



# BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet

*Nancy E. Gist, Director*

## National Night Out: A Community-Police Partnership Program

National Night Out provides information, educational materials, and technical assistance for the development of effective year-long community-police partnerships that can reduce crime, violence, and substance abuse at the community level. The program is administered by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW), a nationwide organization dedicated to the development, maintenance, and promotion of community-based, law enforcement-affiliated crime prevention activities.

Coordinated by local law enforcement and trained volunteers, National Night Out events are designed to engage neighborhoods in local crime and drug-abuse prevention activities. National Night Out creates crime prevention awareness in the community through a multitude of local events, such as block parties, cookouts, parades, contests, youth events, and seminars. NATW annually distributes more than 10,000 National Night Out organizational kits that guide residents and law enforcement leaders through the planning and implementation of a community's National Night Out activities. In addition, National Night Out local and national media campaigns generate extensive print and broadcast coverage.

National Night Out generates community support for crime and drug-abuse prevention activities, as well as a high level of community participation. The presence of local law enforcement in the community under the positive circumstances of a National Night Out allows many residents to meet their officers on a one-to-one basis—in many cases for the first time. This opportunity helps to establish a much needed relationship among neighborhood residents and local law enforcement personnel.

National Night Out demonstrates that partnerships and coalitions can be built and nurtured at the community level for the purpose of establishing cost-effective crime control strategies. As a result of National Night Out activities and events, neighborhoods also become involved in related programs, such as Neighborhood Watch, Safe Haven, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

### Program Scope

When first launched by NATW in 1984, the National Night Out program's community-building and crime watch activities involved 2.5 million people in 400 communities in 23 states. Since then, with continued BJA funding, the campaign has vastly expanded. The 16th annual National Night Out, held in 1999, included a record 32 million people representing 9,500 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the 5 U.S. territories, numerous Canadian cities, and U.S. military bases worldwide.

### Project 365

Introduced in 1994, Project 365 is a targeting component of the National Night Out program that helps communities identify specific problem areas and then work to resolve these problems over the next 365 days. The project begins on the annual National Night Out celebration day (the first Tuesday in August) and ends 365 days later. Project 365's first year was extremely successful and it continues to generate an outstanding response from hundreds of communities. Activity highlights include the cleanup of local parks, the removal and prevention of graffiti, the establishment of domestic violence and homeless prevention initiatives, and an

increase in the number of Neighborhood Watch groups and in crime prevention programming in multifamily housing areas.

## Program Objectives

National Night Out's objectives include:

- ❑ Refining the nationwide crime prevention campaign.
- ❑ Identifying and documenting successful crime prevention strategies.
- ❑ Expanding Project 365.
- ❑ Disseminating information about successful community-based strategies.
- ❑ Providing technical assistance by telephone on crime prevention program development.

National Night Out meets these objectives by providing information to as many communities as possible. In 2000 alone, more than 10,000 communities will be contacted for program participation.

## Program Services

NATW offers a number of no-cost services to communities participating in National Night Out. It provides community leaders with "how-to" materials, including program guidelines, a list of questions and answers, camera-ready artwork, tips, suggestions, sample press releases, and a sample National Night Out proclamation. In addition, NATW's trained staff provide technical assistance directly to the community by telephone. Local law enforcement personnel provide onsite technical assistance for Neighborhood or Block Watches.

Finally, NATW assists in preparing postproject reports detailing the National Night Out events and activities. These reports are reviewed and evaluated by NATW for use in national, state, and local presentations; future National Night Out materials; and technical assistance.

## For Further Information

For additional information about National Night Out, contact:

### National Association of Town Watch

1 Wynnewood Road, Suite 102  
P.O. Box 303  
Wynnewood, PA 19096  
1-800-648-3688 or 610-649-7055  
World Wide Web: [www.natw.org](http://www.natw.org)

### Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
1-800-688-4252  
World Wide Web: [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org)

Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask to be placed on the BJA mailing list.

### U.S. Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

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