



Timeline **1968–2003**



1968

Congress passes the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, which creates NIJ (then called the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice), to monitor and support Federally funded criminal justice research intended to help State and local governments improve police, courts, and corrections.

1969

With 35 employees and a budget of \$2.5 million, NIJ begins operations. Awards during the first year encompass several key areas: law enforcement communications systems, crime prevention and rehabilitation, technology, and management and organization of the criminal justice system.

1970

NIJ evaluates methadone maintenance as a means of dealing with drug abuse and related crime.

1971

NIJ establishes the Law Enforcement Standards Laboratory under the auspices of the National Bureau of Standards to begin filling a long-standing need for scientifically based standards for criminal justice equipment.

1972

NIJ begins to fund development of soft body armor for police, an initiative destined to save thousands of officers from serious injury and death in subsequent years.

NIJ-funded research on "defensible space" links the physical design of buildings to neighborhoods' vulnerability and leads to models of crime prevention through urban design.

NIJ launches the National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

With NIJ funding, Marvin Wolfgang's study on delinquency in a birth cohort finds that a small proportion of criminals commit most crime.

1973

Research on jury management shows ways to make trials more efficient, less costly, and less time-consuming for those who serve.

U.S. Parole Commission adopts research-based guidelines for parole decisions; several States follow.

1974

NIJ publishes findings from the Kansas City (Missouri) Preventive Patrol Experiment, which tested the then-common assumption that by driving more or less randomly in a given area, officers in patrol cars prevented crime, made the public feel more secure, and increased the chances of arresting suspects. Study results indicated that preventive patrol did not necessarily prevent crime or reassure the public. Subsequently, many police departments began issuing officers specific proactive assignments.

1975

An NIJ-funded study reveals the difficulties victims face in the criminal justice system; recommended reforms lead to the creation of victim assistance programs nationwide.

1976

Research finds that the time it takes to report a crime—not the speed of the police response—is the major factor influencing the likelihood of arrest.



1977

Research on criminal investigation concludes that the probability of an arrest is largely determined by information obtained by officers first on the crime scene. If specific types of information are not collected at this time, the chances of solving a case remain low, regardless of the intensity of a followup investigation. These findings lead to the identification of “solvability factors,” which become guides for prioritizing followup investigations.

NIJ initiates the crime laboratory proficiency testing program to measure the analytical accuracy of evidence analysis nationwide.

NIJ launches research on alternatives to traditional parole.

1978

NIJ examines new techniques for detecting and identifying explosives.

Under an NIJ grant, more than 300 forensic laboratory specialists are taught how to analyze types of evidence posing the greatest difficulties for forensic examination.

1979

NIJ launches *Crime and Justice*, a scholarly series edited by Michael Tonry and published by the University of Chicago Press.

1980

NIJ funds an experiment in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to explore options for police responses to domestic violence calls.

NIJ publishes findings of research exploring why career criminals so often “beat the system,” prompting the emergence of career criminal prosecution programs.

1981

Results of the NIJ-sponsored Newark, New Jersey, Foot Patrol Experiment are released. This and subsequent experiments focusing on problem-oriented policing tested whether various forms of foot patrol, door-to-door contact, and other positive contacts between police and the community could reduce fear of crime and improve neighborhood life. This research foreshadowed the development of community policing.

1982

“Broken Windows,” by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, appears in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Research shows a link between drug use and crime. The findings set the stage for the 1987 launch of Federal-local partnerships to collect data and measure drug use among arrestees.

1983

Research on pretrial release is published and suggests that an objective method exists to identify which defendants are most likely to appear for trial. Courts begin implementing formal pretrial release guidelines modeled after the original research.

1984

Research finds that the best predictor of success of drug treatment is the length of time one stays in treatment.

Minneapolis experiment indicates that spending the night in jail appears to significantly cut the risk of repeat violence against the same victim, a finding that motivates many police departments to require an arrest in domestic violence situations.

1985

Research on probation in California finds that routine probation provides insufficient punishment for offenders and inadequate protection for the community. This finding helps spur interest in intermediate sanctions (e.g., boot camps, house arrest, intensive supervision, and electronic monitoring).



1986

NIJ begins support for the development of DNA technology applicable to criminal justice.

1987

NIJ initiates the analysis of drug use by arrestees through its Drug Use Forecasting program (renamed the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program in 1998).

1988

NIJ designates white-collar crime as a priority research area. Subsequently, the Institute funds major studies on savings and loan fraud, insurance and securities fraud, money laundering, computer crime, telemarketing fraud, environmental crime, and public corruption.

1989

First drug court is established (in Miami, Florida). NIJ begins an evaluation that eventually shows that drug courts hold promise for reducing drug-related recidivism.

1990

NIJ initiates several efforts to improve DNA testing.  
NIJ and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation join to establish the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, which begins examining the social development of 7,000 individuals from birth to age 24 and gauging influences on delinquency and crime.

1991

NIJ provides technical assistance to expand private sector involvement in prison industries programs.

1992

Research confirms a "cycle of violence," in which abused, neglected children are more likely to become involved in later criminal behavior.

1993

The first "Three Strikes" laws are enacted.  
*Understanding and Preventing Violence* is released. This report from the National Academy of Sciences lays the groundwork for the next decade of research at NIJ on violence and victimization.

1994

NIJ creates a system of regional technology centers (the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Centers) to respond to the need for technology information and assistance.  
Congress passes the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.



1995

NIJ initiates major research and evaluation efforts in program areas included in the 1994 Crime Act—community policing, violence against women, sentencing and corrections, and drug courts.

1996

NIJ awards funds to enhance State and local DNA laboratory processing capabilities, publishes a report documenting case studies in which DNA evidence presented after trial led to the release of inmates convicted of violent felonies, and sponsors a national conference on the future of DNA evidence.

NIJ issues the first annual report to Congress on stalking and domestic violence.

1997

NIJ establishes the Crime Mapping Research Center and the International Center.

NIJ publishes *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*.

*Science* magazine publishes findings on the influence of neighborhoods based on research from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods.

1998

At the request of the Attorney General, NIJ forms the National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence, leading to a series of recommendations on the use of DNA in the criminal justice system.

1999

In collaboration with other agencies, NIJ works with policymakers, judges, and correctional officials to address challenges posed by the reentry of prisoners into communities.

NIJ prepares guidelines on crime scene investigation, death investigation, and eyewitness evidence using expert panels to identify best practices.

2000

NIJ publishes the 4-volume series *Criminal Justice 2000*, essays on current and emerging trends in criminal justice.

The National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence produces a pocket guide on collecting DNA evidence at crime scenes. Copies are printed for every sworn law enforcement officer in the Nation.

Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey, co-sponsored by NIJ and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, show that more than half of surveyed women reported being physically assaulted at some point in their lives, and nearly two-thirds of women who reported being raped, assaulted, or stalked were victimized by intimate partners.

2001

NIJ responds to the 9-11 attacks with onsite assistance, including search and rescue tools and technology and protective gear. NIJ speeds up production of equipment guides for first responders.

NIJ develops a technique to distinguish between crack and powder cocaine use in test subjects.

2002

Six cities are found to have reduced firearms violence through action research initiated by NIJ.

Ground-breaking research provides the first comprehensive national look at rape and sexual assault on college campuses.

NIJ reports to Congress on the viability of using various less-lethal weapons aboard commercial aircraft as a means of thwarting an onboard attack.

2003

NIJ completes a comprehensive report to the Attorney General on the extent and causes of delays in analyzing DNA evidence. Six report recommendations become the foundation of "Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology," the President's DNA initiative.

NIJ sponsors the development of biometrics as a tool for security and criminal justice. Face and iris recognition technologies are tested in prisons and schools.

A trainer's manual on eyewitness evidence is released. The manual presents effective techniques for interviewing witnesses and conducting lineups.