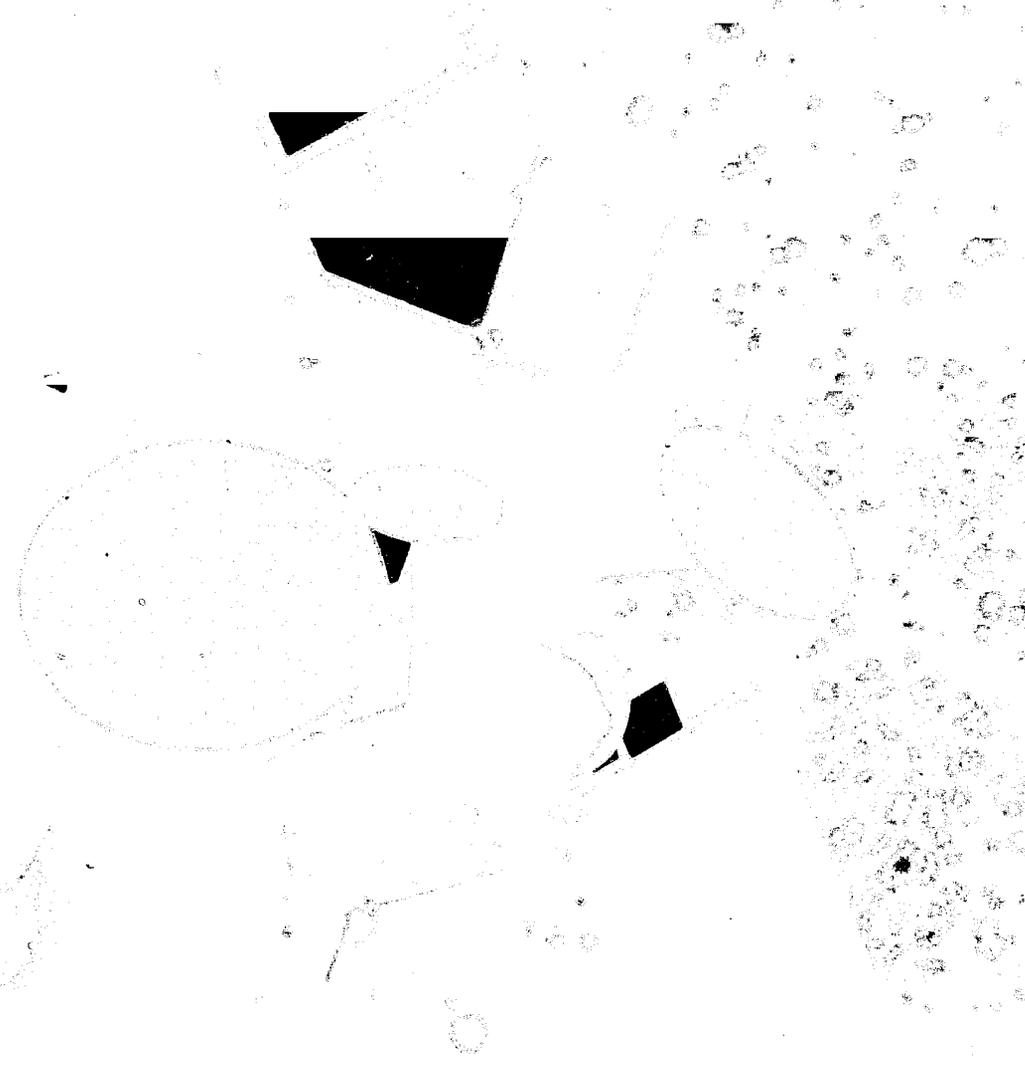


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Director

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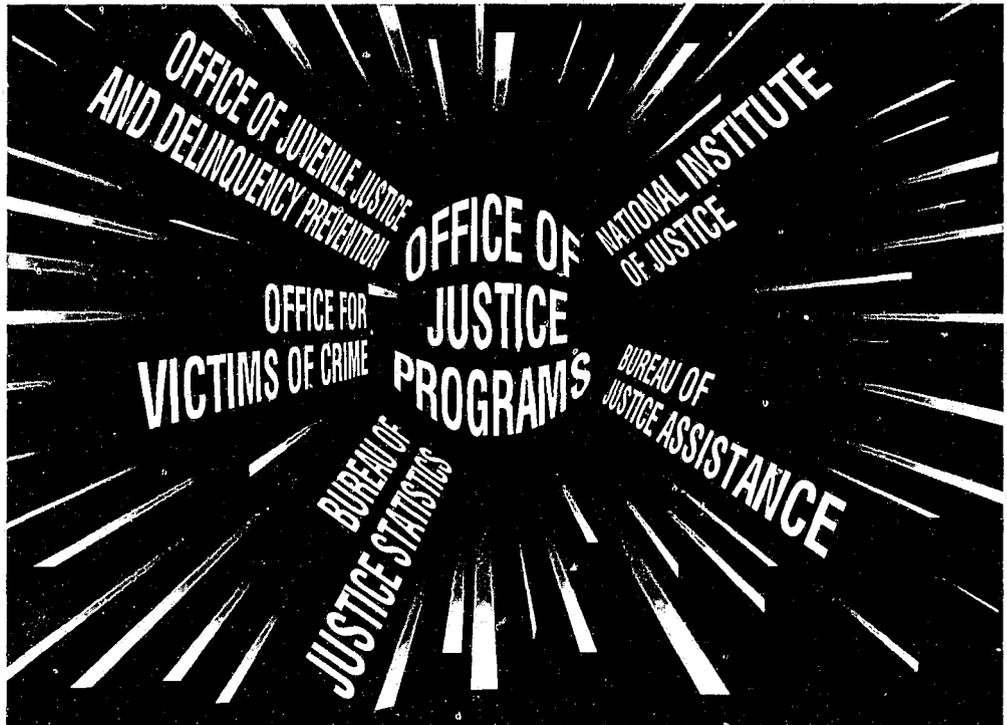
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Office of Justice Programs

Helping Law Enforcement Combat Crime

BY
JIMMY GURULÉ, J.D.



The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) plays a key role in helping law enforcement to combat crime and to improve the criminal justice system. Its primary responsibilities include developing and supporting innovative national, State, and local programs to control drug-related crime and violence, improving the operation of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and providing assistance to crime victims. OJP also plays an important role within the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Government in implementing the goals and objectives of the President's national drug control strategy.

To accomplish its mission, OJP forms partnerships with Federal, State, and local law enforcement and government officials, community organizations, researchers, and others to identify emerging criminal justice issues. Personnel from these groups then develop and test ways to address these issues, evaluate the programs, and disseminate the findings.

Programs established by the Anti-drug Abuse Act of 1988, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 allow the OJP to coordinate its resources and to develop a comprehensive plan to maximize its effec-

tiveness with the limited resources available. The Assistant Attorney General (AAG) of the OJP establishes and guides OJP policy and priorities, ensuring that they remain consistent with the priorities established by the President and the Attorney General.

To fulfill this responsibility, the AAG promotes and facilitates coordination among the five major bureaus within the OJP. These bureaus include:

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), which provides funding and technical assistance to State and local governments that wish to develop innovative approaches to law

enforcement in the areas of violent crime, gang activities, drug control, and drug law enforcement

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which collects, analyzes, and disseminates statistics and other data regarding crime, crime victims, drug use, and other criminal justice issues
- The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which sponsors research and develops and evaluates new approaches to fight drugs and drug-related crime, as well as to improve the operation and effectiveness of the criminal justice system
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which develops innovative programs, sponsors research, and assists State and local jurisdictions in preventing and controlling juvenile drug use and crime
- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), which provides funding to States to support victim compensation and assistance programs and works to improve our Nation's response to victims of crime and their families.

With its multimillion-dollar budget, OJP awards funds to State agencies which, in turn, subgrant the funds for State and local drug control efforts, juvenile justice, and victim assistance and compensation programs. OJP also provides funds directly to law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies and organizations to demonstrate

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The Office of Justice Programs exists to assist U.S. law enforcement agencies in combating crime and improving the criminal justice system.
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new and innovative programs that appeal to jurisdictions around the country.

Each year, OJP establishes priorities for awarding these “discretionary” grant funds and publishes these priorities in the *Federal Register* and the *OJP Fiscal Year Program Plan*. Priorities for the fiscal year (FY) 1992 budget included gangs and violent offenders; victims; community policing and police effectiveness; intermediate sanctions and user accountability; drug prevention; drug testing; intensive prosecution and adjudication; evaluation; money laundering and financial investigations; and information systems, statistics, and technology.

Another primary focus of the OJP is Operation Weed and Seed. This article discusses this program, as well as other OJP programs.

Operation Weed and Seed

OJP maintains a leadership role in implementing DOJ's comprehen-

sive new initiative called Operation Weed and Seed. OJP bases the Weed and Seed strategy on the premise that law enforcement, community residents, government, and the private sector must work together to drive crime out of neighborhoods in order to create an environment where crime cannot thrive. This, in turn, results in an improved standard of living and quality of life for neighborhood residents. The strategy involves four basic elements:

- Weeding out the most violent offenders by coordinating and integrating the efforts of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies in targeted neighborhoods (A law enforcement steering committee, comprised of top officials from all involved agencies, directs this effort by identifying targeted neighborhoods, allocating resources, and coordinating law enforcement efforts.)

- Implementing a community policing program in each of the targeted sites (Under community policing, law enforcement works closely with the residents of the community to develop solutions to the problems of violent and drug-related crime. Community policing is the vital link or bridge between the “weeding” and “seeding” components, the first step in mobilizing residents to work for the betterment of their own neighborhoods.)
- Organizing a neighborhood revitalization steering committee comprised of representatives from a broad array of Federal, State, and local human service agencies, the private sector, and the community to prevent crime and violence from recurring (The committee accomplishes this task by directing a broad array of human services—drug and crime prevention programs, educational opportunities, drug treatment, family services, and recreational activities—into the targeted sites to create an environment where crime cannot thrive.)
- Revitalizing neighborhoods through economic development and by providing economic opportunities for residents.

In FY 1991, OJP established two pilot sites for the Weed and Seed Program—Trenton, New Jersey, and Kansas City, Missouri—and a third site received a grant to

begin planning a program. Then, in April 1992, OJP provided funds to expand the program to 16 additional sites in 13 States. And, in the wake of the civil disturbance in Los Angeles, the city has also been awarded funds to implement a program.

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...OJP forms partnerships...to identify emerging criminal justice issues.
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Targeted neighborhoods in the pilot cities receive approximately \$1.1 million to implement the Weed and Seed strategy—half in FY 1992 and the remainder in FY 1993, subject to Congressional appropriations. These funds come from two sources within DOJ—the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys and OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance—to support law enforcement-related efforts, e.g., suppression, community policing, and prevention and education programs where substantial involvement by local police exists.

Each site selected for funding submitted a comprehensive proposal describing in detail its strategies for the program, including law enforcement efforts, community policing programs, social services, and economic development and revitalization plans. In addition, Weed and Seed neighborhoods received targeted monies under a variety of existing Federal programs during FY 1992.

To coordinate Federal involvement in Operation Weed and Seed, DOJ established a high-level, policymaking interagency working group that meets weekly to oversee Federal programs and funding. These Federal agencies overwhelmingly support the Weed and Seed initiative. For example, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gives preference to those applicants who coordinate with Operation Weed and Seed sites. Other Federal agencies also work to direct funding and programs to the Weed and Seed sites.

Phase III of Operation Weed and Seed began in FY 1993. Approximately \$500 million will be directed to fund the following:

- HUD public housing drug elimination grants
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for community partnership grants, drug treatment, and improved access to health care
- Department of Labor for Job Training Partnership Act Programs that provide job training for high-risk youths and adults
- Department of Education to increase educational and prevention programs and provide Head Start for 1 year for eligible children
- Department of Agriculture for the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) Nutrition Program
- Department of Transportation for reverse commute demonstration grants.

In addition, DOJ earmarked some \$30 million of its 1993 budget to support Operation Weed and Seed. OJP plans to use the funds to expand the number of demonstration sites.

Gangs and Gang Violence

OJP made programs to prevent and suppress illegal gang activity a priority for funding in FY 1991 and FY 1992. To gain a national perspective on the problem of gang violence and the various responses in jurisdictions across the Nation, OJP initiated a series of national field studies on gangs and gang violence. The office conducted three field studies in 1991—in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Chicago—and hopes to schedule another study in the upcoming year.

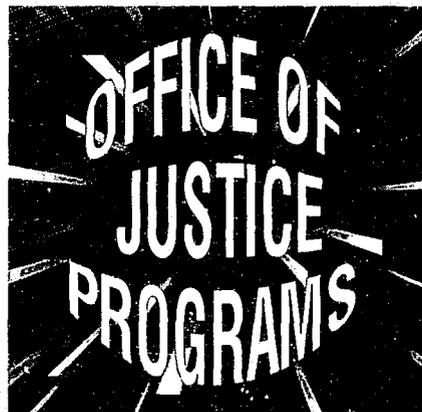
At the completion of the field studies, OJP plans to develop a comprehensive, national strategy for discouraging gang activity among young people. This strategy will be used to identify, arrest, and prosecute hardcore gang members and to assist innocent victims of gang-related crimes and their families.

Community Policing

Community policing requires that the police and the community forge a partnership to identify and solve problems that often result in crime and violence in their neighborhoods. Thus, the police officer becomes a problem solver, who does more than simply respond to calls for service. The police officer—who becomes part of the neighborhood—knows the residents and willingly responds to their needs.

Research by NIJ shows that community policing has numerous benefits. It can reduce citizen fear of crime, improve relations between citizens and police, and increase citizen satisfaction and cooperation with police, while at the same time prevent and reduce crime.

OJP works to expand this method of policing throughout the country. BJA provides funding to eight urban and suburban law enforcement agencies to implement community policing programs. For example, in New York City, police establish minimobile police stations near schools located in areas infested with drug traffickers, and police in Maryland operate ministrations in the rental offices of public housing units.



These efforts deter crime by making police visible in their communities. This, in turn, improves the quality of police response, and most importantly, creates an ongoing partnership between the police and the community. In addition, BJA supports a project to develop a model community policing program that local law enforcement agencies can test.

Crime and Drug Prevention

OJP also supports a number of crime and drug prevention programs that involve law enforcement officials. BJA supports five Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Regional Training Centers that have trained more than 11,000 State and local law enforcement officials who conduct DARE programs. DARE teaches students ways to resist peer pressure to experiment with and use drugs.

In addition, OJP developed and funds the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign, which sponsors public service drug and crime prevention advertising that features "McGruff, The Crime Dog." The campaign also supports programs that encourage law enforcement/community cooperation in drug and crime prevention and conducts drug demand reduction workshops to teach police chiefs and sheriffs how to institute or improve local drug prevention programs.

Criminal History Record Improvement Program

Accurate and complete criminal history information is critical to the operation of the criminal justice system. OJP, through the Bureau of Justice Statistics, worked with the FBI to implement a 3-year initiative to improve the quality of State criminal history records and to increase the possibility of identifying convicted felons who attempt to purchase firearms. BJS and the FBI developed voluntary reporting standards for State and local law enforcement, and BJS provided funds to a number of States to help them improve their recordkeeping

and to comply with certain voluntary standards. In addition, beginning in 1992, States receiving BJA block grant funds must allocate at least 5 percent of their grant award for the improvement of criminal justice records.

Victims

OJP's Office for Victims of Crime provides Federal leadership, funding, training, and other assistance to help improve the Nation's response to crime victims and their families. With monies from the Crime Victims' Fund—comprised of fines and penalties assessed on convicted, Federal defendants—OVC awards grants to support State crime victim compensation programs and organizations that provide direct services to victims.

OJP also sponsors training for Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials to improve their response to crime victims. Law enforcement personnel also receive specialized training on child abuse investigations and domestic violence cases.

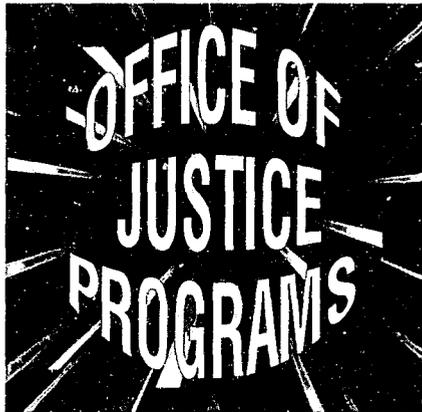
In addition, OJJDP sponsors a series of training programs called Police Operations Leading to Improved Children and Youth Services (POLICY) that help local law enforcement officials improve juvenile justice operations and investigate child abuse cases. OJJDP also works to improve the juvenile justice system's response to crime victims.

Drug Testing

The President's *National Drug Control Strategy* recommends drug

testing as an essential part of drug control efforts. Priority programs in OJP for FY 1991 and FY 1992 included drug testing research and demonstration programs.

NIJ's Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) Program tracks drug use trends among persons charged with serious crimes. Through voluntary and anonymous urine tests and interviews with persons arrested and brought to booking centers in 24 major cities across the country, DUF provides the first objective measure of drug use in this high-risk population. Local decisionmakers use DUF results to help plan and allocate law enforcement, prevention, and treatment resources.



NIJ also conducts research on various drug testing procedures. This includes hair analysis, which can detect drug use that occurred over a longer period of time than urinalysis can detect.

BJA demonstrates a comprehensive drug testing system—from pretrial through parole—in Portland, Oregon. It also works with the American Probation and Parole Association to implement or improve

drug testing programs in probation and parole agencies.

Intermediate Sanctions

OJP helps State and local officials find innovative ways to hold offenders accountable for their crimes while ensuring the public's safety. For example, OJP tests and evaluates a range of intermediate sanctions, such as the expanded use of fines, restitution, community service, home detention, intensive supervision, electronic monitoring, and boot camps.

BJA boot camps in Oklahoma and Illinois provide a highly structured, military-type environment for youthful, nonviolent first offenders. NIJ assesses the effectiveness of these and other programs. In addition, OJJDP provides funds to sites in Mobile, Alabama, Denver, Colorado, and Cleveland, Ohio, to develop and test boot camps for adjudicated, nonviolent offenders under age 18.

OJP also administers the Denial of Federal Benefits Program, which processes notifications from courts that specify that specific drug offenders were denied Federal benefits, including grants, contracts, loans, professional licenses, or commercial licenses. These notifications go to the General Services Administration (for inclusion in the debarment list) and to other Federal agencies.

Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program

OJP's primary program of assistance to State and local law enforcement is through the Edward

Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, which BJA administers. Under this program, State agencies receive these funds in order to issue grants to support State and local programs that address specific drug and crime problems within the State.

Under the program, States set priorities for the use of the funds from among 21 legislatively mandated "purpose" areas created by Congress. These purpose areas include drug use, crime prevention, street-level enforcement, multi-jurisdictional task forces, enhanced prosecution, court delay reduction, correctional programs, intermediate sanctions, treatment for drug-abusing offenders, and victim assistance.

Each State and territory receiving BJA funds prepares, in consultation with State and local drug enforcement officials, a statewide drug control strategy that establishes program priorities based on State and local needs and resources. Each State has its own process for developing the strategy and for consulting with State and local officials. Most States establish drug control advisory boards to aid in this process, and many States conduct public hearings or survey State and local officials. Any law enforcement agency that wishes to participate in this planning process should contact its State planning agency to find out how the process works in its State and how it can receive Federal funds.

Once BJA approves the State's drug control strategy and application and makes the grant award, the State announces the availability of

funds. Most States award a large percentage of their funds on a competitive basis. In FY 1991, 40 percent of BJA funds awarded to the States and territories was used for multijurisdictional law enforcement task forces and street drug sales

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enforcement programs. As a result of these funds, States created over 1,000 multijurisdictional task forces.

The discretionary program funds administered by BJA also support multijurisdictional law enforcement efforts. For example, BJA supports 21 organized crime/drug trafficking enforcement projects that enhance the ability of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to break up major drug trafficking organizations by coordinating investigations and arrest, prosecution, and conviction efforts. In addition, BJA's seven financial investigation programs demonstrate the effectiveness of centrally coordinated, multijurisdictional approach to the investigation and prosecution of drug-related financial crime. The programs trace

drug-related financial transactions, analyze the movement of currency, identify criminal financial structures and money laundering schemes, and use asset forfeiture procedures.

Training and Technical Assistance

OJP supports a wide variety of programs, training, and technical assistance to help law enforcement officials improve the investigation and prosecution of complex criminal cases. For example, BJA sponsors training to help State and local law enforcement officials and prosecutors improve their use of asset seizure and forfeiture laws, which are effective in breaking up major drug trafficking organizations.

The training discusses case law, effective investigative techniques, tracing assets through financial institutions, uncovering hidden assets, and coordinating investigations with other law enforcement agencies. In addition, BJA sponsors training and technical assistance in the use of State civil Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) statutes and other innovative approaches to dismantle drug trafficking organizations.

Other Programs

OJP also administers several other programs of interest to law enforcement officials. The Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) Program helps State and local law enforcement agencies to identify, investigate, and prosecute multi-jurisdictional organized and white-collar crime and drug trafficking. The RISS Program consists of

multistate projects that facilitate the exchange of information on crimes, criminal organizations, and gang migration and provide "buy" money, sophisticated equipment training and technical assistance to Federal, State, and local law enforcement throughout all 50 States.

The Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Program provides funding to State and local government agencies facing law enforcement emergencies, such as natural disasters and serial killings. These types of incidents create an atmosphere of extraordinary public fear and place an undue burden on law enforcement agencies.

NIJ's Technology Assessment Program serves as the criminal justice community's "consumer's guide." Scientists and engineers working under NIJ sponsorship develop minimum performance standards and test technology and equipment used by criminal justice officials against those standards.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides monetary benefits to the eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths result from injuries sustained in the line of duty. PSOB also provides funds to public safety officers who are permanently disabled as the result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

Information Sharing

OJP works to disseminate information regarding its programs, research, evaluation results, and statistical findings to a wide audience. To assist in this effort, OJP supports the National Criminal Justice Refer-

ence Service (NCJRS), a clearinghouse of information and publications concerning OJP programs and other information of interest to the criminal justice community.

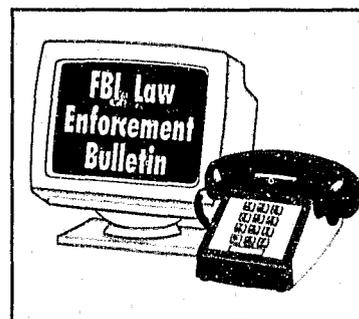
At no charge to users, NCJRS maintains an electronic database with 106,000 information entries and distributes to registered users a bimonthly report on new criminal justice research, programs, and publications. Under contracts with OJP, NCJRS also operates the Drugs and Crime Data Center and Clearinghouse, the BJA Clearinghouse, the Justice Statistics Clearinghouse, the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, the National Victims Resource Center, the AIDS Clearinghouse, and the Corrections Construction Information Exchange.

Conclusion

The Office of Justice Programs exists to assist U.S. law enforcement agencies in combating crime and improving the criminal justice system. However, before agencies can avail themselves of this help, they must determine what programs currently exist and which of these programs might best suit the needs of their respective communities. When local law enforcement agencies join forces with the Federal Government, communities become the winners. ♦

For more information about the Office of Justice Programs, contact the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, Office of Justice Programs, Washington, DC. 20531, 202-307-0781.

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