDAA is developing a course on Gun Prosecution Techniques, which will be offered to prosecutors around the country. This course will focus on all aspects of prosecuting gun cases, including firearms identification, evidence suppression, search and seizure, expert witnesses, firearms tracing, federal firearms law as a tool in plea negotiations, and other courtroom issues. This course will be combined with existing curricula offered at the National Advocacy Center to provide prosecutors at the federal, state, and local levels the knowledge and tools they need to prosecute successfully all types of firearms cases.

A significant amount of this training will also occur in a joint environment. Regional courses designed to build and foster partnerships and coordination

between federal, state, and local prosecutors and law enforcement will be offered. Some of these training courses will focus on the development and implementation of a comprehensive gun violence reduction strategy, as well as outline all of the tools available to both law enforcement and prosecutors. Other courses of instruction will deal with the overall implementation of this gun strategy, including effective tools for interagency coordination, measurement of program successes, and strategies for implementing public outreach campaigns.

Overall, this significant investment in training will work to provide all levels of prosecutorial and law enforcement communities with the tools and information necessary to fight gun violence through continued professional development. Course offering announcements will be advertised through professional journals and bulletins, prosecution and law enforcement organizations, and will also be available on the Project Safe Neighborhoods Web site at [www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov](http://www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov).

Nothing should limit district task forces from planning Project Safe Neighborhoods training at the local level. Local partnerships are best suited to organize and schedule local and regional training so that key law enforcement personnel, both local and federal, are able to develop and maintain the skills necessary to make this initiative a success. A national curriculum will also be offered at the local or regional level. The PSN partnership may determine that course offerings from the national curricula are ideal for their region or they may select individual components from the national curricula for inclusion in a training program they develop regionally. Each district partnership should carefully review the Project Safe Neighborhoods training programs available and consider courses most applicable to the unique gun crime problem in its district.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, local gun crime task forces should consider creating localized

<sup>8</sup> More information on training courses can be found in the Catalogue of Firearms Training Programs contained in Appendix 11.

training that uses local experts and resources. ATF has prepared four separate lesson plans and corresponding power point presentations on federal firearms laws, firearms identification, firearms tracing and firearms trafficking, specifically designed to assist local experts in delivering Project Safe Neighborhoods training. ATF has also trained approximately 50 special agents to deliver the YCGII Firearms Identification and Tracing Procedures curriculum, an advanced, interactive course specifically designed for training state and local law enforcement officers.

Experience has shown that close cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders improves inter-agency cooperation and leads to more effective training. When joint training is offered, local task force leadership should begin the training by addressing the class and stressing the importance of partnership and information sharing. The U.S. Attorney's Offices' Law Enforcement Community Coordinators (LECCs) and the state and local police training officials may often be a significant help in arranging such cooperative training.



# Community Outreach and Public Awareness

Materials included in Resource Guide:

Overview of Contents in PSN Communications Tool Kit	Section 13
Community Outreach — Best Practices	Section 14

## 4. Community Outreach and Public Awareness

Community outreach and public awareness constitute critical elements of any successful gun violence reduction plan. A strong deterrent message — focusing on persuading criminals and other prohibited persons from carrying or using guns illegally — is an essential part of creating a lasting reduction in gun violence and increasing the safety of our citizens.<sup>9</sup> By conveying the priorities and subsequent results of this enhanced enforcement effort to the media and community members, the district partnerships can help shape the attitudes of law abiding citizens and deter those who would otherwise believe they can violate our gun laws with impunity.

### A. Use the Materials Provided in the Tool Kit to Get the Message Out

Project Safe Neighborhoods has partnered with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) to assist the preparation of a national outreach campaign. The Project Safe Neighborhoods Communication Tool Kit contains a myriad of reproducible brochures, literature, videos, and other materials designed to assist the PSN task force in promoting the local gun crime initiative in that district. Each item in the Kit is designed to have the local initiative's name affixed to it, giving that item a distinctly local feel. For example, each Project Safe Neighborhoods brochure has a blank “placeholder” on the cover where a sticker can be affixed containing the name and contact information of a local initiative.<sup>10</sup>

Each PSN task force is encouraged to go beyond the resources provided in the Kit. Accordingly, all reasonable means of outreach should be considered, including the following:

- Utilizing a variety of media outlets, including local or cable news, local public affairs, television or radio talk shows, newspapers, USAs, and Web sites;
- Going door to door in gun crime hot spots to hand out materials on the campaign;
- Distributing hotline cards for tips about illegal gun possession or gun crimes;
- Providing police with laminated summaries of the federal gun laws and penalties;
- Coordinating with ATF in encouraging local gun dealers to display materials; and
- Communicating with the media, including advisories, press releases, letters to the editor, and fact sheets.

The message through all of these outlets should be clear to the criminal community: Gun crime means hard time; citizens will be protected and gun laws enforced.

<sup>9</sup> *Deterrence alone is not enough. Effective outreach and public awareness involves promoting enforcement in addition to community education campaigns focused on prevention and intervention.*

<sup>10</sup> *Additional outreach materials, including public service announcements, will be available in the future. Please see the Project Safe Neighborhoods Web site at [www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov](http://www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.gov) for the latest outreach materials.*



## B. Work with a Foundation to Help Pay for the Outreach Campaign

A successful public awareness and community outreach campaign may be expensive. While the United States Attorneys' Offices are prohibited from forming charitable foundations to pay for an outreach campaign, it is envisioned that the United States Attorneys' Offices will work closely with the local task force and local charitable foundations to accomplish the task of disseminating this message to the community.



# Accountability

Materials included in Resource Guide:

Reporting Requirements

Section 15

## 5. Accountability

### A. The Importance of Measuring the Impact of the Initiative

A critical component of a comprehensive gun violence reduction plan is measuring its impact. Ideally, this measurement should include both an assessment of outcome — the success of the measures the Project Safe Neighborhood partnership has implemented, and trend analysis — an ongoing consideration of the particular gun crime challenges the district faces. These evaluations can help the partnership determine whether the plan is having the desired impact, provide important feedback to assist in improving the plan, and afford a measure of accountability. They will also enable the United States Attorney and his or her partners to react to changes in the type or severity of gun crime in each district, and will furnish the information necessary for leveraging resources most effectively.

Ultimately, we all share the goal of reducing gun crime and gun violence. Yet it is extremely difficult to isolate the particular effects of federal law enforcement activity from the other factors that affect this goal. United States Attorneys' efforts to enforce the law, coordinate with state and local counterparts, ensure adequate training, and communicate the Project Safe Neighborhood message to the community are just a few of the many elements that may contribute to gun crime reduction in a community. Although numerical counts of arrests and convictions are important indicators, the success of any particular strategy is not reducible to those measures alone. Accordingly, the goal of the accountability component of the initiative is not to judge the United States Attorneys' efforts based on a predetermined target number of arrests and convictions in their districts. Rather, the accountability component should serve primarily as a means for the United States Attorneys and their PSN partners to keep abreast of the changes occurring in the districts, to assist them in evaluating their efforts in light of those changes, and to provide them and their partners with an opportunity to retool their gun plans to address the emerging issues in the districts.

To continue making progress in our struggle to reduce gun crime, we must do more to measure our performance, document our successes, and learn from the challenges we have overcome. To encourage the United States Attorneys to assess regularly the effectiveness of their plans and the emerging trends in their districts, the Attorney General will ask them to report on several aspects of the Project Safe Neighborhoods implementation efforts. The information to be included in this report is briefly outlined below. Appendix 15 further describes the expectations for the reports.

### B. General Requirements for Report

The report should consist of a narrative component describing all Project Safe Neighborhoods implementation efforts. That narrative should be supported by relevant data, and, as a general matter, the data submitted with the report should largely overlap with the information the United States Attorneys and their partners are collecting and analyzing as part of their strategic planning efforts. In many districts the relevant data may be specific to major metropolitan areas within the district; when that is the case, data may be supplied that is specific to the areas on which the strategies focus. The report should be submitted twice a year — on January 31 and July 31 — in accordance with instructions provided by the Executive Office for United States Attorneys.

The report provides an opportunity to fully describe the gun violence problems in each district, as well as the strategies the Project Safe Neighborhoods coalition is employing to combat those problems. Each United States Attorney will be asked to report on four general areas: (1) the nature of the partnerships with other federal agencies, state and local law enforcement, and the community; (2) the nature and prevalence of gun crime and violence in the community, the strategies adopted to address that gun crime and violence, and how the impact of those strategies are

measured; (3) how the local gun crime initiative is being publicized; and (4) whether the local task force has taken advantage of training opportunities and has conducted training on a local level.

Careful and consistent review of gun violence reduction efforts is necessary for an effective and proactive gun violence reduction strategy. Both at the local and

national level, we must continually evaluate the problems we face and the efficacy of our response if we are to target our resources strategically. Working together, we can and will create a lasting reduction in gun crime.



Partnerships

Partnerships



# How to Create a Local Gun Violence Task Force or Join an Existing One that Already Works

Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, a *local gun crime task force* should be established in every federal district in America. The task force should establish this local gun crime task force to connect all the intersecting participants in a district to ensure a uniform, tactical approach that yields major impact on the community. In so doing, this partnership will unite and enhance the many aspects of existing federal and local firearms enforcement initiatives. Instead of taking an isolationist view of federal and state cases, each case will now be viewed as a potential first link in a larger campaign to dismantle gun crime.

It is important to include a diverse group of experts from various communities on the local gun crime task force. Participants should include local district attorneys, chiefs of police, sheriffs, as well as representatives from federal law enforcement, including the U.S.

Attorneys, United States Marshals Service, INS, ATF, FBI, and probation and parole authorities. In some instances, it may also be appropriate to include other community leaders, such as faith leaders, educators, and citizen activists.

In many districts across America, local gun crime task forces have already been established and have been operating successfully. Committees are strongly encouraged to join with successful task forces and gun initiatives already in place when they are working effectively. Successful local programs like Exile and Ceasefire, in certain cities, should not be renamed or reinvented if they are already accomplishing their mission of reducing firearms violence, and if that mission is consistent with the primary policy objectives of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

The task force should review any existing local gun crime initiative to determine if it is working well. If the initiative is not working well, the task force must decide whether to form a committee or try and make improvements to the existing one. It is important to note that in some districts it may be necessary to establish more than one local gun crime task force as part of the overall strategy to reduce gun violence district-wide. For example, in a district with two major cities, the partnership may want to establish two task forces chaired separately or simply have one task force with two distinct sub-working groups.

The following section, entitled “Characteristics of Effective Partnerships” outlines some key considerations for task forces when configuring a local gun crime task force. This section represents the accumulation of best practices from local gun crime initiatives across America. It also summarizes substantial academic research in the area of group dynamics and partnership building.

# Characteristics of Effective Partnerships

## Broad base of involvement

There are two aspects to this component: in the initial phases of a problem-solving or planning effort, it is best to recruit or invite representatives from key community sectors or interest groups (e.g., law enforcement, courts, community corrections, local government, business community, 'umbrella' community or social service organizations) to participate in early discussions about the nature and extent of local problems. This approach can help avoid the problem of getting too far down the line in problem identification without the benefit of community stakeholders. As progress is made towards a fuller understanding of the problem(s) a community faces, and as prioritization of problems or aspects of problems takes place, often it will be necessary to reach out to other concerned or affected groups so they have an opportunity to participate in problem-solving.

For example, if a particular neighborhood that has a cluster of public housing is selected for problem-solving (a "hot spot" area), consideration should be given to inviting representatives from the housing authority and/or the local tenant council(s) to join the partnership. In this situation, the work of the partnership will likely be of interest to them and they will likely participate.

A key point here is to achieve balance — include enough organization and community representatives to provide a diverse discussion, but not too many too preclude effective group deliberations and problem-solving. Many successful partnerships invite the known detractors of the group leaders (e.g., key critics of police, or of local government) to address critical perspectives up front.

## Leadership

While a partnership group should strive for a broad base of involvement, leadership is also extremely important. There may be several (or more) natural leaders in a well-functioning partnership, but if the capacity does not exist within the group to coordinate events, push an agenda forward, or demand coopera-

tion from key participants from time-to-time, then a group may flounder in well-meaning, but ineffective, deliberations and group process.

It is important to think of leadership as a group quality, in essence, as a characteristic that emerges, or is bestowed, on certain members of the group at key junctures, or a characteristic that certain group members assume when necessary to make sure progress is made. Leadership, then, can be a fluid and changing phenomenon over time as a group matures, as the core group of partners grows or changes, or as different situations are confronted. At the very least a group leader-coordinator should be appointed, someone responsible for setting meeting agendas, making sure partners attend, and making sure that the many varied tasks in a group endeavor are accomplished. Without an individual who performs that function, progress will be slow or lacking.

Leadership also refers to discretion and authority. Group members, or at least key group leaders, should be the individuals in which sufficient power, authority, and discretion reside so that meaningful and binding decisions about resources, direction, and progress can be made without waiting for affirmation from higher-ups.

## Open communications

Communication is the life-blood of any collaborative partnership. It happens in many different ways, for different purposes, but it rarely happens enough, and extra energy is often spent repairing damage done by miscommunication or non-communication. Rapid, easy communication devices are needed for core group leaders (e-mail, weekly debriefings, frequent phone calls) and for working group participants. Some regular communication devices that help keep people informed of meetings, events, and activities are routine faxes (weekly, bi-weekly), newsletters, and web pages. On the other hand, despite the on-going emergence of the telecommunications age, face-to-face communication is still valued quite highly, especially in the public



safety arena where people are highly committed and where the digital divide may exclude certain constituencies from routine communications.

In the backdrop of this communications issue is the issue of accessibility. Group leaders and members must always be accessible via several different means of communication, and must be committed to responding rapidly to almost all forms of inquiry.

In this context, “open” refers to making sure that all participating partners have opportunities to share their ideas, and that a climate of respect exists in which people can talk with each other about all aspects of the project — good and bad, urgent or routine, mainstream or novel. In communications, project leaders must be good listeners — the flip side of communication.

## Trust

It is not entirely possible to make people trust one another, and it is to be expected that individuals with different (perhaps opposing) perspectives might enter a public safety collaboration with certain levels of mistrust. However, the development of trust is critical to collaborative partnerships.

Perhaps it is most important to stress the establishment of a trusting environment for group meetings and activities. At the least, individuals should be able to attend meetings and speak up knowing that they will be heard and will have a legitimate chance to influence the course of discussions and decision making.

Trust is also related to accountability. The best working relationships are those where group members can trust what others say as the truth, and can trust that individuals will follow through on the commitments they make.

Like other group characteristics, trust is not absolute. Depending on a variety of factors (group composition, personalities, local histories and relationships), the level of trust in a problem-solving group will vary from time to time, and from sub-group to sub-group. When

a certain indefinable, critical level of trust is not achieved the group fails in its goals and conflict and disruptions dominate.

## Reciprocity

This is a fancy term for “helping each other.” It suggests that in a well-functioning group, a spirit of teamwork exists and members contribute to the success of other people’s efforts, just as they can expect that others will assist them. In long-term group processes such as public-safety problem solving, typically many individuals from different organizations will be involved, and at any given time the energy of the group will be focused on things not directly related to the mission of one individual. When individuals contribute to the various initiatives of the project, they can obtain both direct and indirect benefits.

When reciprocity is in place, the teamwork concept is understood by all group members who contribute willingly to the tasks they are assigned or for which they volunteer.

Note that the reciprocity requirement assumes that group members will have the discretion to commit their own time (and sometimes the time of others in their organization), and that their superiors are in agreement with these commitments. It is best to discuss and resolve some of these issues early, and they may need to be revisited several times over the course of a long project.

## Commitment

Group members have dedication and commitment. They believe strongly in the mission of the group and make sacrifices, or rearrange other priorities, to make sure that their promised contribution to the project is honored.

Commitment, like trust, is not taught or mandated. It is a personal decision when individuals honor their promises to the group, made on the basis of beliefs and values pertaining to the group’s goals and objectives.

It is now a common practice for public safety groups to develop mission, vision, and values statements, as are often found in the corporate world. Such statements can induce, or enhance commitment from group members, especially when they are developed with the aid of a skilled leadership trainer/consultant. In addition, it helps to find creative ways to weave the mission, vision, and values statements in the day-to-day, week-to-week activities of the groups — display them visibly in offices, on letterhead; refer to them often in key meetings and public settings; find ways to make them visible and meaningful.

### Shared vision

It is important that the vision (future goals, desired accomplishments, stated outcomes) for the project be shared almost unanimously among the group members. It is common for individual members to value certain particular outcomes, or particular program components, more than others, but it is important that all members understand the overarching aim of the project, and that they are able to articulate it consistently to others.

Shared vision typically ensues when the group works together in the development of the mission, vision, and values statements. The creation of such a statement is something that should take place early on in the group's life, but should be revisited from time to time to re-enforce project goals and values.

### Organization

Structure is very important to multi-disciplinary, long-term projects. When different organizations work together for long periods of time on serious problems, it is possible for inefficiencies to develop, and for individual members to become lost or distracted. Organization refers to the need for strategic planning, for a written description of the goals, sub-goals, objectives, methods, activities, responsibilities, schedules, resources, and anticipated contingencies relating to the project. Like a mission or vision statement, this plan, or description of organization, may change over time, and should be revisited periodically by the

group to assess progress, hold each other accountable, solve resource, scheduling and other problems, and generally keep things on track. Without a plan, or a description of project organization over time, resources are likely to be wasted, some participants will lose interest, and some efforts will falter or fail.

### Definition of roles/responsibilities

This characteristic places extra emphasis on the accountability aspects of a well-organized problem solving group. When group members know their roles and the contributions they are expected to make to the group, and when group members understand each other's roles, less confusion and wasted effort results. In addition, role clarification supports the notion of teamwork (reciprocity) when it is clear to everyone what each group member is contributing.

### Training

While most professionals working on a collaborative project have been trained in several important areas for a problem-solving project (e.g., strategic planning, analysis, crime prevention, mapping, leadership and communication), most group members do not share the same training experiences. It is often a good idea for core group members to receive joint training in problem solving areas (e.g., problem-solving, self-assessment and evaluation, crime prevention). Joint training helps the group develop a team orientation, helps build on the shared vision, and helps put group members on the same page regarding the project.

### Problem-solving mechanism(s)

Because there are many different ways to approach problem-solving, it is important to adopt a strategy and stick to it. In community policing, many groups adopt the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) approach from Problem-Oriented Policing. Other entities have adopted community-collaborative approaches to problem-solving. The Strategic Approach to Community Safety Initiative ("SACSI") has adopted a blend of community- and

problem-oriented policing models, with an emphasis on research integration. It is important for the group to agree to follow a specific approach and method for problem solving, and that appropriate training be provided if necessary.

### Rationale for Action

In addition to a problem-solving mechanism, a problem-solving group should take the time and effort to delineate clearly the interventions or programs to be implemented, and the rationale behind each intervention or each component. Such plans are often referred to as logic models — visual and written descriptions of the key interventions, and key activities, assumptions, resources, sequencing of events, and other parameters or constraints that must be accounted for if an intervention is to be successful.

For example, if a problem-solving group decides that a public marketing, or public education, component of a crime prevention project is necessary, then the logic behind that effort should be articulated — Who are the targets of the marketing effort? How will they be reached (or found)? How will the message be delivered? Will different media or venues be used? What are the key aspects of the message delivery process (e.g., consistency, repetition, clarity)? What must happen after the message is delivered for it to be successful (e.g., it must be understood, internalized, communicated to others)?

Several benefits are realized when interventions and activities are thought through and documented in this manner: this exercise brings a great deal of clarity to group goals (sometimes after a fair amount of debate, because this process will reveal weaknesses or gaps in plans that have been discussed at great length but not put down on paper), procedures, plans, and operations; natural benchmarks and process or outcome evaluation measures become very clear, and it makes the job of the researcher (or the internal evaluator) easier.

### Resourceful

Resourcefulness refers to a group's creativity and ability to find solutions to problems, and to identify resources in participating organizations that can be brought to bear on the problems or tasks at hand. Resourceful partnership team leaders and members are typically opportunistic. Resourcefulness refers to future planning and attainment of resources from sources other than original funders, so that partnership activities continue relatively smoothly when initial funding is depleted.

### Outcome oriented

Well functioning groups have a “bottom line” practicality about them. Once goals and objectives are established, a structure developed, and roles and responsibilities defined, attention turns to outcomes: How close are we to our goal? What specific obstacles are being encountered that constrain our ability to reach a goal(s)? At what rate are we making progress toward our goals? While group members will often value the collaborative process by which goals are attained, they will also hold each other accountable for the attainment of end goals.

Once outcomes, end goals, target reductions, or other quantifiable objectives are defined, it is a good idea to develop charts and tables for monitoring progress toward the goals, and to use them frequently at meetings or in publications or other communication devices. This approach keeps everyone's attention keyed on outcomes.

### Risk-taking orientation

Risk taking is often mentioned as a desirable characteristic in a group or organizational leader. The same can be said of problem-solving group members. Risk taking does not mean that foolish ideas should be pursued with vigor. Rather, it refers to a willingness to try things that have not been tried before, or that have been tried and failed if new information and/or resources are available that were not before. It refers also to a willingness to go against the grain of traditional thinking to see if new ideas will emerge. In problem-solving group settings, risk taking also refers to a

willingness to entertain new ideas and push them a bit further than normal, when there is a likelihood that progress will be made, or that new ideas and new ways of collaborating will come about as a result.

For example, some groups are hesitant to replicate ideas that work in other jurisdictions – they may not want to be seen as copying from others, or they may feel that the idea is not transferable to their own jurisdiction. In the absence of direct evidence that replication would be a bad idea, a risk taking group may elect to try out the idea — it may work and it may not. If it does not then much less would be lost if an entirely new program had been developed and then failed. In this context the idea to replicate may be seen as risk taking.

### Reflective

Reflectiveness in a group refers to self-assessment, evaluation, and an ethical orientation. Serious problem-

solving groups will devote significant resources to examining what they do, how they do it, and when it seems to be working well. They have a self-critical character. In the process of self assessment and evaluation they will ask such questions as: If it works, is it worth it in terms of additional costs or the risk of enhanced community repression (through constant aggressive crime suppression tactics)? Or, if it doesn't work as well as we thought it would, should we continue doing it; how can we make improvements?

A well-functioning partnership will make reflective exercises an on-going part of group development and deliberations. They should consider self-reflection from time-to-time on the group characteristics described here, not just on the instrumental outcomes of their problem-solving efforts.



# Community Gun Violence Prosecution Program

## *Award Recipients*

The Community Gun Violence Prosecution Program (GVP) is a new program established by Congress under the FY 2001 Appropriations Act. The Congress has allocated \$75 million for this program, making it the largest prosecutorial hiring initiative in history. This program allows state and local jurisdictions to apply for funding to hire prosecutors who will focus primarily on gun crime.

Funding for this program was available to all state, county, city, and tribal public prosecutor offices, including those state Attorneys General offices that have responsibility for prosecuting matters involving "firearm-related violent crime." Funding covers 80 percent of the salary and benefits costs of full-time prosecutors, up to a maximum of \$40,000 per year per prosecutor, for three years. Jurisdictions with a population under 150,000 could have applied for up to two new prosecutors; jurisdictions at or above 150,000 could have applied for up to four.

These additional resources at the state and local levels will be important assets to district task forces. As a condition of the grant, these prosecutors are required to not only prosecute gun cases, but to work in conjunction with Project Safe Neighborhoods activities within the district. Local prosecutors can use these individuals as coordination and case review contacts within the jurisdiction as well as participants on district task forces.

The application deadline for this program has passed, and BJA is currently processing the pending applications in phases. To view the list of the jurisdictions that have received grant awards under the Community Gun Violence Prosecution Program please visit [www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.com](http://www.ProjectSafeNeighborhoods.com). This list will be continuously updated to reflect the latest award recipients.



# Existing National Initiatives and Task Forces

Please find below a list of national task forces that may be active in your area. In addition, most districts participate in other district-specific task forces. For more information, contact your local U.S. Attorney's Office.

- The FBI's **Safe Streets Violent Crimes Initiative** addresses street gang and drug related violence, and apprehension of violent fugitives. Utilizing an intelligence base, the primary mission of the task force is to achieve maximum coordination and cooperation among participating law enforcement agencies to investigate, locate, and apprehend fugitives and other persons involved in serious crimes.
- The FBI's **National Gang Strategy** works with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to identify the major violent domestic gang/drug enterprises that pose significant threats to communities and pursue these criminals through multi-divisional, coordinated investigations that support successful prosecutions.
- The **Weed and Seed** initiative, begun in 1991 under President Bush and Attorney General Thornburgh, was designed to first prevent and control violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in target areas, and then to restore the neighborhood through social and economic revitalization. Weed and Seed integrates law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration efforts to achieve these goals.
- The **Integrated Violence Reduction Strategy**, developed by ATF, works to remove violent firearms offenders from communities, deny criminals access to firearms, and prevent violence and firearms crime through community outreach. It combines a variety of ATF programs and task forces in cities across the country: The **Armed Violent Criminal Apprehension Program**, which seeks to identify, investigate, and recommend federal prosecution of those individuals who

illegally possess firearms, particularly armed career criminals and armed drug traffickers; the **Illegal Firearms Trafficking Program** and the Bureau's regulatory efforts; and community outreach through the **Gang Resistance Education and Training Program**.

- The ATF **Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative** (YCGII), a component of the Integrated Violence Reduction Strategy, was formed to develop better information about how youth offenders obtain firearms, and use that information to arrest illegal gun traffickers and reduce youth gun violence. YCGII provides for comprehensive crime gun tracing and is a component of ATF's illegal gun trafficking enforcement program. YCGII now operates in approximately 50 communities.
- The ATF's **Stolen Firearms Program** is an aggressive enforcement effort determined to reduce the amount of firearms stolen from interstate carriers and FFLs. ATF research shows that such guns are destined to be crime guns. The program created a database that separates thefts into categories, including interstate thefts and losses from carriers, source areas of stolen firearms, types of firearms most frequently stolen, types of thefts, FFL theft and loss reports, a record of the modus operandi of reported thefts, and recovery location and possessor information.
- Through the **National Integrated Ballistic Information Network** (NIBIN) Program, ATF deploys ballistic imaging technology to state and local law enforcement agencies. Crime-related firearms evidence is entered into the system and evaluated for similarity to previous entries; high scores alert firearms examiners to potential links between crimes. By connecting crimes, ballistic comparisons provide invaluable investigative leads, some of which could be discovered by no other means. The NIBIN Program is in the first phase of an extensive nationwide expansion. From 77 sites before the start of the rollout, the

NIBIN network has expanded to a total of 124 sites, each a federal, state or local forensic laboratory. The sites are currently located in 29 states nationwide. ATF anticipates that by the end of calendar year 2001, the first half of the nationwide rollout will be complete, including 171 sites in 40 states. There will be approximately 250 sites in the completed network, and the technology will be available in every states. Police departments not scheduled to receive NIBIN equipment are already cooperating to gain access to the system through other agencies.

- **Operation Safe Home** began as a violent crime initiative of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).<sup>1</sup> Operation Safe Home created (1) a collaboration of federal, state, and local law enforcement focused on reducing the level of violent crime within public and assisted housing; (2) a collaboration among law enforcement agencies, public housing managers, and residents to devise methods to prevent violent crime; and (3) the introduction of HUD resources and other federal initiatives specifically geared to preventing crime within public and assisted housing. At the request of a housing community, task forces were assembled to identify individuals committing drugs or weapons offenses within the housing community. Evidence was collected through traditional law enforcement means and then presented to a United States Attorney's Office for prosecution.
- The **Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative** (SACSI) is a Department of Justice initiative designed to increase the capacity of U.S. Attorneys, working in partnership with federal, state, and local criminal justice agencies and a research entity, to collaborate on data collection and analysis, and design targeted strategies and interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. There are ten SACSI sites, which were funded in two phases. The first phase began in

<sup>1</sup> According to a HUD report of February 2000, public housing residents are more than twice as likely to suffer from a firearm victimization as other members of the population. One in five residents reports feeling unsafe in their neighborhood, and children show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder similar to those seen in children exposed to war and major disasters. In a study from 1997, 70 percent of youth ages 7-18 in a public housing project had witnessed a shooting while 43 percent had seen a murder.

1998 and included: Memphis, TN; Indianapolis, IN; Winston-Salem, NC; Portland, OR; and, New Haven, CT. In fall of 2000, the Department selected five additional sites that are targeting gun violence: Albuquerque, NM; Rochester, NY; Detroit, MI; St. Louis, MO; and, Atlanta, GA.

- The **Safe Cities Network** was established in 1999 for the purpose of linking cities and communities across the country so that they can share effective crime-reduction practices and ensure the safety and security of their communities. The Network consists of the following ten partners: Atlantic City, New Jersey; Los Angeles and Inglewood, California; Springfield, Massachusetts; Detroit, Flint, Highland, and Inkster, Michigan; King County, Washington; Louisville, Kentucky; Miami, Florida; Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and High Point, North Carolina (honorary member). The Network operates a Web site and conducts bi-monthly conference calls to share information on such issues as effective prosecutorial strategies, preventing youth violence, crime gun tracing, community policing, and working with faith-based organizations and after-school programs.
- The **Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force** (OCDETF) also addresses gun violence as an integral part of drug interdiction

efforts. In 1982, the OCDETF program was initiated by the Department of Justice to combine federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts into a comprehensive attack against organized crime and drug traffickers.

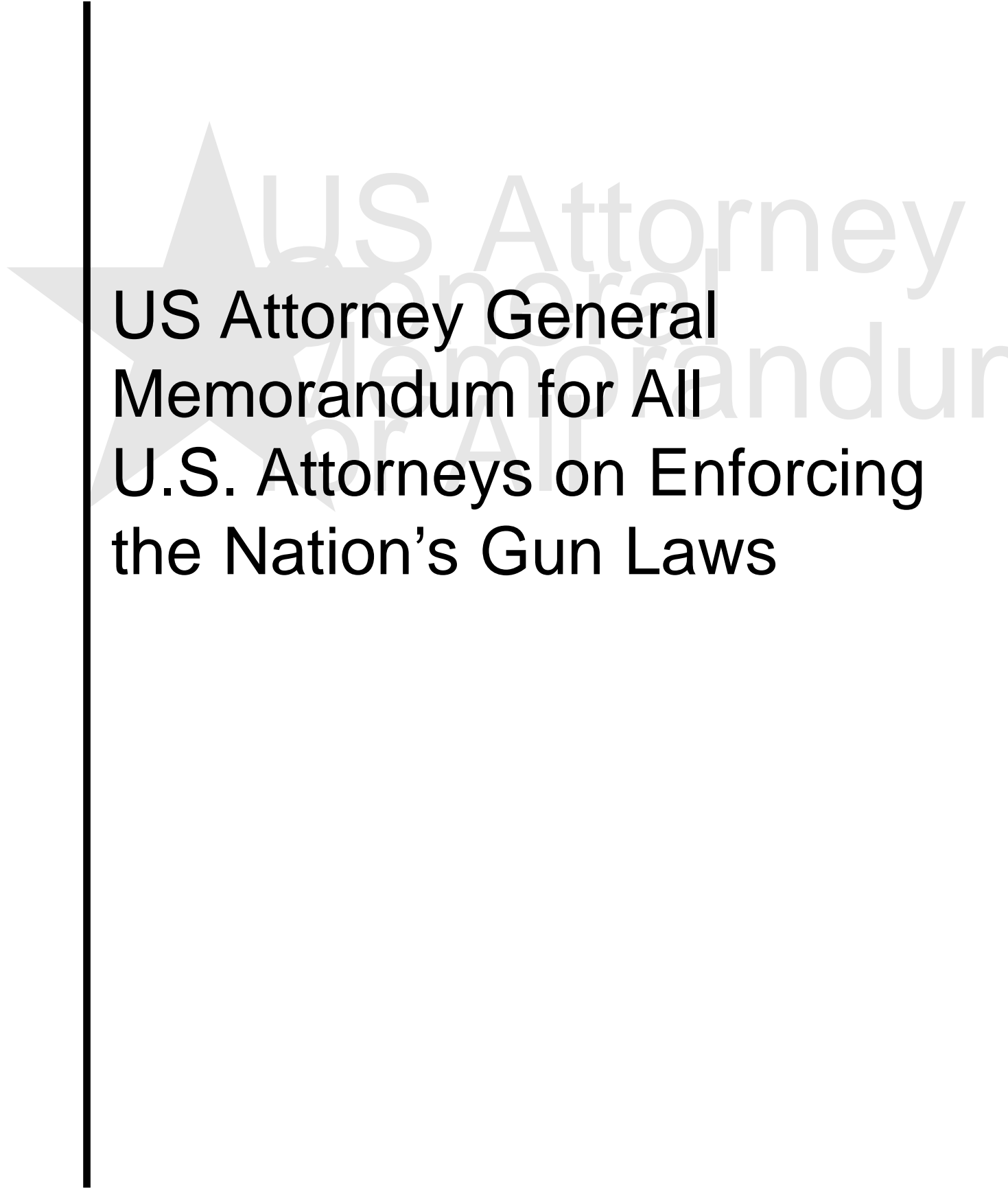
- The **High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area** (HIDTA) program involves gun interdiction efforts by identifying regions with critical drug-trafficking problems and providing federal resources to enhance and integrate drug control efforts among the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in those regions. The HIDTA program operates under the direction of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and HIDTA regions are designated by the ONDCP director in consultation with the Attorney General, Secretary of the Treasury, heads of drug-control agencies, and appropriate governors. In addition to coordinating drug control efforts, HIDTAs assess regional drug threats, develop strategies to address those threats, integrate initiatives, and provide federal resources to implement those endeavors. The HIDTA program also facilitates cooperative investigations and improves information sharing within and between regions. Intelligence is coordinated at HIDTA Investigative Support Centers, which offer technical, analytical, and strategic support to participating agencies.





# Strategic Planning

Strategic  
Planning



**US Attorney General  
Memorandum for All  
U.S. Attorneys on Enforcing  
the Nation's Gun Laws**



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D. C. 20530

November 8, 2001

Dear United States Attorney:

On May 14, 2001, with the support of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, President George W. Bush announced Project Safe Neighborhoods: America's Network Against Gun Violence. Project Safe Neighborhoods renews gun crime enforcement efforts across America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing them with the additional tools necessary to succeed in reducing gun violence.

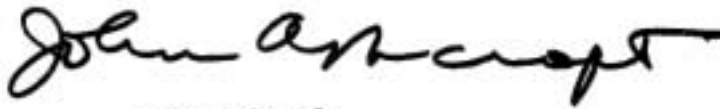
Project Safe Neighborhoods will promote heightened coordination among federal, state and local agencies in a unified offensive. I am directing every United States Attorney in each of the 94 federal judicial districts across America to serve as the agent of change to make this national initiative a success. To succeed in this important mission, each United States Attorney will work with local prosecutors and police departments to establish a task force consisting of federal and local officials. This task force will develop a comprehensive strategic plan to fight gun violence and will review and prepare gun cases for prosecution in the most appropriate forum. Community and law enforcement leaders from across America have been invited and urged to be involved in these local task forces. The rivalries and competing agendas that can exist among law enforcement officials must give way to strategic partnerships focused on public safety.

The new United States Attorney will serve as the catalyst to bring together all law enforcement agencies and the community to ensure a uniform and comprehensive approach to reduce gun violence. Good examples of this type of strong, coordinated partnership include Project Exile in Richmond, Virginia, and Operation Ceasefire in Boston, Massachusetts. The success of these programs is due in large part to the strength of the partnerships established.

But partnership in this endeavor is not enough -- there must also be provision. The Administration will seek to commit \$558.8 million to this effort over two years, including \$233.6 million already available in 2001. This funding will be used to hire new federal and state prosecutors, support investigators, provide training, and develop and promote community outreach efforts. These resources, combined with unprecedented partnership among all levels of government, seek to dramatically reduce gun crime throughout the nation.

I am grateful for the support of the ATF, the National District Attorneys Association, and many other state and local law enforcement agencies who have participated in developing this important initiative. Together in strong coordination with law enforcement and communities across America, we can help break the deadly link between guns and crime and keep gun wielding criminals off our streets and out of our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Ashcroft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

John Ashcroft