



Department of Justice

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Fact Sheet: Project Safe Neighborhoods: America's Network Against Gun Violence

Project Safe Neighborhoods – History and Expansion

In May 2001, President Bush announced Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a comprehensive initiative to reduce gun crime in America. By linking together federal, state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders, PSN has provided a multi-faceted approach to prosecuting and deterring gun crime. In 2006, the Department of Justice expanded PSN to include new and enhanced anti-gang efforts. The goal is to use strategies and partnerships with state and local law enforcement and communities pioneered under PSN to shut down violent gangs in America.

The Project Safe Neighborhoods strategy involves five elements: partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach and accountability. The U.S. Attorney in each of the 94 federal judicial districts works side-by-side with local law enforcement and other officials to tailor the PSN strategy to fit the unique gun and gang crime problems in that district. Criminals are prosecuted under federal, state or local laws, depending on which jurisdiction can provide the most appropriate punishment. PSN task forces engage in community outreach and media campaigns to deter gun and gang crime, and deploy grant funds to support effective prosecution and prevention programs. Both at the local and national levels, PSN also ensures that law enforcement officers and prosecutors have the training necessary to make the program work. Project Safe Neighborhoods Is Working

Under PSN, the number of federal firearms prosecutions has increased significantly, and defendants earn substantial sentences in federal prison. PSN's deterrence and prevention efforts complement this focus on enforcement.

Prosecution:

Under PSN, federal prosecutors focus their resources on the most serious violent offenders, taking them off the streets and placing them behind bars where they cannot re-offend.

In FY 2006, the Department prosecuted 10,425 federal firearms cases against 12,479 defendants. Over 93% of those offenders received prison terms and nearly 75% were sentenced to three or more years in prison.

From FY 2001 to 2006, the Department of Justice has filed 58,464 cases against 71,019 defendants for federal firearms violations. This represents more than a 100% increase over the prior six-year period of 1995-2000.

Deterrence: Since 2002, the Justice Department, together with the Ad Council, the Mullen Agency, and other PSN partners, has launched a public service announcement (PSA) campaign that uses the tag line

"Gun crimes hit home" and couples a strong enforcement message with a deterrence message that focus on the consequences of illegal gun use.

The campaign consists of several PSA releases: o Mothers (2003) o Sentenced (2004) o Sounds of Gun Crime (2006) o Time Served (2006)

Each of these PSAs focuses on the pain that gun crime offenders cause their own families to endure.

At the 2007 PSN National Conference, new TV and radio PSAs developed with the Ad Council and Mullen Agency will debut. The TV PSA, entitled "Babies," shows that the loss of a child to gun violence – whether to injury, death, arrest or jail time – deeply affects the family. The radio PSAs show the genuine pain inflicted upon real families when a family member is involved in a gun crime. These PSAs will be produced in English and Spanish and will be officially released in the coming weeks.

To date, the PSN national public service announcement campaign has received over \$133 million in donated media time.

Prevention:

PSN has also focused on preventing youth gun crime. As early as FY 2002, \$20 million in PSN grant funds went to 37 cities to address juvenile gun crime, including school and gang-related gun violence, and to prosecute adults who illegally furnish firearms to youth. The Department also funded a federal Sentry prosecutor in 93 U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and committed nearly \$50 million to Project Sentry efforts from FY 2002 to FY 2004. Since that time, the Department has been dedicated to prevention efforts to prevent "at risk youth" from joining gangs in the first place. Some examples of the Department's efforts consist of the U.S. Attorney-convened gang prevention summits designed to explore additional opportunities in the area of gang prevention, and two gang prevention webcasts which were hosted by the Department and are accessible by the public at <http://www.dojconnect.com>.

The Administration is working to follow through on the President's campaign promise to distribute 65 million gun safety locks for firearms in America. Since 2003, Project Childsafe, administered by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, has distributed more than 35 million safety kits to gun owners in all 50 states and five U.S. territories and continues to help its law enforcement partners promote firearms safety by providing educational materials and support services.

The "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" program was developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) in coordination with ATF to educate federally licensed firearms retailers on how to detect and deter potential criminal "straw" purchases. Approximately 30,000 federal firearm licensees across the country have received a "Don't Lie" Point-of-Sale Kit that explains federal firearms laws to firearm purchasers. The program has been expanded to include a public awareness component to educate citizens that "straw" purchases are a serious crime.

Continued Support for Local Project Safe Neighborhoods Efforts

Since 2001, PSN has committed approximately \$2 billion to federal, state and local efforts to fight gun crime and gang violence. These funds have been used to hire new federal, state and local prosecutors, provide training, hire research and community outreach support, and develop and promote effective prevention and deterrence efforts. The following have occurred since the implementation of PSN:

More than 200 federal prosecutors have been hired to prosecute gun crime and gun-related cases.

Approximately \$63 million in grants have been made available to hire over 550 new state and local prosecutors to focus on gun crime.

The national PSN training and technical assistance partners have trained nearly 33,000 individuals in

over 300 nationally-sponsored training events across the nation who work to make our communities safer. Local PSN programs have organized training for many thousands more.

Supporting PSN's state, local and community partners is the foundation of the initiative. This year, the Department is making available the following grant funding:

Over \$30 million in grant funding to support local PSN partners in their anti-gang enforcement and prevention efforts, and to provide anti-gang training and technical assistance.

Over \$20 million in grant funding to support PSN efforts that focus on reducing gun crime.

The Department's FY 2008 budget request includes \$200 million for Violent Crime Reduction Partnership grants and over \$13 million for other violent-crime-related enhancements that will support the Project Safe Neighborhoods program and increase the prosecution of gangs and violent criminals.

Additionally, since the inception of PSN in 2001, the Department has made available in grant funding:

More than \$60 million in FYs 2006 and 2007 to support local PSN partners in their anti-gang enforcement and prevention efforts, and to provide anti-gang training and technical assistance.

Approximately \$220 million in grant funding to support PSN efforts that focus on gun crime prosecution, prevention and deterrence.

Nearly \$200 million in grant funding to states and territories to improve the quality, timeliness, and immediate accessibility of criminal history and related records for use by federal, state, and local law enforcement to support criminal investigations, enable background checks related to licensing, employment, firearms purchasing, and identify persons subject to protective orders or wanted, arrested, or convicted for stalking and/or domestic violence.

Project Safe Neighborhoods Complements Other Department of Justice Violent Crime Reduction Efforts

PSN's emphasis on violent gangs complements existing Department of Justice anti-gang efforts, such as the ATF-led Violent Crime Impact Teams that are currently deployed in 29 cities; the 182 FBI-led Safe Streets Task Forces that focus on organized criminal gangs and violent crime; and the Weed and Seed Program, which has more than 300 active sites across the country that focus on weeding out criminal elements from a community and providing that community with social and economic rehabilitation resources.

PSN's anti-gang efforts will also supplement new efforts to combat violent gangs, such as the Attorney General's Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative being implemented in 10 sites: Los Angeles, Tampa, Cleveland, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Milwaukee, the "222 Corridor" that stretches from Easton to Lancaster in Pennsylvania, Oklahoma City, Indianapolis, Raleigh/Durham, N.C., and Rochester, N.Y. The department is committing approximately \$2.5 million in grant funding for prevention, enforcement, and offender reentry initiatives in each of these sites.

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