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Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice

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Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice

The 1998 Research Prospectus of
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Director's Message

I am pleased to present NIJ's 1998 Research Prospectus, *Building Knowledge About Crime and Justice*. It outlines how the Institute's research and development activity seeks to strengthen the Nation's ability to prevent and control crime and to achieve justice.

As we approach the 21st century, the challenges of crime and justice loom large. Despite welcome recent declines, rates of violent crime are still unacceptably high. Although the steep increase in juvenile crime appears to have abated, the certain rise in the crime-prone population over the next decade causes deep concern. As States struggle to fund increases in prison capacity, the fiscal strains felt throughout the rest of the criminal justice system become acute. As the true incidence of violence within the family—including spouse abuse, child abuse, and elder abuse—becomes more apparent, members of the medical and criminal justice professions urgently seek effective interventions.

In this time of challenge and change, the need for sound research that can guide public policy is compelling. Mayors ask, "Which prevention programs work?" State legislators ask, "What options do we have in designing new sentencing statutes?" Police chiefs ask, "How can we harness the power of science and technology to enhance criminal investigations?" Judges ask, "How can we more effectively respond to drug abuse?" Prosecutors ask, "What would be the benefits of implementing the concepts of community and restorative justice?" Civic leaders ask, "How can we energize community resources to promote safety and reduce fear?"

Congress established NIJ to develop and disseminate knowledge that provides answers to such questions. In doing so, the Institute has identified several strategic challenges it must continue to address. This Research Prospectus provides an overview of those challenges and indicates the approaches by which NIJ is meeting them. The research community is integral to this effort. We encourage you to contact us if you wish to submit an application to receive research funding from NIJ or if you wish to obtain information on our research findings. We also encourage you to share this knowledge within your community so that the network of informed citizens continues to grow.

Jeremy Travis
Director
National Institute of Justice

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NIJ Mission and Fiscal Resources

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Mission

Created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, NIJ is authorized to support research, evaluation, demonstration programs, development of technology, and both national and international information dissemination. Specific mandates of the Act direct NIJ to:

- Sponsor special projects and research and development programs that will improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent violent crime.
- Conduct national demonstration projects that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice.
- Develop new technologies to fight crime and improve criminal justice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice programs and identify programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- Recommend actions that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments as well as by private organizations to improve criminal justice.
- Carry out research on criminal behavior.
- Develop new methods of crime prevention and reduction of crime and delinquency.

In recent years, NIJ has greatly expanded its initiatives. In part this stems from provisions of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Crime Act). The Act provided for programs that promote community policing, the control and prevention of violence against women, new directions in sentencing and corrections, court-based supervision and services for drug offenders, and development of new technologies. NIJ has launched major research and evaluation initiatives in

each area—in partnership with Crime Act offices established by the Department of Justice.¹

Expansion of NIJ initiatives also stems from partnerships with other Federal agencies and with private foundations, continued development of technology, and an intensified international focus. NIJ conveys its research interests to the field through widely distributed solicitations and other means. Solicitations are announced in the *Federal Register* and *Commerce Business Daily*. Information is available at NIJ's Web site and from the DOJ Response Center.²

NIJ's research activities constitute an impressive portfolio of works in progress. NIJ's portfolio now includes more than 450 research, science and technology development, and program development projects. NIJ's R&D awards in 1997 totaled more than 290, representing an investment by the Institute of \$100.6 million.

Fiscal Resources

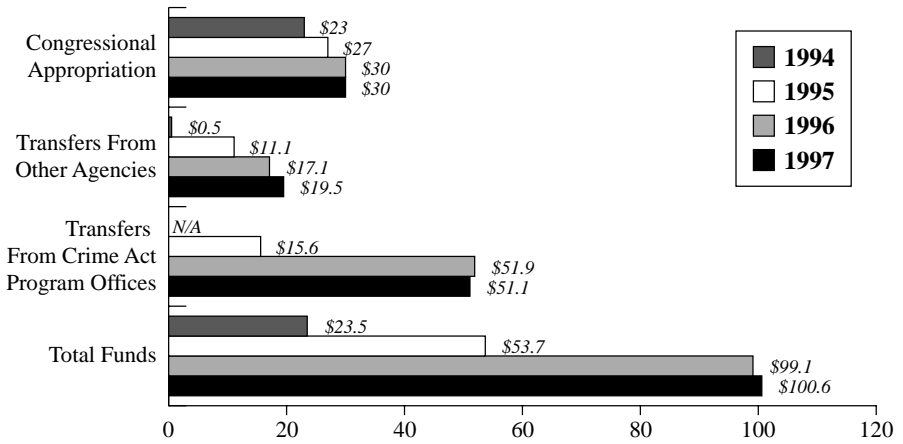
The Institute's appropriated budget has fluctuated significantly, from a high point of \$115 million in fiscal year 1974 to a low of \$22.9 million in fiscal year 1994 (current dollars). In fiscal

year 1997, Congress appropriated \$30 million for core NIJ operations, augmented by transfers of funds from other Federal agencies and from Crime Act Offices (see exhibit 1). Much of NIJ's current research portfolio is supported by those transfers, which fund jointly designed research and evaluation projects. For example, NIJ awards made in fiscal year 1997 with transferred Crime Act funds accounted for 41 percent of total expenditures by the Institute that year (see exhibit 2).

The balance of this Prospectus discusses (1) strategic challenges currently addressed by many of NIJ's research and development activities, (2) R&D opportunities NIJ generates to address those challenges, (3) different perspectives reflected by NIJ-supported projects, and (4) methods by which NIJ disseminates R&D results to the field.

Addressing Strategic Challenges

Five strategic challenges drive much of the Institute's work. They are briefly outlined below with examples of related R&D activities, each building

Exhibit 1: Sources of NIJ Funds, in Millions, FY 1994–97**Exhibit 2:** Allocation of NIJ Funds as a Percentage of Total Expenditures,* FY 1997**Crime Act Grants**

Includes all awards made under the 1994 Crime Act. See also exhibit 3.

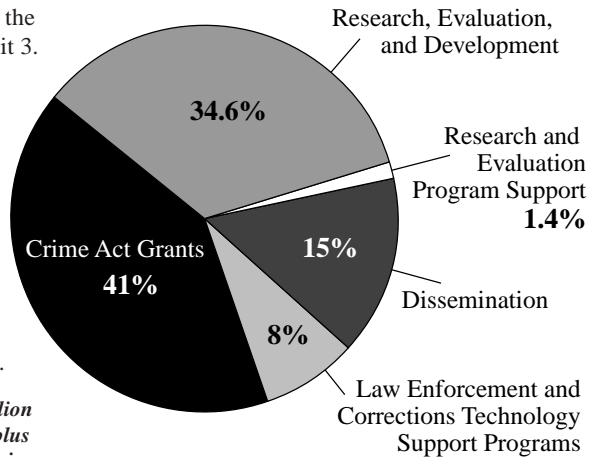
Research, Evaluation, and Development

Includes all research, evaluation, science and technology, development, and visiting fellows projects.

Dissemination

Includes national and international exchange of information, clearinghouse, and publications.

* Total expenditures of \$100.6 million include NIJ's base appropriation plus funds transferred from other agencies.



on knowledge produced by research during the past quarter century.

Rethinking Justice

This challenge pertains to efforts that will develop a deeper understanding of the processes that create safe and just communities. NIJ is engaging this challenge through research and demonstration efforts that critically examine society's response to crime, such as by examining how victims and communities respond to crime and by studying the role of police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections in dispensing justice.

For example, Criminal Justice 2000 is a multiyear NIJ program seeking to foster a national dialogue on the justice system, with the goal of understanding, conceptually and empirically, where it is now and where it is heading as we approach the 21st century. The effort will focus on the principal agencies of the justice system in the executive and judicial branches of government, the processes of justice, and the participants in the justice process.

In 2000, NIJ anticipates convening a major conference, Rethinking Justice, reviewing the state of our criminal

justice system on a broad scale by documenting current operations and examining those systems from the perspectives of victims, offenders, jurors, and witnesses. The goal is ultimately to spur public discussion and ask whether recent innovations such as the community justice movement and problem-solving courts hold promise for systemwide improvement. To that end, NIJ plans to bring together practitioners, policymakers, and interested citizens to develop new directions for criminal justice policy in the new century.

Among other projects related to Rethinking Justice is one to be implemented by NIJ and the Corrections Program Office, also part of the Office of Justice Programs. The effort will bring together leaders from the three branches of government as well as juvenile and adult corrections administrators representing all 50 States and the District of Columbia to engage in a substantive set of discussions, over a 2-year period, on the critical issues of sentencing and corrections.

Understanding the Nexus

NIJ seeks to understand the nexus between crime and other social con-

cerns by illuminating the relationships between criminal activity and its broader context. Illustrative of this effort are ADAM (see “Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program”) challenge grants, scheduled for 1998. The grants would enable researchers at various ADAM sites to probe such potential areas as the relationship between alcohol and crime; alcohol, drug abuse,

and domestic violence; and drug abuse and female juvenile delinquents.

In 2000, NIJ plans to begin publishing an annual report based on ADAM that would indicate trends in such areas as drug use, gun markets, gang migration, suburbanization of crime, and drug treatment availability.

Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program

ADAM resulted from NIJ’s transformation and expansion of its Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program, which for more than 10 years interviewed and drug tested booked arrestees at various sites nationwide. DUF data played an important role in constructing a national picture of drug abuse and have been a central component in studying the drug-crime nexus. As DUF’s successor, ADAM will be in place at the 23 DUF sites. If approved, increased funding will expand ADAM to encompass 75 cities.

Retaining many of DUF’s features, ADAM will also incorporate new elements that will significantly strengthen the value of collected data. If increased funding of ADAM is approved, NIJ is proposing:

- Development of local coordinating councils that will generate local research projects for execution at the ADAM sites and assume prominent roles in disseminating the site’s findings to policy, practitioner, and public constituencies.
- Establishment of a program to scan for developing substance abuse problems among arrestees. This outreach program will annually collect one additional quarter of data from a targeted population, such as a suburban, rural, or Native-American jurisdiction.

ADAM will provide local and State drug policymakers, courts, law enforcement agencies, treatment providers, and prevention specialists with information that can be used to conduct local research and evaluation and to inform local policy decisions.

In 1998, NIJ anticipates launching International ADAM, which would involve a partnership among criminal justice organizations in many countries and provide a framework for a global assessment of drug use and for strengthening nations’ drug control policies and their coordination.

Breaking the Cycle

NIJ is meeting this challenge by designing and evaluating research-based interventions to reduce crime, a logical extension of understanding the nexus. When connections between crime and social conditions are identified, then experiments with policies that break the linkages should follow. Among several such NIJ efforts is one designed to break the cycle of drug abuse and crime by examining the hypothesis that testing, mandatory treatment, and other interventions provided to those with a history of illicit drug use will reduce drug abuse and criminal behavior.

The Institute is also exploring with experts the possibility of developing and evaluating an intervention that would ameliorate the negative consequences of child abuse and neglect—particularly delinquency and substance abuse. This exploration flows, in part, from research suggesting that abused or neglected children are 40 percent more likely to engage in delinquency or crime later in life, and in part, from a strategic planning meeting in fall 1997 on child abuse and neglect interventions.

Also pertaining to domestic violence are at least three planned demonstration

projects, with followup evaluations, featuring innovative judicial approaches and interventions to break the cycle of spouse or partner battering. NIJ is proceeding with this effort in close cooperation with the Violence Against Women Grants Office, which, like the Institute, is a component of the Office of Justice Programs.

Among other NIJ research related to the Breaking the Cycle strategic challenge are the following projects scheduled for 1998:

- Offenders and employment. NIJ will begin to explore possible research issues in the areas of offender employment, training and education, and correctional industries.
 - Decline in crime rates. The Institute is working with researchers and practitioners to understand the recent declines in reported crime and victimization.
 - Community dynamics. If funding is approved, NIJ will initiate research at the neighborhood level to better understand why crime rates fluctuate and to use that knowledge to design and implement appropriate interventions.
-

Creating the Tools

To meet this challenge, NIJ is developing, testing, and evaluating new and transferable techniques, practices, and technologies that address practitioners' needs. One of many examples is the Institute's Crime Mapping Research Center, whose goal is to promote the use of geographic information system technology for the analysis of crime and criminal behavior (see "Crime Mapping Research Center").

NIJ is considering development of new training-related methods and tools for the law enforcement and corrections communities, such as computer-based training and CD-ROM systems. Among the training areas to which those tools might be applied are training in use of force, office safety, weapons, team engagement, and protocol and policies.

Among many other NIJ activities focusing on the challenge, the Institute is pursuing projects that will make DNA testing an even more valuable and widely used tool, including the following:

- Supporting development of a DNA technology that is affordable—about \$20 a test—and portable, providing nearly immediate results.

Crime Mapping Research Center

Crime mapping permits exploration of spatial and temporal dimensions of crime and enhances the ability to see crime in the context of other social forces, such as income distribution, health care, transportation systems, and demographic patterns. Many police departments have made crime mapping an integral part of their response to crime.

As a focal point for bringing together researchers and practitioners, NIJ's Crime Mapping Research Center (CMRC) is promoting computerized crime mapping through research that includes fellowships, staff research, and grants; evaluation of current and best practices; development of training programs, a national geocoded data archive, and new analytic software; and dissemination of information through workshops, conferences, a Web site, and a listserv.

Future initiatives of CMRC include reaching out to both the criminal justice and academic communities by providing training on geographic information system technology, cartography for crime analysis, and techniques for the spatial and temporal analysis of crime.

If successful, the technology will aid in convicting many more criminals, exonerating the innocent earlier, and will fundamentally change the work of law enforcement.

- Continuing the forensic DNA laboratory improvement program, which was created to increase the capabilities and capacities of State and local forensic laboratories in the United States for conducting state-of-the-art DNA testing to support investigation and prosecution of violent crime.
- Overseeing direction of the National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence, established by Attorney General Janet Reno to recommend courses of action and means to improve the use of DNA technology in the investigation of criminal cases.

(Other NIJ science and technology projects related to the Institute's addressing the challenge of Creating the Tools are noted in the section "Technology Development.")

Expanding the Horizons

To look beyond traditional boundaries—both geographical and intellectual—and thereby develop a full understanding of crime and justice issues is critically important in an era of rapid change and global communication. NIJ is committed to viewing those

issues from interdisciplinary and international perspectives. Among the projects planned are these:

- Interdisciplinary seminar competition. NIJ expects to invite universities to submit proposals to host seminars exploring the contribution a particular discipline—economics, history, business—can make to the study of crime and the justice system.
- Challenge grants for comparative international research. The Institute plans to stimulate comparative research projects on key justice system issues of importance to policymakers and practitioners in the United States and other countries. Through challenge grants, U.S. researchers will be asked to seek research and funding partners in other nations to conduct comparative studies.
- Transnational crime. NIJ will support development of a better understanding of the definition, measurement, and policy concerns about crime that transcends national boundaries.

NIJ's newly formed International Center will generate a number of

initiatives, support and serve as a resource for other NIJ components, and continue previous NIJ international activities, such as those related to NIJ's affiliation with the family of research institutes connected with the United Nations. One such endeavor is the NIJ-developed UNOJUST—the United Nations Online Crime and Justice Clearinghouse—which links criminological institutes of the world on the World Wide Web. The International Center is planning to inaugurate an effort to create a technical infrastructure and develop in-house skills to support the growth and operation of NIJ's international endeavors.

Role of the International Center

NIJ Director Jeremy Travis puts the role of the Center into perspective:

“Since the creation of the Office of Justice Programs and its predecessors, our agencies have been engaged in international research, statistical analysis, and program exchanges. As we approach the next century, and as our concern about transnational crime grows and our opportunities to learn about effective criminal justice approaches in other countries increase, it is important that we create new avenues for dialogue with our counterparts in other countries. The International Center will foster those new international relationships.”

Generating Opportunities for Research and Development

NIJ support for outside (extramural) research and development and for staff-conducted (intramural) R&D is the catalyst that opens opportunities for pursuit of projects and programs enabling the Institute to address effectively its strategic challenges and other priorities.

Promoting Extramural Research and Development

NIJ engages the Nation's best researchers to explore crime and justice issues through its diverse, multidisciplinary extramural research program. As a science agency, NIJ is firmly committed to a competitive process for awarding grants to these researchers. Successful applicants for NIJ funds must demonstrate to an independent peer review panel that (1) the gap in our knowledge they propose to fill is

critical to understanding crime and justice and is highly policy relevant, (2) the proposed research design is rigorous, and (3) the researchers are highly qualified to execute that design within a reasonable budget.

The independent peer review panels recommend many more research applications than can be funded within NIJ's budget. Upon considering peer review results, Institute staff make recommendations to NIJ's Director. In consultation with staff, the Director reaches a final decision.

NIJ's extramural research program consists of two types of funding strategies. The first is the solicitation for investigator-initiated research. The other is the directed solicitation.

Solicitation for investigator-initiated research. In June and December, NIJ receives and reviews research proposals that respond to the Institute's research solicitation for investigator-initiated projects. Researchers may propose their own study concepts.

The solicitation conceptualizes broad criminal justice and social themes for investigators to consider, but virtually any criminal justice topic may be proposed. Currently, those themes

center on the strategic challenges described earlier.

Typically, grants under this type of solicitation range between \$25,000 and \$300,000 and last for 1 to 2 years. NIJ actively encourages applicants from a broad variety of disciplines so that the resulting research reflects different approaches to the challenges of crime and justice.

Directed solicitations. NIJ also issues special, directed solicitations that call for research proposals on a specific topic. For applications submitted under this type of solicitation, peer review panels and NIJ staff impose an additional criterion, asking whether the proposal is responsive to the specific research questions set forth in the solicitation. Often, NIJ's directed solicitations are developed in partnership with another Federal agency. In this case staff from that agency may participate in the internal review of the proposals but do not participate in the peer review. NIJ's Director makes the final decisions regarding grant awards.

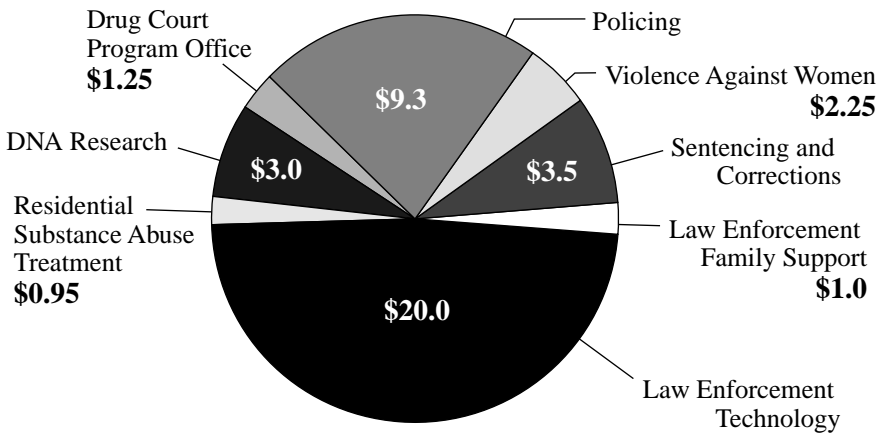
The 1994 Crime Act has had a dramatic impact on the volume of research activity funded under directed solicitations. After its enactment, the Department of Justice decided that each of the

major Crime Act initiatives would be evaluated, that selected local innovations would be assessed, and that basic research would be conducted to lay the foundation for further reform and innovation. (See “Crime Act Initiatives” and exhibit 3.)

With the approval of the Department’s appropriators in Congress, funding for this research agenda was provided by setting aside a small percentage of Crime Act program funds. Through this research activity, NIJ and its partners hope to maximize the lessons learned from this unique period of innovation and reform in the Nation’s approach to crime and justice.

National evaluations are being conducted on the Crime Act’s program initiatives on community policing, violence against women, violent offender incarceration, and truth in sentencing. Evaluations at the State and local levels are being conducted to learn about community policing reform, different tactics and strategies in response to various crimes, coordinated responses to domestic violence, drug courts, drug treatment in prisons, truth-in-sentencing statutes, and other issues at the leading edge of criminal justice innovation. NIJ expects that these research projects will yield valuable lessons to guide policy and practice in the future.

Exhibit 3: Allocation of NIJ Crime Act Funds by R&D Area, in Millions, FY 1997



Crime Act Initiatives

Among NIJ's Crime-Act-related research have been projects focusing on community policing and violence against women. In fiscal year 1998, and in cooperation with the Violence Against Women Grants Office, NIJ expects to issue a solicitation for examination of the process associated with, and the impact resulting from, arrest policies implemented in the context of newer systemwide and coordinated approaches to domestic violence.

In 1997, NIJ's partnership with the Corrections Program Office continued. National Evaluations of the Violent Offender Incarceration/Truth in Sentencing Program and the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program were initiated. Increasingly, NIJ's research and evaluation collaboration with the Corrections Program Office promotes and funds practitioner-researcher partnerships. Several of these partnership grants will examine the impact of changes in State sentencing practices. Another 13 were awarded to conduct process evaluations of the implementation of substance abuse treatment programs funded under RSAT—bringing the total of such grants awarded in the past 2 years to 20 in 15 States.

The Drug Court Program Office and NIJ cooperatively funded two grants in 1997 to evaluate four drug courts. To be conducted in two 1-year phases, the evaluations were awarded a total of about \$720,000 for phase 1, during which researchers will examine descriptive, historical, and attitudinal data; obtain and analyze data on criminal recidivism related to offenders adjudicated by the drug courts; and develop a research design for phase 2.

In fiscal year 1997, NIJ made six awards totaling \$743,000 under another Crime Act initiative, the Law Enforcement Family Support Program. The projects will develop policies and demonstration programs to reduce job-related stress and its consequences for law enforcement personnel and their families.

Finally, the Crime Act has supported significant investment in new technology to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.

Directed solicitations also have been stimulated by other partnership research efforts encompassing a wide variety of topics outside the Crime Act. For example, NIJ supported evaluations of the following projects: National Institute of Corrections Criminal Justice System Project, Community

Prosecution in the District of Columbia, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Youth Gun Interdiction/Youth Firearms Market Project, and Tribal Strategies Against Violence. In cooperation with the Office for Victims of Crime, a new initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of victim assistance

and victim compensation programs resulted in a grant that will establish a protocol for a national study of victim needs and assistance.

Supporting Intramural R and D

NIJ is also committed to a wide-ranging program of intramural research. This staff-conducted research meets the same rigorous standards of peer review, budget review, and policy relevance applied to extramural studies. NIJ staff propose topics that reflect timely issues of some urgency, gaps in NIJ's portfolio, or issues that will have immediate relevance to policy development. The Institute's Deputy Directors select and approve topics with the concurrence of NIJ's Director. Senior researchers closely manage NIJ's intramural research activities.

Illustrative of staff-conducted research is a study of homicide in eight U.S. cities. It was completed in 1997, as was the first phase of a project using hair and urine tests to examine drug use in a State's prisons.

Pursuing Multiple R and D Perspectives

NIJ research and development not only spans a wide spectrum of topics but also reflects multiple perspectives, ranging from basic research and research infrastructure to research demonstration programs and technology development.

Basic Research

Practice in other fields has made enormous gains as a result of long-term exploration of basic issues. In medicine, for example, studies such as the Framingham Heart Disease Epidemiological Study are commonplace, and advances in health care are evidence of the benefits of such research. Similar efforts are needed to build the comprehensive knowledge base for shaping more effective public policies on crime and justice. Thus, NIJ supports long-term, multidisciplinary studies that promise significant contributions to the foundation of knowledge for understanding crime and delinquency.

A primary example of such work is the Project on Human Development in

Chicago Neighborhoods, a longitudinal project involving a variety of research disciplines, a private foundation, and government—the National Institute of Justice and, more recently, the National Institute of Mental Health. The study’s 5-year development and design phase began in 1989 and involved more than 100 scientists representing the fields of pediatrics, biology, psychology, sociology, and criminology.

Researchers have interviewed more than 8,000 adult residents in 343 Chicago neighborhoods and nearly 3,000 neighborhood experts. As reported in *Science*,³ the study finds that collective efficacy—defined as social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene in the supervision of children and in the maintenance of public order—is linked to reduced violence.

A component of the ongoing project involves overlapping longitudinal studies that examine the development of both prosocial and antisocial behavior from birth to age 26 in 7,000 individuals as well as a series of data collection efforts at the community level. Researchers will track participants for several years, analyzing their development to gain insights into family and neighborhood factors that

encourage prosocial or antisocial behavior.

Another basic research effort is the Police Observational Study, which has completed data collection in Indianapolis and St. Petersburg. This study replicates the landmark police observational studies of the 1960s and 1970s, with a special focus on understanding how police operate in the era of community policing. Researchers will be tracking changing law enforcement styles under a community policing rubric over time by accompanying officers on their beats to observe encounters with suspects and citizens.

Research Demonstration Programs

NIJ is responsible, within its statutory mission, for carrying out research demonstration programs. The Institute has defined a research demonstration as a planned intervention that is based in theory, designed to test one or more clearly articulated hypotheses, and carried out with the most rigorous research methods. This definition serves an important purpose: to ensure that findings of impact can be attributed directly to the intervention and findings of no impact cannot be laid at the doorstep of poor program design.

With funding from the President's Office of National Drug Control Policy, NIJ is managing a research demonstration project in Birmingham, Alabama, designed to test the following hypothesis: If the criminal justice system were to test *every* adult arrestee for illicit drug use and offer treatment, sanctions, or continued testing for *all* defendants with drug problems, the levels of drug abuse and criminal behavior would decline significantly. Funding increases are permitting expansion of the project to at least two additional adult sites and two juvenile sites.

In 1997, NIJ completed an evaluation of a research demonstration of the System for the Effective Control of Urban Environmental Security (SECURES), which uses acoustic signal-processing technology developed for the military to detect and report the location of gunshots in an urban environment. NIJ also evaluated the effectiveness of a competing acoustic-based gunshot detection system, designed to help police in their response to gunfire.

In each of these research demonstration programs, NIJ enters into a cooperative agreement with the jurisdiction hosting the programmatic intervention and issues a competitive, directed solicitation for the evaluation of the program.

Identification of Innovative Programs and Effective Policies

Another perspective of NIJ's R&D efforts is identification of critical issues and important innovations at the local level. In some cases, identification results from independent evaluations supported by NIJ. In others, NIJ staff and consultants assess projects according to a set of criteria to ensure that they reflect programmatic innovations that are based on the literature of the field and offer important insights. The assessments are widely disseminated to the field to stimulate new thinking and research.

More detailed reviews are also conducted of specific, emerging issues, and NIJ publishes reports synthesizing research findings, operational experience, and expert opinion related to the topic. For example, NIJ learned of the concern of police officials, prosecutors, and others about witness intimidation. NIJ convened a focus group to gauge the depth of the problem, inventory promising approaches, and develop research strategies.⁴

In response to the concern that job-related stress has negative consequences for law enforcement personnel and their families, NIJ commissioned a review of stress-

reduction and other employee assistance programs operating in law enforcement agencies and published the findings.⁵

Another example of NIJ's efforts to identify innovative programs was sponsorship in 1997 by the Institute, other components of the Office of Justice Programs, and the National Institute of Corrections of several regional symposiums on restorative justice. Practitioners and researchers from across the country shared information about existing and new approaches to restorative justice practices, which focus on providing support and compensation to victims and assisting with mediation among victims, offenders, and the community.

Technology Development

NIJ has a long and very successful history of developing technology for law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. NIJ pioneered the development of some of the technologies that are now commonplace within policing and criminal justice. Soft body armor (commonly called the bullet-resistant vest) was first developed and field tested by NIJ. The advances in the use of DNA science in forensics can be largely attributed to NIJ investments.

For many years, NIJ has operated a program to test products routinely purchased by police agencies, such as body armor, handcuffs, patrol vehicles, replacement brake pads, and crash helmets. These products are measured against objective, voluntary performance standards so that purchasing entities at the local level can invest tax dollars wisely in the most effective police equipment.

Over the past few years, NIJ's science and technology program has grown exponentially through the Crime Act and domestic counterterrorism funding. The Department of Justice and Department of Defense entered into a partnership in 1994 to share and develop technologies potentially having both military and law enforcement applications.

Congress has continued to appropriate funds in the NIJ budget to develop a technology information network—the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center and its four regional centers—to supply technology assistance by providing a gateway for law enforcement, corrections, and the entire criminal justice community to have access to relevant technology information. (See “National Law Enforcement and Corrections

Technology Center.”) Congress has also continued to appropriate funds in the NIJ budget for the operation of an NIJ Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization to help introduce new products to the marketplace.

For fiscal years 1996–1998, Congress set aside 1 percent of Crime Act law enforcement funds to create in each of these years a \$20 million fund at NIJ for investment in law enforcement and criminal justice technology. It also began funding a DNA laboratory improvement program. For fiscal year 1997 and 1998 budgets, Congress appropriated funds for the development of domestic counterterrorism technologies. Those funds have been used to expand technology development and demonstrations for State and local law enforcement and corrections agencies.

NIJ has responded to this expanded mandate by creating an integrated mix of science and technology program strategies. First, the Institute regularly consults with law enforcement and correctional practitioners to ascertain their needs and priorities for new technologies. This is accomplished through the Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Advisory

Council (LECTAC), consisting of more than 150 professionals nationwide. NIJ translates these needs and priorities into an agenda for funding science and technology research and development programs.

National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center

The National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (Rockville, Maryland) and its regional centers are the heart of NIJ’s technology assistance and information dissemination efforts. These centers offer a professional source of product and technology information, community technology assistance services, technology assessment, and referral services to law enforcement, corrections, and other criminal justice professionals.

Each regional center (located in Rome, New York; Charleston, South Carolina; Denver, Colorado; and El Segundo, California) has its own local advisory committee to provide input from local law enforcement and corrections agencies. The centers’ staff also work with State and local agencies to support local needs and concerns and help transfer the technologies to law enforcement and corrections agencies. NIJ also supports a Border Research and Technology Center in San Diego, California, which focuses on developing and enhancing border research and technology.

The top technology needs of the law enforcement and corrections communities, as identified by LECTAC, include the following:

- Concealed weapons and contraband detection. NIJ, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Defense are the leaders in the development of relatively inexpensive, easy-to-use concealed weapons detection technology.
- Vehicle-stopping technology. Research is under way for new and innovative technologies, operational procedures, protocols, and concepts that can be used to stop a vehicle without injuring the pursuers, suspects, and innocent bystanders.
- Investigative and forensic science initiatives. A major focus of these technologies is to help identify and develop evidence to solve criminal cases. Among areas of interest are the following: DNA, trace evidence, questioned documents examination, fingerprints, and firearms.

Among NIJ's other technology thrusts are officer protection and safety technology, less-than-lethal incapacitation, noninvasive drug testing, electronic monitoring of personnel movements, and information technology.

Research Infrastructure

One of the Institute's chief aims has been to build a solid research infrastructure that can develop the reliable data and knowledge needed to face current and future challenges. Already noted in this regard is the ADAM program, which can collect a broad spectrum of relevant data.

Through its Data Resources Program, NIJ makes data from its supported projects publicly available, thus maximizing their usefulness for research. The program collects, preserves, and disseminates data for further analyses by other researchers. The data are deposited with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. NIJ issues a competitive solicitation for analysis of archived data through grants for secondary analysis.

Also contributing to the strengthening of the research infrastructure are NIJ's fellowship opportunities, which provide support for individuals at all stages of their careers. Fellowship opportunities include the Visiting Fellows Program, the John B. Pickett Fellowship in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, Graduate Research Fellowships for dissertation support, Crime Mapping Research Center Visiting Fellow-

ships, the Graduate Law Enforcement Technology Fellowship Program, and International Visiting Fellowships.

Disseminating R and D Results to the Field

Congress has directed NIJ to disseminate R&D findings to criminal justice policymakers and practitioners at all levels of government and to the research community and general public. Fulfilling that mandate, NIJ makes available R&D results to the field through a variety of means: print and electronic publications, conferences, videotaped seminars, Web sites, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, and encouragement of award recipients to disseminate their research findings in journals and through conference presentations.

NIJ distributes its publications to targeted audiences ranging in size from 5,000 to 80,000, depending on the type of publication and the timeliness and topicality of the subject matter. In 1998 the Institute anticipates preparing about 100 reports (in contrast to 30 in 1992) and distributing more than 2.5 million copies of documents. NIJ publications

and other R&D information are also available online and may be accessed through several Web sites (see “NIJ Online Resources”).

The bimonthly *NCJRS Catalog* notes recent NIJ publications, along with those published by other components of the Office of Justice Programs. To receive the *Catalog*, which is also online, contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (800–851–3420). Also contact NCJRS for publications in NIJ’s Research in Brief series that note projects in NIJ’s current research portfolio and that list recent awards, including those funded under the Crime Act.

Created by NIJ in the early 1970s as a national and international criminal justice clearinghouse, NCJRS responds to queries about criminal justice matters from its print and electronic library of more than 140,000 documents. Among them are final reports—in manuscript form as submitted by authors—pertaining to completed NIJ-sponsored R&D projects, as well as journal articles on NIJ-supported research.

Among the many NIJ-sponsored conferences scheduled for 1998 is the popular annual Research and Evaluation Conference, attended by a record

850 participants in 1997, who heard a wide range of presentations, many based on NIJ-supported research. Topics encompassed community policing, drug testing and treatment, violence against women, correctional programs, community restorative justice, DNA databases, and evaluation methodology and issues. Also popular is NIJ's Research in Progress Seminar Series, in which researchers describe their ongoing projects and present preliminary findings. Videos of the seminars and a listing of upcoming NIJ-sponsored conferences are available from NCJRS.

Notes

1. Crime Act offices are the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Violence Against Women Office, the Violence Against Women Grants Office, the Corrections Program Office, and the Drug Courts Program Office. For details about NIJ activities in conducting research and evaluation under the Crime Act, see *Criminal Justice Research Under the Crime Act—1995 to 1996*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, September 1997—available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Call 800-851-3420; ask for NCJ 166142.
2. Access NIJ's Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> and contact the DOJ Response Center at 800-421-6770 (202-307-1480 from the Washington, D.C., area).
3. Sampson, R.J., S.W. Raudenbush, and F. Earls, "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime," *Science*, August 15, 1997.
4. See Finn, P., and K.M. Healey, *Preventing Gang- and Drug-Related Witness Intimidation*, Research Report, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, November 1996. NCJ 163067.
5. See Finn, P., and J.E. Tomz, *Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families*, Research Report, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, March 1997. NCJ 163175.

NIJ Online Resources

NIJ uses advanced information technologies to promote faster and easier electronic access to exchange criminal justice information. NIJ's Web site permits viewing and downloading of NIJ publications and presents a wealth of other NIJ-specific information. Another valuable Web site is that of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), which is the clearinghouse for NIJ and other components of the Office of Justice Programs. Data collections from NIJ's Data Resources Program are also available on the Web. NIJ is one of six Federal agencies that support the Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET), a unique online resource for information about antiviolence programs, including technical assistance programs and Federal and private funding sources. News and information about NIJ's technology programs and products are available on the Justice Technology Information Network (JUSTNET). It provides access to information on commercially available products and technologies for law enforcement and corrections and features a chat area for online users. These and other World Wide Web addresses are listed below:

National Institute of Justice: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Justice Information Center: <http://www.ncjrs.org>

PAVNET Online: <http://www.pavnet.org>

National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD): <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/nacjd>

JUSTNET. NIJ's Justice Technology Information Network: <http://www.nlectc.org>

NIJ Crime Mapping Research Center: <http://www.nlectc.org/cmrc>

UNOJUST. United Nations Online Crime and Justice Clearinghouse:
<http://www.unojust.org>

Rule of Law. Online database of more than 3,600 Internet-accessible documents that assists Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union and other emerging democracies: <http://www.rol.org>

The following are useful e-mail addresses:

JUSTINFO. To subscribe to JUSTINFO, the bimonthly free newsletter on criminal and juvenile justice from NCJRS, which is delivered via e-mail, send this message: "subscribe justinfo," and give your name. Send to listproc@ncjrs.org

To automatically receive information about NCJRS, send an e-mail to look@ncjrs.org. To ask a question or obtain other services, send an e-mail to askncjrs@ncjrs.org (or call 800-851-3420).

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