



COPS Fact Sheet

Community Oriented Policing Services

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Anti-Gang Initiative

Crime rates — and most notably violent crime rates — are dropping across the nation. But there is one disturbing trend: youth violence is on the increase, in big cities and smaller towns. In particular, gangs associated with criminal activity have extended their dangerous reach, bringing with them violence, drug involvement, delinquency, destruction of property, and other public safety threats.

Police chiefs and sheriffs credit the innovative strategies of community policing with bringing about these dramatic reductions in crime. The COPS Office was established under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to fund 100,000 community policing officers to our nation's streets. Last year, the COPS office launched its Youth Firearms Violence Initiative, which funded targeted enforcement strategies to curb the rise of youth firearms violence in ten cities. Building on this effort, the COPS Anti-Gang Initiative is another element of the Clinton Administration's comprehensive assault on the vexing problem of youth violence. The COPS Anti-Gang Initiative will bring the most effective community policing strategies to 15 communities on the front lines of the battle against gangs.

Community Policing Efforts

Gangs pose many threats to the communities they invade — drive-by shootings, murders, high-level drug sales, as well as threats, intimidation, and graffiti — all bringing fear to neighborhoods and homes. There are many proven strategies in support of community policing that can have a profound impact on a city's gang problem. For example, police can focus on gang infiltration of public housing, direct attention to both chronic and first-time offenders, and patrol "hot spots." Other communities have targeted known gang gathering places and work to prevent at-risk youth from joining gangs. Still other approaches use civil enforcement remedies against gangs, use

environmental design to reduce gang activity, target witness protection and anti-intimidation efforts, and mobilize neighborhoods, schools, churches, synagogues and community organizations to strengthen efforts to keep kids in school and out of trouble with the law. The COPS Anti-Gang Initiative will use these and other strategies to confront gang-related problems and to test innovative approaches.

- Fifteen jurisdictions have been invited to participate in this initiative: Austin, TX; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Jersey City, NJ; Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles, CA, area multi-agency partnership; Miami, FL; Oakland, CA; Orange County, CA, multiagency partnership; Phoenix, AZ; Salt Lake City, UT; and St. Louis, MO.
- The COPS Office will work directly with these agencies to craft innovative strategies, track and evaluate their implementation, and share results and successes with the many other communities confronting similar challenges.
- Up to \$11 million will be allotted to the participants based on population levels. The grants will run for one year. No local match of funds will be required for this program.

For more information, call the Response Center at 1-800-421-6770 or visit the COPS web site at:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/cops/>