

ATTACHMENT 1

STATE OF NEW JERSEY **2009 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG)**

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Outline of Types of Programs to be Funded

New Jersey's program activities under the 2009 JAG program will continue to assist with implementation of the Governor's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods with a focus on one of the state's most serious crime problems—the proliferation of illegal gang activity and its associated violence and criminal activity. The Governor's Crime Plan, released in October 2007, focuses on three critical areas to addressing violent crime: enforcement, prevention, and reentry. Criminal justice system improvements, vital to the integration of statewide information sharing networks, continue as a priority.

Analysis of Program Needs

Violent crime represents one of New Jersey's most significant public safety problems. JAG funding will be awarded to state and local agencies to meet important public safety and criminal justice needs for our residents. This funding will help keep our communities safe and will continue to provide New Jersey with an opportunity to support important local and state criminal justice initiatives, focusing on statewide efforts.

According to New Jersey's latest 2007 Uniform Crime Report (UCR), violent crimes account for 13% of the total crime index, and violent crimes account for 30% of index arrests. Persons under 21 years of age account for 26% of all arrests. Criminal street gangs are responsible for a major part of this violence. Gang violence results in many youth in our cities left seriously wounded or dead. In 2006, homicide was the second leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The 2007 UCR indicates:

14% of all murder victims were between the ages of 15-19,
23% of all murder victims were between the ages of 20-24, and
17% of all murder victims were between the ages of 25-29.

Thus, 54% of all murder victims were between the ages of 15 to 29. Showing an increase of 3% since last year, 14% percent of all 2007 murders were drug or gang related.

Gang violence strikes innocent victims who happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, perpetuating a generalized fear in our communities. In 2007, 55% of murders occurred on public streets and highways - - an increase of 7% since 2006. In one year, crime in 2007 was marked with:

1% increase in the use of firearms in 68% of all murders and in 13% of felony murders.
27% increase of juvenile arrests for murder.
2% increase of robberies as a motive for felony murders (with an 88% rate).

20% increase of convenience store robberies.

Despite a decrease of 4% in New Jersey's overall crime rate from 2006 to 2007, the above figures confirm disturbing trends of rising drug and gang related murders, and increasing juvenile murder rates and murders in public streets and highways.

In May 2009, the State Commission of Investigation (SCI) released a report and documented the rapidly growing problem of organized criminal gangs thriving inside New Jersey's prisons. Criminal street gangs have long been recognized as a threat, not just to society at large, but to the safety, security and integrity of the prison system. The State Commission of Investigation has found that burgeoning numbers of gang affiliated inmates today:

- Communicate widely both inside and outside of prison – throughout New Jersey and the nation – using smuggled cellular phones and other sophisticated electronic devices.
- Move unlimited amounts of money and orchestrate illicit financial transactions by manipulating an official system of inmate monetary accounts.
- Readily secure, use and deal in contraband, including illegal narcotics.
- Extort fellow inmates and their families and corrupt corrections personnel, including custody officers.

Together, these circumstances enable them to nurture and advance violent criminal enterprises while incarcerated, and their ability to operate in this fashion raises the specter of greater violence, not just inside the prisons, but once they return to the outside world.

Although New Jersey experienced an apparent decline in the overall number of gangs statewide, the growth in membership continues to spiral upward. This phenomenon reflects gang consolidation into more powerful and more dangerous criminal organizations. By 2004, 28 gangs in New Jersey were found to have in excess of 100 members each; collectively, these gangs accounted for more than half of all gang members active throughout the state. The SCI conducted a survey of New Jersey's 21 County Prosecutors' Offices and Jails and found the Bloods to be the pre-eminent gang both on the street and inside the county jail system. Bloods members now constitute more than half of all incarcerated gang inmates at the state level – up from one-third. New Jersey identified more than 13,000 criminal street gang members in the state prison system since it formally started keeping track of this phenomenon in the mid-1990s. Among the overall current inmate population of approximately 22,000, more than 4,600 have been officially identified by the department as gang members. Moreover, it does not include inmates who may, in a variety of ways, be involved in a gang's criminal activities as non-member associates. Law enforcement officials are arresting, prosecuting and jailing gang felons in record numbers. On a routine basis, the New Jersey Department of Corrections reports that it is now identifying gang-member inmates entering the state prison system at a rate of 75 to 80 each month. The growing influx of convicted gang members has transformed the prison system into a breeding ground of gang-related activity at a level far more expansive than ever before.

Planning and Statewide Priorities

New Jersey's statewide strategic plan focuses on three components critical to addressing violent crime: enforcement, prevention and reentry. The plan is based on increased accountability for all state, county and local law criminal justice agencies through a collaborative, data-driven, action-oriented, outcome-based process. Working groups, established for each category, met with experts in their respective fields, representatives of state and local governments, law enforcement, community-based organizations, education, social service agencies, and representation from the private sector to coordinate resources and to ensure that a collaborative, multi-pronged approach to enhanced public safety was formulated. Directors of Enforcement, Prevention and Reentry, in the Office of the Attorney General, oversee the implementation of each major component of the Crime Plan.

Priority: Suppression of Gang and Drug Criminal Networks

Programs under this priority area include targeted enforcement of criminal street gangs, drug trafficking and money laundering operations. Federal funds will support state and local multi-jurisdictional gangs, guns and narcotics task forces. State and county task forces concentrate investigative and prosecutorial resources in designated locations heavily affected by gang violence and crime. Funds will also provide for statewide analytic support to state, county, and local law enforcement agencies. The enhanced analytic capabilities will allow Law & Public Safety to further promote intelligence sharing, coordination, and analysis across law enforcement agencies. The resources will centrally aggregate crime incidence statistics and trends, and provide, on a regular basis, intelligence products by participating law enforcement agencies identifying and analyzing their local and regional law enforcement trends and issues. Additionally, local law enforcement will be provided with funding to assist in suppressing violent crime. The initiative will augment efforts to reduce continuing and escalating violence reactions and support violence prevention with ongoing proactive efforts.

To increase both public safety and institutional security, the state Department of Law and Public Safety and the Department of Corrections will collaborate in a joint intelligence-sharing and law enforcement effort to identify, investigate and prosecute the criminal activities of incarcerated gang members and their non-incarcerated co-conspirators. The collaborations will be technological, investigative and proactive. The collaboration will coordinate and initiate criminal investigations of gangs whose violence and criminality span the prison walls and contribute to violence in our communities. Additionally, the Department of Law and Public Safety and county jails will collaborate in a focused intelligence-sharing and law enforcement effort to identify, investigate, and prosecute the criminal activities of incarcerated gang members and their non-incarcerated co-conspirators at certain county jails that have particularly high gang populations. The collaboration will be technological, investigative, and proactive.

The State Police Ballistics Unit is responsible for examining and providing expert advice on firearms related evidence from crime, preparing reports, offering courtroom testimony, providing lectures, entering and correlating images in the NIBIN database. Funding will support a firearms identification expert.

Specialized training and assistance to state law enforcement officers in the latest techniques and resources to investigate violent crime and corruption will also be funded.

A witness assistance program will provide protection for individuals who testify in selected gang/violent crime cases. Additional resources are required in order to provide assistance to witnesses who face threats to their safety as a result of their cooperation with law enforcement. Securing the cooperation of credible witnesses will increase the likelihood of convictions where testimony of the witness is pivotal to winning the case. Successful prosecutions will ensure that some of the State's most dangerous and violent gang members will be removed from the streets.

Federal funds will continue to be awarded to the 21 County Prosecutors' Offices and the Division of Criminal Justice to assist with the implementation and oversight of Megan's Law and other law enforcement initiatives. There are over 12,500 registered sex offenders in New Jersey.

Priority: Violence Prevention and Intervention

Federal funds will be used to continue the Community Justice Programs that are designed to engage local communities in the justice system. County prosecutors take the lead in working with residents to resolve crime and quality of life problems at the local level. In concert with New Jersey's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods, Community Justice Coordinators assist communities in analyzing crime data, establish partnerships to identify existing resources to address community concerns and work with community organizations to address gaps in services.

Priority: Community Reentry

Annually, approximately 14,000 state sentenced adult offenders are released from the New Jersey Department of Corrections; and over 1,500 juvenile are released from juvenile justice facilities. Federal funds will provide assistance to the New Jersey State Parole Board for continuation of a specialized reentry program for female offenders in the Newark area. Women are housed in a safe environment and they are provided an array of services to assist with the reintegration process. In collaboration with the Essex County Day Reporting Center, the program participants gain employment skills, increase their educational and technical skills, and develop life management and coping skills. The women receive mental and physical health services as well as assistance in making positive community contacts in the Essex County area that will lead to successful reintegration. Additionally, a new initiative will provide enhanced services to additional female offenders.

Priority: Criminal Justice System Improvements

New Jersey will continue to enhance public safety through integrated technology. The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Policy Committee will recommend funding priorities. Established in 1991, the CJIS Committee plans and coordinates projects funded under JAG Five-Percent Set-Aside Program and other sources of federal financial support. The CJIS Committee

includes representatives from the Department of Law and Public Safety, the Office of the Attorney General, the Division of State Police, the Division of Criminal Justice, and the Juvenile Justice Commission. Also represented at the meetings are the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Office of Information Technology, the State Chiefs of Police and County Jail Wardens. New Jersey has evolved as a national leader in integrated digital data technology. Building upon projects being implemented with JAG ARRA funding, the CJIS Policy Committee will determine projects designed to address current needs. The committee meets monthly to plan and discuss projects for system improvement and funding.

Performance Measure Data Collection and Reporting

The Program Development Section working in conjunction with the Research and Evaluation Section, within the Division of Criminal Justice, will collect performance measures and reports electronically from all state and local agencies receiving JAG funding and report quarterly to BJA.

Coordination of Efforts

The Directors of Enforcement, Prevention and Reentry have each established councils for the implementation, coordination and leveraging of resources. Councils have wide-ranging involvement from experts in their respective fields. Representation includes participation from state and local governments, non-profits, community agencies and agencies in the private sector.

The Program Development Section within the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) has direct responsibility for the administration of the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Grant (RSAT), the Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking Grant (SMART) and the federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program (BVP). Also, DCJ oversees the OJJDP's Gang Prevention Coordination Assistance Program. On behalf of the New Jersey U.S. Attorney's Office, DCJ is the fiscal agent for the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Program and the federal Anti-Gang Initiatives and participates in the PSN Taskforce. DCJ also oversees New Jersey's Safe and Secure Communities Program (provides funding for additional police officers to address crime in a community oriented manner), Operation CeaseFire (multi-pronged initiative to address shootings, involves law enforcement and community outreach components) and the state-funded Body Armor Replacement Program (provides state funding to purchase body armor). Additionally, staff participate in the Prevention Coordinating Council and newly established Prevention and Reentry Resource Management Committee, established to coordinate resources and leverage funding.

The Division of Criminal Justice works in tandem with the other federal programs operating in New Jersey including Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) and Weed and Seed. New Jersey has a unique partnership with GREAT implementers for the provision of in-state training of officers. To date, over 365 officers have been trained to teach the curriculum in schools and communities throughout the state. Weed and Seed Programs, originated in Trenton, is a highly successful program which has been adopted by many cities across the state to meet the needs of local communities.

Working through the County Prosecutors' Offices in the counties of Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Passaic and Sussex, Community Justice Coordinators serve as the bridge between law enforcement and the community to identify problems, coordinate resources and plan solutions. The County Coordinators are evaluating and implementing crime and gang prevention strategies to help reduce the number and severity of gang-related incidents within their communities.

The County Prosecutors' Association meets monthly to share information, discuss emerging problems and policy issues. Through complimentary grant-related programs, the prosecutors play an integral role in the implementation of the State's Enforcement and Prevention strategies.

The Department of Law and Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, Grant's Office convenes a weekly consolidated grants meeting for the purpose of ensuring coordination of resources and services within the department.