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## Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Receives \$500,000 Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant

***Grant to Enhance the Ability of Local, State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies  
to Reduce Gun and Gang Related Violence in Arizona***

**Phoenix, AZ, Wednesday, September 10, 2014** – Today, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) announced that it has been awarded a \$500,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance under the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Program which is designed to create safer neighborhoods through a sustained reduction in crime associated with gang and gun violence.

“I am extremely pleased that Arizona was chosen to receive this PSN grant to further the work that we are doing here to address gun and gang related violence,” said John A. Blackburn, Jr., Executive Director of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission. “To be one of only eight states chosen to receive a 2014 PSN grant shows that the work of our partner agencies to promote best practice criminal justice models is being recognized nationally.”

The Project Safe Neighborhoods Program's effectiveness is based on the cooperation of local, state, and federal agencies engaged in a unified approach led by the U.S. Attorney in the District of the State of Arizona. The goal is to support collaborative strategic partnerships; data-driven identification; community-based prevention and intervention, as well as intelligence and university-based research analysis in order to reduce violent crime at the gang, individual and neighborhood level.

“We are exceptionally pleased with the award - this significant grant will allow us to continue with our Project Safe Neighborhoods efforts here in the District of Arizona,” said U.S. Attorney John S. Leonardo. “This new program will employ previously proven methods for successfully addressing gun and gang violence and will provide important statistical insight into better ways to police and serve the communities.”

The U.S. Attorney is responsible for establishing a collaborative PSN task force composed of federal, state, and local law enforcement and other community members to implement violent gang and gun crime enforcement, intervention and prevention initiatives within the district. Project Safe Neighborhoods Partner Organizations Include:

US Attorney's Office	Phoenix Police Department
Maricopa County Attorney	Maricopa Adult Probation
Maricopa Juvenile Probation	Silent Witness
Arizonans for Gun Safety	Arizona Common Ground
Rocky Mountain Information Network	ASU-Center for Violence Prevention &
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission	Community Safety

*(continued)*

“This program presents a unique opportunity to partner with fellow law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders to develop effective strategies for reducing unlawful use of guns, associated violence, and gang-related crimes,” said Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “We believe this approach will ultimately result in improved public safety for the residents we serve.”

Through the PSN task force, the U.S. Attorney will implement the five design features of PSN – partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach, and accountability – to address specific gun crime and gang violence problems in that district. More specifically the objectives include:

**Objective 1** – Improve law enforcement investigative efforts by collecting and sharing intelligence data on gang and gun crime to reduce gun violence and crime.

**Objective 2** – Increase penalties for gang and gun crime.

**Objective 3** – Increase law enforcement and prosecutor knowledge to effectively implement gun and gang violence reduction strategies.

**Objective 4** – Increase awareness among those engaging in gang and gun crime on the consequences of their violent behavior and increase the availability of resources to them to promote violence-free behavior.

**Objective 5** – Increase awareness among the public on how they can help prevent gun violence.

"The Phoenix Police Department continues to focus our enforcement efforts on gangs, guns and drugs as part of our policing plan to reduce violent crimes in the City of Phoenix," explained Phoenix Police Chief Daniel Garcia. "The collaborative relationships created by this grant, the resulting crime analysis and the inclusion of research-based practices will enhance our policing mission."

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*Created in 1982, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. The ACJC serves as a resource and service organization for Arizona's criminal justice community on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs and victim assistance to criminal history, and crime laboratory enhancements.*