

Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces

Defining the Issue

A multi-jurisdictional task force is a cooperative law enforcement effort involving two or more criminal justice agencies, with jurisdiction over two or more areas, sharing the common goal of addressing drug control or violent crime problems. These task forces allow law enforcement agencies in different jurisdictions to work together as a single enforcement entity with the ability to improve communication, share intelligence and coordinate activities. This allows for more efficient use of resources and targeting of offenders whose activities cross jurisdictional boundaries. Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces have proven extremely successful in preventing and responding to drugs and violent crime across the nation.

A number of mechanisms have been found to enhance the success of these task forces. They include:

- ✓ Good communication - among participating agencies, between the task force and the community and between the task force and nonparticipating agencies.
- ✓ An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the problem the task force intends to address.
- ✓ Prosecutorial involvement. A prosecutor with designated prosecutorial time allocated for the purpose of prosecuting task force cases is critical to the success of these task forces and should be involved as an active member of the task force.

State Examples

Arizona- The Arizona Counter Narcotics Alliance (CNA) is comprised of 18 participating agencies focusing on drug and anti-terrorism enforcement efforts. In 2006, the CNA disrupted/dismantled 81 drug trafficking organizations, six methamphetamine labs and three money laundering operations. In addition, the Alliance seized over \$3 million in assets and made over 1,400 arrests. The CNA was also instrumental in developing new protocols for responding to property contaminated by drug labs and reduced incidents of meth-related crime by 30 percent.

Iowa - Multi-jurisdictional drug task forces are the largest, single program funded by the Iowa Office of Drug Control Policy and are considered the cornerstone drug enforcement unit throughout Iowa. Over 200 agencies participate in Iowa task forces and in SFY 2007 these task forces seized illegal and diverted drugs valued at more than \$31 million and netted over 2,000 criminal convictions. Task force investigations routinely result in individual and family referrals to substance abuse treatment, protective services for children affected by drug involved caregivers and other types of human services necessary to rehabilitate the lives of people adversely affected by substance abuse.



Mississippi - Prior to Byrne/JAG funding, there were no organized drug task forces in the state. During the FY 2007 program year, the City of Meridian, East MS Narcotics Task Force with 11 staff conducted 817 felony drug investigations, prosecuted 197 defendants and instituted forfeiture on 40 vehicles valued at \$200,000 and seized \$4.9 million.

South Carolina - Taskforce investigations resulted in 1,302 arrests, confiscation of large quantities of narcotics, and the seizure of assets worth over \$2,510,000. This included 40 vehicles, 99 weapons and over \$321,000 in cash. The funded taskforces involved a prosecutor's office, three sheriff's offices and nine local agencies who worked closely with federal agencies. The narcotics taskforces pooled human resources, equipment, knowledge and expertise to attack the distribution of illicit drugs by dissolving the jurisdictional barriers that often exist during investigations. At monthly governing board meetings, case progress, funding needs and significant developments are discussed. Specialized training for officers is regularly provided.

Hawaii - The Hawaii Narcotics Task Force seized 11,330 grams of crystal methamphetamine, 9,874 grams of cocaine, 386 grams of heroin, and 77,536 grams of marijuana. A total of 1,824 arrests were made, and 61 weapons were seized. The Statewide Marijuana Eradication Task Force seized 2,690 marijuana plots and 33 indoor marijuana grows in which 140,065 plants were destroyed. A total of 676 arrests were made and 48 weapons were confiscated.