

Letter from the Director

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to announce that East Valley, California has been selected as the third COMPASS (Community Mapping, Planning, and Analysis for Safety Strategies) site by the National Institute of Justice, in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. COMPASS is a data-driven approach to enhancing community safety through collaborative, proactive problem-solving. East Valley was selected because of its impressive history of collaborative problem-solving and its expertise in using GIS and other analytical tools to inform policy and practice.

A key component of COMPASS is a research partner (or consortium of partners). This research partner will be an active participant in East Valley's COMPASS project. The expected roles of the research partner are: 1) participating in the strategic development of the data infrastructure, 2) conducting surveys to supplement the COMPASS data infrastructure, 3) providing analytical and research support to the COMPASS project, and 4) documenting and evaluating East Valley's COMPASS project. We are seeking a research partner who understands the complexities of working with government officials and criminal justice practitioners in a collaborative, problem-solving relationship to increase public safety.

This letter solicits proposals to create, through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Justice, a research partnership to work with East Valley COMPASS. The cooperating agencies have committed \$275,000 for a two-year effort scheduled to begin in December 2001. Proposals must be postmarked by January 4, 2002 to be considered. A more detailed briefing paper describing COMPASS is enclosed. It also describes the projected role of the research partner, qualifications required of the research partner, and information on how to apply.

If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, contact Erin Dalton of my staff (202-514-5752; email daltona@ojp.usdoj.gov).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sarah V. Hart

Solicitation for a Research Partner for the East Valley, California, COMPASS Initiative

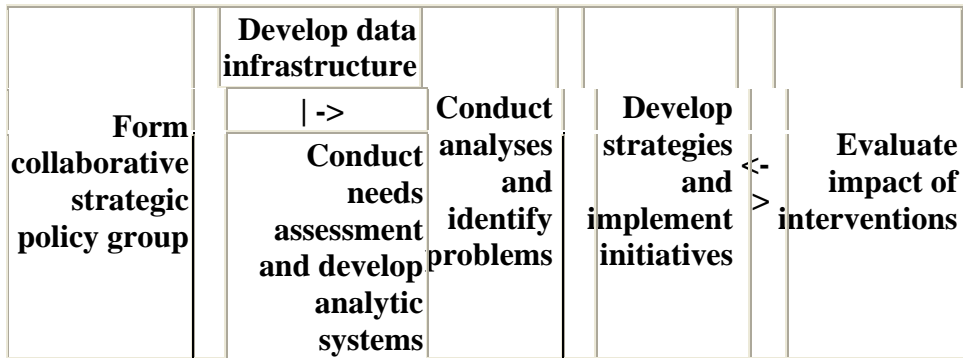
In recent years, the development of local juvenile and criminal justice policy has shifted to a more collaborative, strategic approach. Key to this approach is analyzing the nature of public safety problems in order to develop interventions to help solve them. The approach is data driven; that is, it relies on timely, accurate, electronically based data, keyed to geographic and drawn from multidisciplinary sources. Jurisdictions that have developed such data systems, analytic capability, and collaborative partnerships have had great success in reducing crime and addressing public safety problems.

I. What Is COMPASS?

In the interest of promoting this approach to the development of juvenile and criminal justice policy and practice, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, has launched a new initiative, COMPASS (Community Mapping, Planning, and Analysis for Safety Strategies). COMPASS has four components:

- Collaboration among a wide range of local agencies and community interests
- A comprehensive data infrastructure that will house a broad array of data (crime incident, public safety, demographic, social, health, education, and environmental data) from a variety of sources
- Strategic analysis of data both spatially and temporally through application of a user-friendly information system
- A research partner (or consortium of partners) to assist in data analysis, support the development of interventions, and provide continuous feedback on the outcomes and impacts of interventions.

Planning for COMPASS consists of the following steps:



Two pilot COMPASS sites have been selected. This solicitation requests proposals from prospective research partners who will provide support to the COMPASS initiative in East

Valley, California. The cooperating Federal agencies have committed \$275,000 for a two-year effort, scheduled to begin in December 2001.

II. About East Valley COMPASS

The mission of East Valley COMPASS is to link diverse stakeholders and their data systems as a regional collaboration that will develop coordinated responses to community safety problems. In addition, East Valley will facilitate community problem-solving by creating “Citizens’ COMPASS,” a Web site that will enable communities to access, via the Internet, data bases rich in public safety-related information previously unavailable to the general public.

Geographically, East Valley COMPASS comprises the city of Redlands, California, in San Bernardino County; the cities of Highland, Yucaipa, Loma Linda, and San Bernardino; and the unincorporated town of Mentone (all in San Bernardino County). Collectively, this region of 350,000 people is known as the “East Valley.” In addition, the city of Fontana (population 110,000) is included in the East Valley COMPASS initiative.

III. The COMPASS Model—Elements

Building Collaboration

Collaboration is integral to COMPASS. COMPASS partners include criminal justice system agencies, local governments, healthcare providers, public housing officials, social service providers, schools, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, the private sector, and NIJ.

The initiative will be managed by a COMPASS leadership team that will be supported by the COMPASS project director. This team, which will consist of representatives of the Initiative’s partners, will help guide the COMPASS project in sharing data among the various organizations, in using the COMPASS data system to address public safety problems, and in working collaboratively to address common public safety problems. Its specific responsibilities will be to:

- Identify and prioritize community safety problems to be addressed by COMPASS
- Assist in developing a data-sharing infrastructure
- Develop effective data-sharing agreements
- Identify and overcome technological, organizational, and political barriers to effective data sharing
- Initiate collaborative problem solving based on integrated data analysis.

Developing a Data Infrastructure

The core of COMPASS is the creation of a data infrastructure that contains information from a variety of sources. They include existing social indicator data (e.g., statistics or other data on employment, housing, land use, schools, hospital admissions, community assets/resources [such as community centers]) and a host of crime/safety information and other public safety indicators

(e.g., statistics or data on crime incidents, arrests, court and corrections events, victimization surveys).

As part of data infrastructure development, East Valley COMPASS will also work toward achieving compliance with the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). NIBRS, a redesign of the summary-based Uniform Crime Reporting system, seeks to compile more comprehensive and detailed information about each reported crime. This information is essential to COMPASS problem-solving.

Additional information will be generated by special surveys administered locally. The local COMPASS team will determine the structural form of the COMPASS database.

Strategic Analysis of Data

The analytic strength of COMPASS lies in the wealth of data collected and the identification of relationships among key indicators in the data.

One analytic tool used for this purpose is GIS (geographic information systems), which can be used to spatially visualize and examine the incidence of crime and other factors. GIS can also be used to develop and test models of hypothesized relationships among these factors. For example, with GIS it is possible to find out whether assaults are concentrated around bars at night or around schools at the time when students are dismissed; or whether drug dealers are carrying out their transactions in front of a poorly lighted public housing complex. By examining these types of relationships it is possible to develop data-driven problem-solving strategies that can be implemented in a targeted fashion. GIS can also be used to assess the impact of interventions over time, and to analyze unanticipated outcomes (e.g., crime displacement).

IV. Roles of the Research Partner

The research partner (or consortium of partners, but hereinafter referred to as the research partner) is a key participant in COMPASS, providing research and evaluation support. A decisionmaking member of the COMPASS leadership team, the research partner will lend research skills, objectivity, analytical rigor, and independence, and linking research to practice on the leadership team. In addition to having a role on the COMPASS leadership team, the research partner will work with the COMPASS project director to accomplish COMPASS project goals.

Prospective research partners should expect to spend a considerable amount of time in these roles. NIJ's experience with existing COMPASS sites is of nearly daily phone contact, weekly meetings, and extensive contact with the COMPASS team. Specific roles are as follows:

- Providing substantive input on the content and shape of the data infrastructure (The COMPASS project team is responsible for the technical development.)
- Supplementing COMPASS data (as needed) with survey research and other qualitative analyses

- Providing analytic and research expertise to the COMPASS project, including evaluating the outcomes of specific interventions
- Documenting and evaluating the overall East Valley COMPASS project.

Each of these roles is elaborated in the sections that follow.

Role 1: Help develop the local COMPASS data infrastructure

As noted, the East Valley COMPASS project director will be responsible for the technical development of the data infrastructure. These responsibilities consist of:

- Assessing data/information needs
- Creating a database design
- Acquiring and implementing an appropriate hardware/software system solution for access to and analysis of COMPASS data
- Ensuring the security of the COMPASS data system.

The role of the research partner is to ensure that the data sources fulfill COMPASS's ultimate purpose—using various types of data to identify and understand complex public safety problems and to develop collaborative interventions that address them. For this reason, it will be essential for the research partner to make certain that the data structure supports crossdisciplinary analyses. These analyses include exploratory problem identification, quantification of perceived problems, justification of interventions, and monitoring and evaluation of intervention outcomes.

Fulfilling this role requires a level of expertise that transcends mastery of GIS and encompasses a thorough understanding of criminological theory, practice, data, and statistical analysis. Most of the work in the first year will be spent on this task/role.

In developing their proposals, applicants should consider the following questions: What would an ideal COMPASS data infrastructure for East Valley look like? What types of data would it contain in order to conduct meaningful analyses? How would the infrastructure be best structured to facilitate analysis of public safety problems? What data are most essential to understanding the problems of East Valley? What data need to be combined to understand particular emerging problems in East Valley?

The research partner will be further responsible for working with the city of East Valley to ensure that the structural form of the COMPASS database can handle complex methodological problems. Examples of such problems are combining data sources, creating common units of analysis, defining temporal ordering, and developing comparison groups.

Finally, the research partner will work with the COMPASS staff to recommend data infrastructure access and privacy strategies acceptable to the agencies that are contributing data to the project. COMPASS staff expect to draw on the researchers' experience with confidentiality and privacy issues.

Role 2: Develop new data to supplement the COMPASS data infrastructure

Most information used to create the COMPASS data infrastructure will come from participating agencies and existing databases. However, it is likely that the research partner will be asked to identify and develop new data for the system. The sources of these data may include, for example, public opinion surveys, direct observations, qualitative analyses, and focus groups.

The types of data that would be collected in surveys and other ways are yet to be determined. However, applicants should indicate the research partner's capacity to conduct surveys and to use other data-gathering methods they believe would be valuable, given their understanding of the goals of the COMPASS project.

Role 3: Provide analytic and research expertise to COMPASS system users

The research partner is expected to work with COMPASS staff and leadership team to implement an iterative, data-driven problem-solving model, doing so by:

- Using the COMPASS data infrastructure to identify trends and problem(s) that need to be addressed
- Quantifying important known or perceived problems
- Developing a more in-depth understanding of the targeted crime problem(s)
- Identifying opportunities for intervention presented by the trends and problems
- Assisting the team in designing interventions
- Evaluating the interventions
- Continuously providing feedback to the team so they can adjust the interventions based on the evaluation findings
- Using COMPASS on an ongoing basis to analyze changes in key indicators.

These tasks are presented in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Identify and quantify problems. The research partner should assist the leadership team in identifying trends and problems that need to be addressed. Such assistance should include but not be limited to:

- Documenting practitioners' and policymakers' perceptions of the community's most serious or persistent crime problems
- Reviewing crime incidents and cases
- Examining local crime statistics and comparing them to State, national, and same-size city averages of the same crime
- Examining changes in the target problem over time in the city
- Spatial analysis of socioeconomic, health, and physical characteristics that may be associated with the problem
- Conducting focus groups with community members
- Conducting interviews with offenders
- Conducting formal public opinion surveys.

While data analysis is a scientific process, there is no strictly “scientific” way to identify a community’s most “important” crime problem. The leadership team will decide what they believe is most critical, using such factors as severity (e.g., homicide), persistence (e.g., of domestic violence, disorder, or assault), context (e.g., whether a “problem” neighborhood), or other aspect as the basis for their judgment.

Once the group agrees to focus on a specific crime problem that has been newly identified or whose importance has been quantified by the data analysis, the research partner will assist the group in developing a common goal that has measurable objectives. This step takes place before an intervention is developed. The objectives may be quantified any number of ways; for example, “achieve a 25 percent reduction in gun assaults in the next year” or “reduce level of fear of being shot.” The research partner should play a significant role in identifying crime problems and determining measurable goals and objectives.

Develop in-depth understanding of problems. Once the problem and collective goal is identified, the research partner will be responsible for conducting a more in-depth analysis of the problem. The purpose is to understand the nature and characteristics of the crime and identify opportunities for criminal justice agencies and other organizations to develop reduction strategies. In particular, the research partner can provide descriptive data on the crime, offenders, and victims as well as patterns and trends that emerge from the analysis, narrowing the focus to afford maximum impact on the targeted crime. Crime incident factors such as time, location, drug involvement, offender–victim relationships, and criminal justice responses should be examined, in addition to demographics and the criminal histories of the offender and, when applicable, of the victim, and information from the front-line staff of the criminal justice agencies.

Identify opportunities for intervention. Following this analysis, the research partner and the leadership team together will evaluate patterns and trends in the data to identify and explore opportunities for intervention. Examples of possible intervention opportunities may arise from such questions as: Are homicides committed by people who are under probation supervision and are violating curfew to commit the crime? Are drug dealers selling near schools or in front of a public housing property? Where are service providers located in relation to the places where offenders are returning from prison? The answers to these questions may uncover trends that may suggest potential problem-solving strategies that the group can implement.

Design intervention. The policymaking group will then attempt to design an intervention strategy that accommodates a variety of inputs, including opportunities identified by the data, capacities of the various organizations that are at the table, pertinent crime control theories, and successful strategies and innovative ideas used elsewhere. This aspect is a dynamic, “part art, part science” process that may involve continuous consultation between the group and the research partner. As questions are answered through the analyses, critical new questions may arise and insights emerge that prompt further investigation. The goal of this stage is to devise interventions that can disrupt patterns identified in the targeted crime problem in the short run and address underlying causes of the crime problem in the long run. The research partner is essential to this process.

The working group collects information about responses to similar problems in other communities and solicits additional ideas from each participating member. Following these steps, the group should reach a consensus on the best strategic intervention to use. Once the strategy or strategies are developed, the research partner can develop logic models that describe how the interventions will affect the targeted crime problems. With input from the working group, the research partner can use these models to develop output, outcome, and impact measures for the intervention strategies selected. It is important that, having collaboratively identified a problem and an appropriate response, the group and the research partners continue the cooperative effort. Thus, implementation will require the establishment of regular, staff-level working groups, which include the research partner.

Evaluate the intervention. Essential to the credibility of the process is evaluating the selected intervention to find out if it is making a difference. Evaluation is the responsibility of the research partner.

The measures used can be both qualitative and quantitative. For example, objectives of the intervention may include increasing the number of guns used in crime that are seized, decreasing domestic assaults, or shutting down drug markets. Other, more qualitative measures may include “perceived safety” or quality of life, as expressed by increased attendance at theaters or sporting events, or as determined by focus group sessions.

Intermediate outcomes that are necessary but not sufficient to effect crime reduction can also be measured. It may be important to find out (through interviews with prisoners in correctional facilities, for example) whether the offender population is aware of the interventions being implemented and if so, what impact the interventions have had on offender behavior. It may also be important to know whether targeted crime has been displaced and whether there are factors other than the intervention that may be responsible for reduction of the targeted crime. Other questions might include whether there are other concurrent programs that affect the same population, crime problem, or neighborhood and what is the effect of the economic climate or other macro indicators. Research partners should attempt to address the issue of displacement as well as possible “rival” hypotheses that may affect selected outcomes of COMPASS.

Provide feedback. If the intervention and the overall strategy are to be effective, they should be able to accommodate adjustments. These adjustments would be called for when analysis of the changes resulting from the intervention indicates unwanted consequences. For example, if a strategy used to suppress drug dealing in a particular location results in displacement of this crime to another area, the group will want to be able to identify this unintended consequence through the ongoing information analysis and revise the intervention accordingly.

The process of collaborative data evaluation, goal-setting, implementation, and reevaluation should be a continuous one until the intervention is institutionalized or no longer necessary. The research partner should feel confident about relaying assessment information to the COMPASS team on an ongoing basis and should continue to assist the team partners in refining interventions until the intended results are achieved. It is also important that the research partner consider adopting possible additional measures of success. There are many such measures, among them community satisfaction with the system and satisfaction of participating staff.

Once the goals for addressing the problem have been achieved, the same collaborative process of identifying a problem, a response, and an appropriate measure of success should be repeated for other problems. Applicants should demonstrate their experience with this type of problem-solving model.

Role 4: Documenting the process

The final role of the research partner is to document the ongoing implementation of COMPASS in East Valley. The documentation should cover such information as:

- The nature of the COMPASS team's working relationships
- Factors that contribute to and/or detract from sound cooperative and successful relationships
- Factors that help ensure adequate and appropriate availability of, access to, and analysis of data
- Types of strategies that are effective in addressing crime problems
- The influence of external factors on team activity
- Factors that influence the team's ability to implement designated strategies.

Applicants should include in their proposal a plan for documenting this process. Particular attention should be paid to describing how they will provide timely feedback to the project and evaluate their own efforts, recognizing that they themselves are key participants in the project.

V. Final Products Expected

Throughout the life of the COMPASS project, the research partner is expected to work with local collaborative teams, providing data, analysis, research products, technical assistance, advice, and the like, as necessary. At the end of the project, the research partner is also expected to submit to NIJ a final report describing how the COMPASS model was implemented locally. The report should include information about:

- The nature of the COMPASS team's working relationships
- Factors that contribute to and/or detract from sound cooperative and successful relationships
- Factors that help ensure adequate and appropriate availability of, access to, and analysis of data
- How the target problem was selected
- What the data revealed when the problem was more precisely defined
- What was taken into account in designing interventions
- The extent to which research and information were used to design intervention strategies
- The logic and theory behind these strategies
- How the strategies were implemented
- The impact and effectiveness of these strategies in solving problems, as measured by selected variables
- How the strategies were adjusted based on formal and informal data on their impact.

VII. Qualifications of Research Team/Consortium

A qualified research partner will have the following qualifications and/or skills:

- Be a Ph.D. in criminal justice, sociology, public policy, or a related discipline or have equivalent work experience
- Show evidence of understanding or of ability or experience in:
 - Data infrastructure development and analysis (especially GIS)
 - Local survey development and administration
 - Qualitative research methods
 - Development of collaborative, problem-solving approaches; action research models; and program evaluation and assessment.
- Demonstrated understanding of/experience in working with staff and officials of local government agencies and other organizations (including local officials, criminal justice practitioners, and community members) in a collaborative, problem-solving relationship.

In view of the variety of skills needed, researchers are encouraged to partner with others as necessary to meet the requirements of the COMPASS model.

VII. How to Submit an Application

Applications should include the following standard forms, which can be downloaded from the NIJ Web site (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>) or can be obtained from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (800-851-3420).

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Geographic Areas Affected worksheet (for Question 12 of SF 424)
- Assurances (of compliance with all relevant Federal statutes and regulations)
- Budget detail worksheet
- Certifications regarding lobbying, debarment, suspension, and other matters; and drug-free workplace requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities;
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate);
- Privacy certificate
- Form 310 (protection of human subjects assurance identification/certification/declaration)
- Environmental assessment (if required);
- Resumes of key personnel
- List of previous NIJ awards and their status.

The application must also include:

- Budget narrative
- Time and task plan
- Program abstract

- Program narrative
- Names and affiliations of all key people, including applicant and subcontractor(s), advisers, consultants, and advisory board members.

The “program narrative” section of the proposal should be no more than 40 double-spaced pages in length, set in 12-point type, and should include a statement that demonstrates an understanding of the COMPASS model and the role of the research partner in its development, a description of how the research partner would apply the COMPASS model to fit East Valley, a statement describing experience with similar initiatives, a general time and task plan for carrying out the four core research roles described above, and a statement of organizational qualifications.

Proposals should be postmarked by January 4, 2002

Send the original and 10 copies of the proposal to:

COMPASS Initiative
c/o Erin Dalton
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531 (Overnight courier zip code: 20001)

If there are issues for which clarification is needed as the proposal is being prepared, contact Erin Dalton (202-514-5752; email daltona@ojp.usdoj.gov).

Selection Criteria

- Extent to which proposal reflects COMPASS model
- Quality of proposal (e.g., comprehensiveness and clarity)
- History of successful coordinated efforts with local practitioners and policymakers
- Qualifications of key staff
- Demonstrated ability to manage proposed initiative
- Soundness of plans for implementation.

Review Process

- Review by the U.S. Department of Justice COMPASS partner agencies
- Independent peer reviews
- Interviews, conducted by the East Valley COMPASS team staff and the sponsoring Federal agencies, with candidates who, through the review process, are deemed highly competitive.

This document is not intended to create, does not create, and may not be relied upon to create any rights, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any matter civil or criminal. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.