



II. Supporting Law Enforcement in the Community

Goal: To Provide the Maximum amount of support and cooperation for America's police departments and for the communities they serve.

The Department continued to aid the fight against crime at the local level through generous grant programs, new legislation, and the sharing of new investigative and prosecutorial tools with local law enforcement. Communities received additional police officers for community oriented policing duties, which enhanced residents' accessibility to law enforcement and the use of community-based crime prevention and response techniques. The Department also worked with States to control the proliferation of dangerous weapons and gang activities by advancing their criminal history record systems and supplementing local programs targeting youth. Task forces and committees organized by local Department representatives resulted in community partnerships with law enforcement, which played a vital role in reducing crime.

Putting More Police on the Beat

The COPS Office has awarded grants to put more than 52,000 officers on the streets, having surpassed the halfway mark towards the President's goal of 100,000 cops on the beat by the year 2000—in just over 2 years. Grants awarded during 1996 supported the hiring or redeployment of nearly 24,000 police officers. Across the country more than 87 percent of the American populace, both in urban and rural areas, is served by an agency receiving COPS funding. These officers and deputies are patrolling America's streets and actively working in partnership with their communities to reduce crime and social disorder.

As part of this movement, the U.S. Attorneys, through their respective Law Enforcement Coordinators, hosted community policing training for grantees to educate the law enforcement community on the philosophy of community oriented policing. They also assisted police departments in completing applications for community policing grants.

In the past year, DEA assisted State and local law enforcement through the deployment of Mobile Enforcement Teams (METs) to places throughout the United States, where drug trafficking and



MET Nets Results in Los Angeles

Targets: Violent Street Gangs
"18th Street"
"Playboys"
"Mara Salvatruches"
"Crazy Riders"
"Orphans"
"Diamonds"

Results:

421 Arrests (DEA to Prosecute 141)
Heroin 1,200 Grams
Cocaine 630 Grams
Marijuana 104 Pounds

Crime Statistics Post Deployment:

Robberies Down 1%
Aggravated
Assaults Down 9%
Sex Crimes Down 52%
Burglaries Down 28%
Vehicle
Burglaries Down 27%
Vehicle
Thefts Down 17%
Homicides—
In 1995 134
From January to July 1996 44

related violent crime were wreaking havoc in local neighborhoods and communities. The main purpose of these specialized units is to assist State and local jurisdictions in identifying, prosecuting, and incarcerating members of violent drug gangs. On request from a State or local law enforcement official, teams composed of 8–12 DEA Special Agents were deployed to specific jurisdictions, where they assisted local law enforcement counterparts by providing intelligence assessments, arresting violent gang members, and supporting Federal, State, and local prosecutors. As a direct result of the MET Program, leaders and key members of trafficking organizations were removed from community streets, thereby restoring order and peace to community residents. Sample MET targets included members of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club for drug trafficking and associated violence, and "Blood"-associated street gangs and drug supply sources.

Encouraging the Use of Locality-Based Strategies

Community partnerships play a vital role in reducing crime. Through task forces and committees, local U.S. Attorney Law Enforcement Coordinators worked to develop partnerships between members of law enforcement and the community. Funding was also made available for local Law Enforcement Coordinating Committees (LECCs) to provide training and publish brochures in support of the Weed and Seed Program.

Weed and Seed is a comprehensive, community-based program to "weed out" violent crime, gang activity, drug trafficking, and drug use, and "seed in" neighborhood revitalization. Forty-three (43) additional neighborhoods were selected to receive 1996 funding, joining the 36 currently funded sites and marking the largest increase of funded Weed and Seed sites in the program's 5-year history. Weed and Seed links Federal, State, and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with social services, as well as with private and community efforts. In addition, several Department agencies were able to transfer real properties through State and local law enforcement agencies to nonprofit community organizations under the Weed and Seed program. Such properties have been used as rental housing for low-to-moderate income individuals, teen counseling centers, job training programs, and drug treatment facilities—garnering significant property management cost savings.

During the year, the Criminal Division undertook an outreach initiative to study the potential for using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at the local level to enhance crime trend analysis capabilities, facilitate information sharing, and improve operational efficiency. The Division implemented such a system for the Warrenton, Virginia, Police Department, and made significant progress in a similar effort for the Montgomery County, Maryland,



Police Department. The Criminal Division also assisted local officers in crime trend analysis through development of the user-friendly prototype Spatial Crime Analysis System. The system enables officers and crime analysts to analyze crime data spatially, identify crime patterns, print crime maps, and develop tactical plans to deter future crime.

FBI instructors encouraged the use of locality-based law enforcement strategies by participating in 3,472 specialized police schools throughout the United States, which were attended by more than 117,139 officers.

Controlling the Proliferation of Dangerous Weapons

In 1996, The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act successfully prevented tens of thousands of people—including convicted felons, fugitives from justice, and persons subject to certain domestic violence restraining orders—from purchasing handguns from gun dealers by requiring a 5-day waiting period and a background check. The Department worked with Congress to ensure the survival of the Brady Act and the assault weapons ban law to keep guns out of the hands of felons and others and to keep military-style assault weapons off the streets. The Civil Division has defended the Brady Act against numerous constitutional challenges, arguing that Congress has the right to order background checks because of its authority to regulate commerce. Opponents have argued that the background check infringes on States' sovereignty. The Supreme Court is expected to issue its decision in 1997 in two Brady cases.

The Department is also well on its way to completing the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which the Brady Act requires the Attorney General to establish by November 30, 1998. The Department recently completed a detailed blueprint for the operation and use of the NICS system, designed to instantly perform background checks on prospective firearm purchasers. Critical to implementation of NICS, the Department has provided approximately \$112 million dollars to the States to upgrade their criminal history records and thereby contribute accurate and useful information to NICS. The FBI is responsible for NICS management and operation.

Community Projects Aimed at Gang Violence

During 1996, the Department saw the development and implementation of projects launched in 1995 under its Youth Firearms Violence Initiative, designed to help 10 cities use community policing strategies to counter firearm violence by and against young peo-



The COPS Office initiated a pilot project in Baltimore to use 3-1-1 as a nonemergency number to help ease the burden on 9-1-1. A COPS Office grant of approximately \$350,000 will help offset some of Baltimore's cost in this groundbreaking project. The COPS Office will monitor and evaluate the success of the project in order to help develop long-term solutions to preserve the effectiveness of 9-1-1. COPS also requested that the Federal Communications Commission reserve 3-1-1 for voluntary use as a three-digit nonemergency number on a national level.

ple. Examples of strategies include establishment of violence suppression and weapons recovery units to target gang territories, enhanced enforcement of gun and drug laws, and creation of community "safe spots." These efforts over the past year have resulted in significant decreases in crime and an increase in seized firearms in several of the jurisdictions.

Similarly, Operation Safe Home, a multi-agency operation that aims to rid federally subsidized housing communities of gangs and drug organizations, resulted in the arrest by Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials of 29 members of a violent drug gang in Dade County, Florida.

Providing Specialized Law Enforcement Assistance

Sharing Resources and Forging Partnerships

Under the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA's) 1996 Local Law Enforcement Block Grants program, over 2,600 local jurisdictions, every State, and several eligible territories received grants totaling around \$405 million to help reduce crime and improve public safety. Local jurisdictions can use their grants to hire police officers or to pay existing officers for overtime; to establish multijurisdictional task forces; to purchase equipment directly related to basic law enforcement functions; to prosecute violent offenders, particularly youthful violent offenders; to fund drug courts; or to implement crime prevention measures. The program was authorized by the 1996 Omnibus Appropriations Act passed in late April. To deal with the unusually large number of applications, BJA reinvented its grant award process, allowing jurisdictions to submit their one-page applications via modem or on diskette. Applications were scanned and stored electronically, significantly reducing paperwork during the review and award process.

During 1996, the National Institute of Corrections continued to assist Federal, State, and local corrections agencies in improving their management, operations, programs, and services. A total of 36,576 executives, managers, trainers, and specialists working in adult corrections were provided training. Through an interagency agreement with OJJDP, 737 practitioners working in juvenile corrections and detention were also provided training.

Training local prosecutors and police officers is another method of assisting local communities. The Criminal Division, in a joint effort with the National White Collar Crime Center, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, and others, trained hundreds of State and local prosecutors and investigators on legal issues pertaining to computer crime, electronic investigations, electronic search and seizure, and other high-tech issues. In addition, the



Criminal Division recently launched the new Infotech Training Initiative, through which it will coordinate computer-crime-related training efforts in jurisdictions across the country, helping to develop curricula, working with instructors, and promoting the sharing of resources.

With COPS MORE (Making Officer Redeployment Effective), local agencies were awarded resources to buy technology and equipment, such as laptop computers, and to hire administrative staff. These funds allow officers to spend more time on the streets, rather than at the station filling out paperwork. Under COPS MORE, the equivalent of more than 7,000 officers was funded in 1996, helping expand community policing practices and programs.

In keeping with its proactive approach, the Department is fostering exceptional working relationships with all law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating hate crimes. With the goal of promoting common understanding, improving cooperation, lessening tensions, and preventing civil rights abuses, the FBI is forging partnerships with interested individuals and organizations to address their concerns. It is also developing and sponsoring specific operational workshops, seminars, and training sessions for local law enforcement, minority and religious organizations, and community groups.

Protecting America's Children

The Department has waged an aggressive battle to protect children from individuals who use the U.S. mail or computers to sexually abuse and exploit them. For example, a project with the U.S. Postal Service—Project Special Delivery—focused on identifying and prosecuting individuals using the U.S. mail to distribute and receive child pornography. As a result of this effort, several dangerous child molesters were apprehended and 40 individuals convicted. In addition, the Department worked with Congress this year in passing amendments to the child pornography laws that make it a crime to disseminate, receive, or possess computer-created child pornographic images.

One direct result of this effort was the Innocent Images Project. A multi-agency task force led by the FBI, this project is the first to nationally focus on combatting the use of computers to traffic in child pornography. The task force focuses on the identification and prosecution of individuals using computer telecommunications facilities to receive or distribute child pornography and to recruit minors into illicit sexual relationships. Other major efforts to protect America's children in 1996 included the following:

- The Morgan P. Hardiman Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children began operations. Representatives from the Department and other Federal law enforcement agencies worked to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in the most difficult missing and exploited child cases nationwide.

Toddler beds and accessory guardrails manufactured by Cosco presented a risk of head/neck entrapment and consequent strangulation of small children. A leading manufacturer of children's products, Cosco violated the Consumer Products Safety Act for 3 years by failing to report to the Consumer Product Safety Commission numerous consumer accounts of children trapped in the headboards or footboards of the beds. In its suit against Cosco, the Civil Division obtained a civil penalty of \$725,000.



The Criminal Division serves as legal advisor for the task force.

- During the 65th INTERPOL General Assembly session held in Turkey, and attended by USNCB agents, several resolutions were passed regarding the protection of children and the fight against their exploitation. These resolutions add emphasis and strength to INTERPOL's position of protecting children worldwide and of providing investigative assistance in matters of international child abductions, child pornography, child sex tourism, and pedophile cases.

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued regulations that will significantly limit children's access to tobacco and to the advertising that targets young people. The Civil Division successfully defended the regulation even before it became final. With litigation now resumed, the tobacco companies are charging that FDA lacks jurisdiction and that the regulations violate the Constitution. The Civil Division is actively defending the Administration's policy.

- The U.S. Attorneys have undertaken the investigation and prosecution of parents who willfully fail to pay support obligations for a child living in another State. During 1996, the Attorney General convened a Criminal Child Support Enforcement task force of Federal, State, and local representatives to foster cooperation among the different levels of government and the various agencies responsible for child support enforcement.

The FBI presented its "There's No Escape" crime prevention video to over 30,000 students at schools throughout Georgia.

Preventive Measures

Finally, community policing may offer good preventive medicine for children, especially those at risk of delinquency. Because community policing requires officers to take a proactive, preventive approach to solving problems, many of the officers hired under various COPS programs are actively involved in improving and protecting the lives of America's children.

For example, officers are working with anti-drug programs, teaching conflict resolution as school resource officers, and tutoring children in after-school programs at police substations. By actively engaging in young people's lives, community policing officers funded by COPS are providing positive role models to America's youth and, in partnership with others, teaching them alternatives to a life of crime.

Similarly, FBI agents and U.S. Attorneys throughout the Nation are developers and supporters of youth initiatives, from one-on-one mentoring to mock trials, all intended to redirect the energies of youth into more positive channels.