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Solicitation for a Demonstration/Evaluation of the
Utility of ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction
Initiative
Fiscal Year 2001

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

For grant and funding information, contact:
Department of Justice Response Center
800-421-6770

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<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

National Institute of Justice
World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Solicitation for a Demonstration/Evaluation of the Utility of ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative Fiscal Year 2001

I. Introduction

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), this solicitation seeks proposals to conduct a multi-agency demonstration/evaluation of a research- and information- based strategy designed to interrupt or reduce the supply of firearms to juveniles and offenders, and to reduce the use of firearms to commit crime. This initiative seeks to expand the use and impact of ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) in one pilot city. The proposed program will involve a research team, working with a task force of practitioner agencies coordinated by the local ATF Field Office. It will utilize data collected by ATF and local police as a part of YCGII, along with other data resources, to: (a) identify illegal gun markets targeting juveniles and criminals; (b) design a set of supply-side strategies to intervene in these markets; (c) implement these strategies; (d) monitor their implementation and provide feedback to refine them; and, (e) evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies for decreasing the supply of firearms to juveniles and offenders and for reducing the use of firearms to commit crime. As a test of the utility of YCGII, this demonstration/evaluation program will serve as a model for other jurisdictions interested in using local gun tracing and other data to reduce firearms violence in their communities.

II. Background

One of the most critical issues in addressing the reduction of violence and its consequences is the role that firearms play in contributing to violent crime, serious injury and death. Victimization involving a firearm represented 21 percent of the 2.7 million crimes of rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault in 1999. Sixty-five percent of the murders in 1999 were committed with firearms. Nearly forty thousand gunshot wounds from assaults were treated in hospital emergency departments across the country in 1997.

Although laws exist that prohibit criminals, juveniles, and other high-risk individuals from legally purchasing a gun, surveys with inmates suggest that offenders acquire a significant percentage of their firearms by theft or from illegitimate or informal sources or street "markets". These markets are especially important in the acquisition of firearms by high risk juveniles who are legally barred from purchasing guns through legitimate channels.

Additionally, data from NIJ's Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program suggest that firearms ownership is much more common among people who have been arrested than is shown in surveys of the general population. More than half the arrestees interviewed reported that it is easy to obtain guns,

and a substantial proportion use them to commit crime.

Analyses of the 1999 YCGII provide additional indicators that firearms used in crimes are being illegally diverted from the legitimate market. For example, nearly 90 percent of traced crime guns changed hands at least once before recovery by law enforcement. In addition, many of the traced crime guns were recovered soon (within several years) after their initial purchase, suggesting that there may have been illegal diversion or criminal intent associated with the original purchase. Further, in the eleven YCGII cities that reliably submitted this information in 1999, 9 percent of the recovered semiautomatic pistols and 5 percent of the recovered revolvers had obliterated serial numbers, another indication of criminal diversion.

Crime guns form part of local, regional, and national gun trafficking patterns. From YCGII trace data we know that firearms are trafficked both within a state as well as across state lines. The percentage of crime guns imported from out of state is closely linked to the stringency of local firearm regulations and statutes.

As described above, recent efforts by the ATF and the Justice Department have resulted in increased understanding of the connection between firearms and crime and the ways in which offenders are acquiring firearms. This initiative aims to take us one step further, to test the impact of strategies, based on gun tracing and other data, designed to interrupt or reduce the supply of firearms to juveniles and offenders, and to reduce the use of firearms to commit crime.

This effort builds on lessons learned from (a) ATF's Project Lead; (b) ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative; (c) DOJ's collaborative research- and information-based problem-solving

initiatives; and (d) prior collaborations between the ATF and NIJ to study patterns of illegal gun markets.

(a) ATF's Project LEAD

In late 1995, ATF introduced Project LEAD to its 24 field division offices. This has evolved into an "on line" system that enables law enforcement to organize and analyze crime gun trace information in the database of the National Tracing Center (NTC). The system is an automated link analysis information system that organizes the trace data, providing information on potential illegal firearms trafficking patterns, illegal purchasers, problem Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs), and geographic sources of crime gun supply.

(b) ATF's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

In 1997, utilizing Project LEAD software, the Treasury Department Enforcement Division and ATF implemented a special Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative in cooperation with the local police departments in seventeen cities. Local participating departments agreed to (1) request ATF traces through Project LEAD for all confiscated guns in order to identify their point of original FFL purchase, and (2) collect detailed incident and offender data on all juvenile confiscations. Additional cities have now been added to the YCGII program. Fifty cities are now actively implementing this initiative, with more scheduled for implementation in the future [see Appendix for a list of participating cities].

(c) Data-driven Collaborative Problem Solving

In 1994, NIJ funded a study in Boston, involving Harvard University, the Boston Police Department, the United States Attorney's Office, the ATF, and

other criminal justice, governmental, social service, and community agencies. Among other things, the study examined the informal and illegal channels through which juveniles acquired firearms, including the tracing of all confiscated guns through the ATF Tracing Center. Based on its findings, innovative prevention and control strategies targeting these markets (primarily gangs) were designed and implemented by these organizations. Evaluation findings indicate that the program was associated with a significant reduction in juvenile and young adult gun homicide and violence in the targeted high-crime areas. [The Boston initiative has been described in an article by David M. Kennedy in the *Valparaiso University Law Review*, entitled “Pulling Levers: Chronic Offenders, High-Crime Settings, and a Theory of Prevention” (Volume 31, Number 2, Spring 1997, pp. 449-484) and will be reported in greater detail in a forthcoming NIJ publication.] The collaborative data-driven problem-solving process utilized in the Boston study has been replicated in a number of other jurisdictions.

(d) NIJ’s Initial Partnership with ATF

In 1997, following a series of strategic planning sessions, ATF and NIJ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to conduct a joint research effort based on the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative. The study was designed to reflect the interest that both agencies have in illegal and juvenile gun markets and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the extensive trace and incident/offender data being collected in the YCGII sites. Following competitive review, Northeastern University was awarded a grant by NIJ to utilize firearms trace information and other crime incident data to examine illegal channels of firearms distribution, especially to juveniles, in seven of the seventeen original YCGII cities: Baltimore, Boston, Memphis, Milwaukee, New York City, San Antonio, and St. Louis. This study is now nearing

completion and has accumulated detailed data describing illegal gun markets and channels of distribution in each of the target sites.

NIJ’s Current ATF Partnership

As the next step in the NIJ/ATF collaboration, a second MOU was developed in 2000. This agreement supports a collaboration to evaluate the effectiveness of ATF’s YCGII program as a source of information on which to base the design of supply-side strategies to intervene in the illegal firearms market in one target city. Both agencies are contributing funds to sponsor this research and demonstration effort to design, implement, and assess the impact of such an intervention.

III. Areas of Research Required

This solicitation seeks proposals to conduct a multi-agency demonstration/evaluation of a research- and information-based strategy designed to interrupt or reduce the supply of firearms to offenders and juveniles, and to reduce the use of firearms to commit crime. This initiative seeks to expand the use and impact of ATF’s Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative. The program will be conducted in one pilot city of greater than 250,000 population. The city must be one of the 50 active YCGII sites in the ATF program listed in an appendix to this solicitation. Research applicants are asked to select and partner with a target city as part of their proposals, using the following criteria: (a) its inclusion as one of the active YCGII sites; (b) its substantial firearms violence problem; (c) the existence of sufficient data resources describing its local illegal firearms markets or distribution channels, especially targeting juveniles; (d) the presence of a local ATF office with at least one enforcement group; (e) the support of local criminal justice and other agencies required for program design and

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implementation; and (f) the extent to which this effort will complement other federal, state, and local law enforcement and firearms efforts already underway. This will require applicants to make some preliminary contacts with promising sites to ascertain the degree to which they meet these criteria and to gain assurance of their interest in participating in the initiative.

The proposed program should involve a research team, working with a task force of practitioner agencies coordinated by the local ATF Field Office in the selected site. At least one principal member of the research team should be based in or near the target city. Utilizing tracing and other law enforcement data collected by the ATF and local police as a part of YCGII, along with other relevant information, the program should be designed to accomplish the following objectives:

(1) to identify and describe local gun markets or distribution channels utilized by juveniles and criminals;

(2) to develop and implement a set of problem-solving strategies and tactics to interrupt and/or reduce the supply of guns to these illegal markets;

(3) to monitor the implementation of these supply-side interventions and provide feedback to assist in their refinement; and

(4) to evaluate the impacts of these strategies on interrupting or reducing the supply of firearms to juveniles and offenders, and to reduce the use of firearms to commit crime.

The proposal should specify the key required program elements in detail, including:

C **researcher and multi-agency collaboration** (such as law enforcement,

probation/parole, prosecution, corrections, schools, social services, and other relevant agencies at all government levels located at the site), coordinated by the local ATF Field or Regional Office;

C **documentation of how this initiative will complement on-going federal, state, and local law enforcement and firearms efforts already underway**, including existing gun violence reduction strategies of U.S. Attorney's Offices;

C **problem specification** through data collection and analysis;

C **potential supply-side intervention strategy design and implementation** including intensive investigation and prosecution of firearms traffickers and interruption of other sources of illegal guns (such as theft, straw purchasers, and gun shows);

C **research documentation and formative assessment** of the implementation process, including feedback and strategy refinement; and

C **evaluation of the impact of the strategies** on decreasing the supply of firearms to juveniles and offenders, and on reducing the use of firearms to commit crime.

Comprehensive data resources are recommended for inclusion in the study. Examples of suggested sources are: (a) ATF/YCGII gun tracing data; (b) police department crime data and other local criminal and juvenile justice agency records and statistics; (c) NIJ's Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program data; (d) National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) data; (e)

interviews with relevant law enforcement officials (investigators, gang officers, prosecutors, probation/parole, corrections), social services and community agencies, Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs), convicted straw purchasers and other traffickers, gun show participants, gun offenders, and other relevant groups; (f) investigative (end-to-end) traces, if feasible; (g) gun sales and pricing data; and (h) ethnographic and observational data on site.

Since the program will involve multiple research methodologies, applicants are encouraged to enlist the participation of a team of researchers with a variety of skills and perspectives, including an extensive knowledge of firearms violence literature and programs; experience in working with gun tracing, police, and other criminal justice data; skills in the development and conduct of personal interviews; field research capabilities for working closely with practitioners and policy makers in a coordinated team; and expertise in formative and impact evaluation techniques.

In addition to the research team, the applicant should include evidence of the cooperation and support of the key operational agencies crucial to the successful design and conduct of the program. In particular, local ATF and police department participation are essential, as well as prosecution and other criminal justice agencies and local government and social service agencies whose involvement will be required for program implementation. Letters of support are required from these agencies, as well as a description of their roles in the planning and conduct of the interventions.

NIJ funds will be available in the form of one grant award to a research applicant, not to exceed \$400,000. Additional ATF in-kind resources and funds will also be available for program implementation, including: one FTE position within

the local ATF office to coordinate the program; provision to the researcher of direct access to ATF's firearms tracing system and data; and operational support of other special agents as required during program implementation. Applicants should contact Terry Austin, at ATF Headquarters in Washington, D.C., who will provide details on these in-kind contributions to the researcher and the local ATF office in applicant jurisdictions. Mr. Austin may be reached by telephone at 202/927-8425 or on-line at tpaustin@atfhq.atf.treas.gov.

The overall time frame for the program will be two years.

IV. How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for consideration:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Geographic Areas Affected Worksheet
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Budget Narrative
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members.

Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax

- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate
- Form 310 (Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/ Certification/ Declaration)
- Environmental Assessment (if required)
- References
- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications])

Confidentiality of information and human subjects protection. NIJ has adopted new policies and procedures regarding the confidentiality of information and human subjects protection. Please see the *Guidelines for Submitting Proposals for National Institute of Justice-Sponsored Research* for details on the new requirements.

Proposal abstract. The proposal abstract, when read separately from the rest of the application, is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Applicants must concisely describe the research goals and objectives, research design, and methods for achieving the goals and objectives. Summaries of past accomplishments are to be avoided, and proprietary/confidential information is not to be included. Length is not to exceed 400 words. Use the following two headers:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Proposed Research Design and Methodology:

Page limit. The number of pages in the “Program Narrative” part of the proposal must not exceed 30 (double-spaced pages), no matter the amount of funding requested.

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on May 31, 2001. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. As stated above, the maximum award period for this grant will be 24 months.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting a single grant under this solicitation.

Award amount. One award totaling up to \$400,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation.

Applying. Two packets need to be obtained: (1) application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and (2) guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients). To receive them, applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the Web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij> or the NIJ Web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm>

These Web sites offer the NIJ application forms and guidelines as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800–851–3420 or from

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the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C., area, at 202-307-1480).

- Request copies by fax. Call 800-851-3420 and select option 1, then option 1 again for NIJ. Code is 1023.

Guidance and information. Applicants who wish to receive additional guidance and information may contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Center staff can provide assistance on administrative and procedural matters. For substantive questions regarding content of the research, applicants may contact Lois Mock, NIJ Program Manager, at 202/307-0693 or loism@ojp.usdoj.gov.

Send completed forms to:

Demonstration/Evaluation of ATF's YCGII
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

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.

NIJ is streamlining its process to accommodate the volume of proposals anticipated under this and other Crime Act solicitations. Researchers can help in a significant way by sending NIJ a nonbinding letter of intent by April 30, 2001. The Institute will use these letters to forecast the numbers of peer panels it needs and to identify conflicts of interest among potential reviewers. Letters should be sent to "Demonstration/Evaluation of ATF's YCGII; NIJ; 810 Seventh Street, N.W.; Washington, DC 20531".

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Appendix

Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) Participating Cities

Albuquerque, New Mexico	Nashville, Tennessee
Atlanta, Georgia	New Orleans, Louisiana
Austin, Texas	New York City, New York
Baltimore, Maryland	Newark, New Jersey
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	Oakland, California
Birmingham, Alabama	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Boston, Massachusetts	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Buffalo, New York	Phoenix, Arizona
Camden, New Jersey	Piedmont Triad: Greensboro, North Carolina
Charlotte, North Carolina	High Point, North Carolina
Chicago, Illinois	Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Cincinnati, Ohio	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Cleveland, Ohio	Portland, Oregon
Dallas, Texas	Richmond, Virginia
Denver/Aurora, Colorado	St. Louis, Missouri
Detroit, Michigan	Salinas, California
Gary, Indiana	San Antonio, Texas
Houston, Texas	San Jose, California
Indianapolis, Indiana	Stockton, California
Jacksonville, Florida	Seattle, Washington
Jersey City, New Jersey	SoCal Triad: Anaheim, California
Las Vegas, Nevada	Long Beach, California
Los Angeles, California	Santa Ana, California
Louisville, Kentucky	Tampa, Florida
Memphis, Tennessee	Tucson, Arizona
Miami, Florida	Washington, DC
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	
Minneapolis, Minnesota	

For more information on the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

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If you have any questions, call or e-mail NCJRS.