



Department of Justice

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ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER ANNOUNCES \$5.5 MILLION IN RECOVERY ACT GRANTS TO SUPPORT ARIZONA LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS ON THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Eric Holder today announced more than \$5.5 million in Recovery Act funds will go to Arizona to use in fighting crime and drug trafficking as part of the Justice Department’s Southwest Border Strategy.

“A central part of the Recovery Act is focused on building communities – making them better places to live and work,” Attorney General Holder said. “We can’t reach that goal without supporting the men and women who work to keep our communities safe.”

In March 2009, the Department announced its Mexico Cartel Strategy, which uses federal prosecutor-led task forces that bring together federal, state and local law enforcement components to identify, disrupt and dismantle the Mexican drug cartels through investigation, prosecution and extradition of their key leaders and facilitators, and seizure and forfeiture of their assets.

“The Recovery Act funding for Arizona will help local law enforcement in our joint efforts to combat the threat posed by these cartels,” Holder said. “The Department of Justice is intensifying its efforts to investigate, prosecute and punish members of the Mexican drug cartels. The guns, drugs and bulk cash that are the backbone of the cartels’ business contribute to addiction and drug-related violence in our communities.”

“The Recovery Act funding is helping to target these very real threats to our communities, boosting resources for local law enforcement and giving greater protections to our citizens,” Holder added.

The Department is increasing its focus on investigations and prosecutions of the southbound smuggling of guns and cash that fuel the violence and corruption and attacking the cartels in Mexico. In recent months, the Department has announced resources for the Southwest border, including an increased law enforcement presence and is now providing additional resources through the Recovery Act grants. In addition, the Department is continuing to collaborate with counterparts in Mexico to strengthen Mexico’s law enforcement capacity and institutions.

Department officials are taking an active role in the national effort to combat the Mexican drug cartels. Top Department officials participated in a Violent Crime and Arms Trafficking Summit in Albuquerque, N.M., where federal, state and local officials worked to refine enforcement strategies. In June 2009, the Attorney General, along with Secretary Janet Napolitano and Director Gil Kerlikowske from the Office of National Drug Control Policy released President Obama's National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, designed to stem the flow of illegal drugs and their illicit proceeds across the Southwest Border by, among other things, increasing coordination and information sharing with state and local law enforcement agencies. Previously, the Attorney General and other Department officials participated in high-level meetings with U.S. and Mexican officials at an arms trafficking conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

As part of the efforts to combat Mexican drug cartels, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is administering the \$30 million Recovery Act Assistance for Law Enforcement along the Southern Border and in High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (Southern Border/HIDTA) grant program. This will provide resources for hiring, retention, assistance and equipment to law enforcement to combat criminal narcotics activity stemming from the southern border-states.

The Arizona Office of the Attorney General (\$2,911,082) plans to support the AAGO Drug Prosecution Program in order to successfully prosecute illegal drug trafficking and other crimes stemming from the southern border; retain and create prosecutorial positions; and provide training, equipment, supplies, and services in support of the prosecution effort. The Arizona Department of Public Safety (\$1,462,256) plans to support the Crime Laboratory System; preserve and create jobs while minimizing and avoiding reductions in essential services; and support multiagency, multi-jurisdictional task forces, as well as Sheriff's Offices, Police Departments, and State Narcotics Officers. Santa Cruz County (\$457,006) plans to combat criminal narcotics activity through increased job creation; improving agency capacity for prosecutorial and interdiction support and intelligence gathering and sharing activities; and expanding and enhancing management practices to support a multi-jurisdiction, multi-disciplinary information sharing system. The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department (\$685,993) plans to support the Fugitive Apprehension Unit and purchase equipment necessary equipment to support officer safety and unit operations.

The Department of Justice has already awarded \$8.7 million in Recovery Act funds for three communities in California as part of the Southwest Border strategy, and the remaining Southern Border/HIDTA grant awards are being processed and will be announced in the near future.

The Southern Border/HIDTA grant program is part of more than \$4 billion in Department of Justice Recovery Act funds available to assist state, local and tribal law enforcement and for other criminal justice activities that help to prevent crime and improve the criminal justice system in the United States, while supporting the creation of jobs and much needed resources for states and local communities. The Recovery Act also provides an additional \$10 million for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to combat firearms-trafficking on the U.S. Southwest Border.

OJP provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. Additionally, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at www.ojp.gov.