- Providing continued support to the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council, the national voice for State and local public safety communications issues.
- Managing a grant to the Capital Wireless Integrated Network, which is creating the first multi-State, interjurisdictional integrated wireless network in the United States.

For more information:

- Visit the AGILE Web site at http://www.agileprogram.org.

Protecting Communities

NIJ continued to explore strategies for keeping communities safe in 2002 by giving communities evidence-based knowledge, innovative methods, and other tools to help reduce crime and protect citizens.

Reducing firearms violence

Projects in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and St. Louis have shown some success in targeting and reducing youth gun violence. These six cities operated local projects designed to reduce firearm-related violence and were funded by NIJ, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Lessons learned from these projects are chronicled in a series of publications on reducing gun violence. The first one described Boston's Operation Ceasefire. The second described the Indianapolis Police Department's Directed Patrol Project, which showed that targeted patrol efforts can significantly reduce violent crime. One area of the city, the East District, increased officer contact with citizens, primarily through increased traffic enforcement. The North District increased officer contact only with targeted individuals who police suspected of being involved in illegal activities. The North District issued far fewer citations, but made twice as many arrests per vehicle stopped and discovered three times as many guns per stop compared to the East District.

Each subsequent report in the series will describe in detail the problem targeted; the program designed to address it; the problems confronted in designing, implementing, and evaluating the effort; and the strategies adopted in responding to any obstacles encountered.

For more information:

- Edmund F. McGarrell, Steven Chermak, and Alexander Weiss, *Reducing Gun Violence: Evaluation of the Indianapolis Police Department's Directed Patrol Project*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, November 2002 (NCJ 188740), http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/188740.htm.

A particular problem in responding to gang-related violence is the lack of valid baseline data on gang incidents. Without accurate information on when and where gang crimes occur, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-gang strategies.

Understanding gangs and gang-related crime

Concern about gang-related homicide and violence has reemerged in the last few years. For example, Los Angeles has witnessed a spike in gang-related homicide. Police suspect that more than half of their 658 homicides in 2002 were gang-related. A particular problem in responding to gang-related violence is the lack of valid baseline data on gang incidents. Without accurate information on when and where gang crimes occur, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-gang strategies.

In 2002, NIJ completed research on a regional gang incident tracking system developed in Orange County, California, using geographic information systems (GIS) technology. The system was designed to present a clearer picture of the nature and scope of gang crime and to better track the success of prevention and control efforts.

The research found that the gang incident tracking system presents a relatively unbiased and complete picture of gang incidents handled by the police and that police are not overestimating gang-related crime in Orange County, as some suspected. Instead, the research found that law enforcement agencies tended to underreport gang incidents to the tracking database.

The police logged an average of 3,000 gang-related incidents yearly between 1994 and 2000; about half of these were violent offenses, followed in frequency by vandalism/graffiti, weapons violations, property crimes, and narcotics sales. Trends in the timing and nature of incidents were found, providing a valuable tool to law enforcement and others developing prevention and enforcement strategies.

Other gang studies completed by NIJ covered topics such as gang prevention, female involvement in gangs, youth gang violence problem solving, and links between gangs and organized crime.

For more information:

n Winifred L. Reed and Scott H. Decker, eds., *Responding to Gangs: Evaluation and Research*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, July 2002 (NCJ 190351), http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/190351.htm.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a comprehensive, multiagency problem-solving Federal initiative designed to reduce firearms violence in each of the 94 U.S. Attorney districts nationwide. Taking the most successful elements of deterrence-based programs in Boston, Richmond, and 10 Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) cities, PSN represents a "new way of doing business" for most criminal justice officials. For this reason, training and technical assistance is critical to the successful implementation of the PSN initiative. As a result, NIJ awarded a grant in 2002 to create a "Project Safe Neighborhoods Academy" to provide this research-based training and assistance.

Goals of the PSN academy include:

n Conducting regional training programs for PSN task forces and their research partners.

n Producing online training modules to support the regional training and manage an online help desk and information clearinghouse.

n Establishing a national cadre of researchers and practitioners with expertise in the problem-solving model to provide technical assistance to the PSN sites as needed.

n Developing a database of common enforcement and intervention activities, measurement instruments, and violence indicator measures.

n Conducting case studies to identify lessons learned and promising approaches.

n Coordinating activities among all the PSN partners and providing frequent feedback to them on all aspects of academy activities and findings.

Helping Knowledge Travel Faster, Farther

Redesigning NIJ's print and electronic products

In 2002, NIJ improved its communications with the public by revising the way it writes and presents its publications. NIJ placed greater emphasis on clear, concise writing with a greater use of plain language and less use of jargon and technical terms. Products more clearly state the relevance of the findings, and distribution is better tailored to specific audiences of State and local practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

Part of the redesign involved changing the format of the printed documents and the appearance of the Web. Complementary changes were made in the look of CD covers, seminar flyers, conference materials, and other items.

Reaching out electronically

NIJ took steps in 2002 to become better equipped to reach its audience electronically. Through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), NIJ main-

tains a list of registered users—individuals who have asked to receive NIJ materials and have supplied their areas of interest, organizational affiliation, job description, and address. By the end of 2002, 70 percent of NIJ's 39,000 registered users had provided an email address in addition to a regular mailing address. More and more of NIJ's audience was equipped and willing to receive information electronically instead of through paper copy.

Spreading research results

Findings from NIJ research have always been available through the archives and searchable database at NCJRS. In 2002, NIJ took steps to make all final reports prepared by its grantees available online at the NCJRS Web site. In addition, work began on scanning past grantee final reports so that they too are available electronically.

For more information:

n Visit the NCJRS Web site, http://www.ncjrs.org.

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