



National Institute of Justice

S o l i c i t a t i o n

Jeremy Travis, Director

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Assessment of the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

February 3, 1999

U.S. Department of Justice
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Assessment of the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative

I. Introduction

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking proposals to assess how a strategic problem-solving model is implemented in five sites and whether it achieves the goals set for it in the individual sites. These five sets of strategies are the focus of this assessment. Request for proposals is sought under the authority of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, 1968, as amended by the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act (Title I) of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Act), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3796 dd and ff. Research and evaluation monies authorized under the Act may study the use of problem-solving strategies and tactics implemented by or involving police agencies to address crime and disorder problems. These strategies may reflect the full range of crime prevention and control responses available to law enforcement and local communities.

Applications under this solicitation are due by close-of-business on Wednesday, February 3, 1999. In order to facilitate the application review process, applicants should submit a nonbinding letter of intent by January 15, 1999. There are two ways to send these letters: send by email to NIJ at <tellnij@ncjrs.org>; or write a letter with the same information to SACSI Assessment, NIJ, 810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531. Be sure to identify this solicitation by name in your email or letter.

II. Background

The Department of Justice launched the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) as a result of experiences with the Ceasefire Project in Boston, COMPSTAT in New York and collaborative community initiatives in other U.S. cities. From the Boston experience, DOJ learned that data-driven

problem-solving can inform collaborative partnerships between federal, state and local organizations. New York City's COMPSTAT demonstrated that analytic efforts focused on local crime problems can have a considerable effect on those problems. From the federal Weed & Seed Program, DOJ realized the invaluable and integral role the U.S. Attorney can play in forming such collaborative multi-agency partnerships. Indeed, focusing on specific crime problems or geographic areas can provide for concentrated, synergistic activity within a multi-agency partnership. The SACSI approach focuses on problem-solving and information-driven multi-agency action; this collaborative use of information for purposes of problem-solving is a new and effective way of "doing business" for many communities.

SACSI takes this multi-agency problem-solving model as a guide for five communities-- Indianapolis, Indiana; Memphis, Tennessee; New Haven, Connecticut; Portland, Oregon and Winston-Salem, North Carolina -- to develop strategies to identify and tackle their own local crime problems. The purpose of SACSI is to enhance the effectiveness of U.S. Attorneys, working in partnership with federal, state and local criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations, government agencies and a research partner *to reduce a target crime problem*, with the hope that this becomes a way of doing business. In particular, SACSI focuses on the collaboration with researchers as a key component in identifying local crime problems, specifically through data collection and analysis, and in designing targeted strategies and interventions to prevent and reduce crime.

The Department of Justice has undertaken efforts to guide the overall SACSI effort as part of a collaborative effort between a variety of agencies interested in data-driven problem-solving. The national assessor, as part of the evaluation of the entire initiative, will be expected to conduct an assessment of the Department's program management and monitoring efforts.

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The program components of SACSI that the five U.S. Attorneys' offices were asked to follow are four-fold:

- 1) Compose an inter-agency core group supported by a Project Coordinator and the Research Partner. The U.S. Attorney acts as a catalyst in initiating the strategic approaches project; the Project Coordinator is the daily manager of the process, moving the group towards its collective goal; the Research Partner provides analytic support. The inter-agency core group also develops strategies to draw on community resources, government entities and law enforcement to combat their local crime problem.
- 2) Enhance the analytic capacity of each site by improving Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enable researchers and other core group members to map crime and other data to predict and analyze emerging crime patterns.
- 3) Institute the process of problem-solving, which includes identifying the problem, analyzing its nature, identifying trends, patterns, and opportunities for intervention, designing the strategy, and implementing the intervention.
- 4) Conduct an empirical, objective evaluation of the implementation of the intervention and its effects in order to adjust the strategy to maximize its impact over time.

The SACSI effort began in March 1998 and continues through September 2000. The communities participating in the SACSI project are Winston-Salem, North Carolina; New Haven, Connecticut; Indianapolis, Indiana; Memphis, Tennessee; and Portland, Oregon. The Department of Justice's purpose in funding these five sites is to pilot test and develop this comprehensive problem-solving approach. Each of the five sites has provided NIJ with (1) a planning proposal describing the process it wants to create, and (2) a research proposal detailing the crime problem it will tackle, the research methodologies used to confirm or refine practitioners' perceptions of the

crime problem through empirical data, and the working group's approach to devising intervention strategies. According to need, each of the five proposals will result in a planning grant; five research grants will be awarded by NIJ by December 1998.

This request for proposals (RFP) seeks applications to conduct a national assessment of the SACSI effort. The assessment should include a process evaluation of the development of the community safety initiative in each site and an impact evaluation examining whether the goals of the core group have been met and whether the crime problem has changed or abated as a result. In addition, the process evaluation should produce a cross-site analysis of common themes from all five sites. The following sections provide summary information on the SACSI effort implemented in the five sites. **Please do not contact any of these sites directly. Send any queries while you formulate your response to this RFP directly to NIJ (Andrea Tisi, JD, Program Manager).**

Memphis, Tennessee

The rate of sexual assaults has been increasing in Memphis, even as nation-wide trends show a stabilization in rates. The core group in Memphis, which represents a variety of city and county agencies, research partners and federal and local law enforcement, plans to reduce the incidence of sexual assault by building on work already being done by the Memphis Sexual Assault Resource Center and working in conjunction with the Memphis Police Department. In addition, the core group will build on efforts by the Memphis/Shelby County Crime Commission, an organization established to develop best practices in the city's and the county's fight against crime, and to identify and further develop best practices with regard to sexual assault broadly, including child sexual abuse, date rape and stranger rape.

Memphis' research proposal focuses on a target population of teenagers, a group identified through previous research as most likely to experience repeat victimization. Through networking and communication among a wide variety of community resources, most of which are included in the core group, Memphis intends

to improve its GIS capacity and knowledge base. The core group anticipates that data analysis will provide insight into typologies of offenses, the role of networks of perpetrators and victims in rapes, precursor locations and criminogenic environments, the role of sanctions and implications for opportunities for intervention. Memphis has already identified significant challenges facing the project, notably lack of an integrated data processing system, a need for a change in the way the participating agencies “do business” on the issue of sexual assault, and the confidentiality of agency records.

New Haven, Connecticut

New Haven’s target crime problems are the perceived high rate of gun possessions associated with stops, arrests and searches, and gun violence and public safety concerns evolving from gun violence. The core group, comprised primarily of law enforcement, seeks to reduce gun possession and violence through four strategies, including impeding gun distribution through gun tracing, deterring gun possession by publicizing significant prosecutions, increasing incapacitation of illegal gun possessors and coordinating prevention-oriented community interventions targeted at high-risk populations. The goals of the core group also include making people feel safer living in or going to New Haven and institutionalizing successful aspects of the process developed by the core group.

New Haven’s research design focuses on determining the prevalence of gun possession in violent gun crime cases through random samples of police case files including incident reports, court and correctional records in order to gain insight into patterns associated with different types of offenses. The research design also includes two telephone surveys on public safety, one conducted as a pre-project benchmark survey and the other towards the end of the two-year project. Throughout the project, the research partner will develop qualitative and quantitative approaches to decreasing the prevalence of gun possession and gun violence, as well as

enhancing the effectiveness of the core group in meeting other goals it sets for itself.

Indianapolis, Indiana

Marion County, Indiana, which includes Indianapolis, experienced record homicide levels in 1996 and 1997. As a result, civic leaders established a multi-agency core group to develop a coordinated and focused problem-solving approach to reduce the level of homicide, and of other serious violence, in the community. Indianapolis has conducted homicide “reviews”, in which the inter-agency core group met and analyzed the case files of each homicide in 1997 and the first six months of 1998, in order to identify the context in which the murders are occurring. This analysis led the working group to conclude that the homicides differed in type between urban Indianapolis and rural Marion County, although each had domestic violence homicides, and drug- and gang-related homicides. Its intervention strategies will reflect this analysis.

The core group in Indianapolis anticipates initiating intervention strategies that focus on non-domestic homicides and include increased arrest, prosecution and incarceration of the most serious and chronic violent offenders; disruption of illegal firearms markets; a multiple-level and multiple-agency strategic response to homicides and firearms violence; communication of the anti-violence message to potential offenders and to the community at large; and development of community-based prevention components.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Winston-Salem proposes to build on a community effort already underway to develop a comprehensive, research-based crime prevention and intervention model for addressing violent crime among youth. Winston-Salem’s goal is to ensure that young people who indicate risk factors for delinquency and who have had multiple contacts with city agencies do not “slip through the cracks” because of lack of inter-agency communication and coordination. The

SACSI effort in Winston-Salem also builds on the work of the Forsyth Futures group, a group of civic leaders already communicating on city-wide crime and delinquency problems.

Winston-Salem's research proposal includes a multi-method approach to identify and analyze violence among adolescents to develop strategies to reduce it. The core group is likely to target serious assaults. They will use extant data and front-line practitioners. The group will develop recommendations for collaborative prevention and intervention strategies among law enforcement, education, juvenile service agencies, and higher education to deal with violent juvenile behavior.

Portland, Oregon

Portland is investigating youth gun-related violence and possible connections to alcohol use. Its efforts build on the work of the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) Executive Committee and the Mayor's Gun Initiative Task Force. The SACSI core group includes members of the LPSCC and the Mayor's task force, as well as a wide range of participants from the community. In conjunction with the extant community initiatives, the local Portland SACSI group, known as STACS (Strategic Approaches to Community Safety), will assess the extent and nature of gun violence. Portland has expended considerable effort building their core group, which is planning its research program. It proposes to organize existing data sources, which are substantial, and mine these sources to understand in detail the scope and nature of guns, youth violence and alcohol in Portland. General goals include disrupting the flow of illegal guns to juveniles, understanding the interaction of guns and alcohol, and possibly conducting large surveys of at-risk youth, offenders, victims, and members of neighborhoods.

III. Request for Proposals: Research Design for Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to document the SACSI efforts in the five sites, and to chronicle factors associated with the varying degrees of success such collaborative, data-based problem-solving efforts have had at the local level. This solicitation seeks proposals for an assessment of the initiative undertaken by each of the five sites, including a cross-site analysis. Beginning in 1999 and carrying through July 2000, the assessment will constitute an intensive research project examining the five approaches to strategic problem-solving. Each city's approach to its identified local crime problem is unique, albeit based on the general framework of strategic problem-solving. As such, proposals to conduct the assessment should recognize the diversity of approaches and the wide variety of techniques used by the sites while assessing each site's strategy in terms of the general collaborative problem-solving model the sites were to use as a guide.

Applicants should outline an overall research strategy that includes an intensive process analysis and a comprehensive assessment of the approach in each of the five cities. It is reasonable to consider this assessment as a series of five case studies, with a cross-site analysis of common themes. Such themes might include identifying common success factors and common impediments, as well as any commonalities in effective strategies used by the sites to complement successful efforts and to overcome problems. It is hoped such an analysis of the five sites will result in a comprehensive understanding of the components of a model for how a community might successfully approach multi-agency partnerships and problem-solving, especially those involving state, local and federal partnerships. This national assessment should provide other U.S. Attorneys and the Department of Justice with a means for understanding how the processes worked in the five pilot sites, in anticipation that other communities and U.S.

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Attorneys may want to explore similar strategies in the future.

The **process analysis** should include, but is not limited to, with respect to each site:

- a description of the local crime problem that precipitated formulation of the inter-agency partnership and the partnership's process for choosing this problem;
- description of the nature and extent of the local crime problem throughout the project period;
- analysis of development of the partnership among researchers, project coordinators, U.S. Attorneys, law enforcement agencies and non-law enforcement agencies, and the interactions among them;
- analysis of the various strategies considered by the site once its crime problem was identified and its rationale for choosing the strategy selected;
- descriptions of the obstacles encountered by the five sites in implementing the strategies;
- determination of whether the interventions employed extant resources or required an injection of new resources;
- analysis of how the sites used their GIS and analytic capacity to understand their local crime problem and develop effective strategies;
- analysis of whether each of the five sites met the goals they set for themselves;
- lessons learned about the formulation and conduct of such federal, state and local partnerships that would be useful for other U.S. Attorneys and cities in tackling local crime problems.

The **impact analysis** should include, but is not limited to, data in each site on the following questions:

- what is the effect of the overall crime prevention or crime reduction strategy on local crime rates?
- what was the impact of the continuing analysis of the crime problem on the subsequent development of intervention strategies within a site? (Were the intervention strategies adapted in each site based on data analysis of changing local circumstances?)
- were the intervention strategies conceptually and empirically linked to the crime problems targeted?
- did the site put in place an infrastructure to continue federal, state and local partnerships in the future? (*E.g.*, was the SACSI problem-solving model institutionalized within the U.S. Attorney's office or elsewhere? Did collaboration among governmental agencies extend to other problems or contexts?)

This project will require the grantee to work closely with the local partnerships in the five sites, to have access to key individuals and data from the sites and to relevant Department of Justice personnel, all of which will be facilitated by NIJ. During the eighteen-month national assessment, periodic feedback will be expected to be provided to the five study sites as well as to NIJ. Therefore, the project will require the evaluator's intensive on-site presence. Applicants should describe how this will be accomplished. Products from this project anticipated by NIJ include an interim report and a publishable final report of the cross-site analysis, including five in-depth case studies as supporting

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documentation. All reports must be of a quality suitable for local and national dissemination.

The deadline for submission is close of business, Wednesday, February 3, 1999. For purposes of this solicitation, applicants should concentrate their efforts in the program narrative on the assessment strategy, a dissemination strategy and a management plan. In addition, applicants may want to consider developing a research consortium or coalition, perhaps subcontracting a portion of the work to local partners in some of the sites. As part of applicants' responses to this RFP, it is *not* necessary to include a plan to conduct an assessment of the Department of Justice's program management and monitoring efforts; this will be discussed with the national assessor, once selected. Finally, while not necessary in order to respond to the February 3rd deadline, a detailed evaluation design will be required within thirty days of the selection of the evaluator. **The page limit for this solicitation is twenty-five pages.** Up to \$450,000 is available to conduct this evaluation.

IV. How to Apply

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

- Standard Form (SF) 424C application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet

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

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Program narrative or technical proposal

Privacy certificate

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]).

Due date. Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on Wednesday, February 3, 1999. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

Award period. One grant will be awarded for up to eighteen (18) months.

Number of awards. NIJ anticipates supporting one (1) grant under this solicitation.

Award amount. One award of up to \$450,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation.

Guidance and information. The National Institute of Justice contact is: Andrea Tisi, JD, at (202) 514-1893. *Potential applicants are NOT to contact the study cities listed in this solicitation.*

Obtaining application forms. To obtain application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal

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writers and requirements for grant recipients), applicants can:

1. Access the Justice Information Center on the World Wide Web:
<<http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij>>
. At this site, the NIJ application forms and guidelines are available as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.
2. Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420.
3. Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D.C. area, at 202-307-1480).

Applicants may, for example, wish to discuss their prospective research topics with the NIJ professional staff.

Send completed forms to:

Strategic Approaches to Community Safety
Initiative Evaluation Component
National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
[overnight courier ZIP code 20001]

To find out more information about the National Institute of Justice, please contact:

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

800-851-3420

e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org

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