

## **SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

### **2007 Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units**

The Bureau of Justice Statistics proposes to conduct a nationwide census of all law enforcement gang units operating within police agencies of 100 or more officers. The Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units (LEGU) is a data collection effort corresponding with the Attorney General's initiative for the enhancement of knowledge regarding gang prevention and anti-gang enforcement. Specifically the project will provide information about how law enforcement agencies are organized to deal with gangs and the kinds of gang prevention tactics that are employed. The focus will be on the operations, workload, policies, and procedures of special police units staffed with full-time personnel that deal primarily with gang activity.

#### **A. Justification**

##### **1. Necessity of Information Collection**

Under Title 42, United States Code, Section 3732 (see Attachment A), the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is directed to collect and analyze statistical information concerning the operation of the criminal justice system at the Federal, State and local levels. As gang activity continues to be a problem across the nation there is a need for empirical data on the gang prevention and anti-gang enforcement strategies utilized by those law enforcement agencies with specialized gang units.

One of the current top priorities for the Attorney General and the Department of Justice is the development of more effective programs to prevent gang violence and enforce anti-gang laws when such violence does occur. Law enforcement agencies are often the first line of response to the gang problems experienced across the country and are a critical component of the anti-gang initiative. There is, however, very little information regarding how law enforcement agencies nationwide are organized to deal with gangs and the types of gang prevention tactics they employ. Based on the most recent available data from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) program, it is estimated that approximately 450 large law enforcement agencies (those with 100 or more officers) have specialized units staffed with full-time personnel whose primary focus is on gang activity. This data collection effort will focus on the operations, workload, policies, and procedures of these gang units in order to expand knowledge of law enforcement gang prevention and enforcement tactics. The collection of summary measures of gang activity in the agencies' jurisdictions will produce a standardized metric for comparing jurisdictions.

Police are the primary consumers of information about how law enforcement agencies are responding to the continuing threat of gang violence. The 2007 LEGU will provide information about law enforcement gang prevention activities on a National scale to be used by both law enforcement agencies with existing gang units as well as those agencies considering the merits of establishing a specialized gang unit.

## 2. Needs and Uses

The 2007 Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units is essential in light of the Attorney General's anti-gang initiative and the lack of nationwide data on police activities related to gang prevention and anti-gang enforcement. The 2007 Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units will provide State and local law enforcement agencies with much needed comprehensive data on the organization, operations, workload, policies and procedures of specialized law enforcement gang units. The data collected will be used by Department of Justice officials, both law enforcement agencies with already established gang units and those considering creating such a unit, State and local officials, and researchers on topics ranging from the organization of police agencies to law enforcement reaction to gang problems. This survey is the only source of this essential information on a National scale. If these data are not collected, a serious gap will exist in our knowledge of the handling of the gang problem at the State and local levels.

## 3. Use of Technology to Minimize Burden

The goal of the Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units will be to use electronic data collection methods for at least 15% of the surveyed gang units. In an effort to minimize respondents' burden, the data collection plan allows for the respondent to submit data in an automated or manual form. Respondents will be mailed questionnaires but will be encouraged to complete online data collection forms for this survey. If internet access is not available, respondents will have the option of completing the data collection forms on a laptop or desktop computer and sending these files back to the collection agent in a diskette. For law enforcement agencies that are not equipped to transmit the data electronically, the survey will be completed manually and mailed to the project monitor. We anticipate that 85% of the agencies should fall into this category.

In addition to exploring electronic data collection opportunities, publications from the 2007 Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units will be generated in both printed *and* electronic formats and will be available on the BJS webpage. Moreover, the data from the LEGU will be available for public use at the University of Michigan Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

## 4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

No other governmental or private organization collects nationwide comprehensive information on indigent defense services. To identify possible duplication of effort, BJS consulted with other agencies within the Office of Justice Programs, including the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

## 5. Efforts to minimize burden

In an effort to minimize respondent's burden, the data collection plan allows for respondents to submit data in an automated or manual format. The data collected are readily available from current reporting and record keeping practices of its respondents.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

There has not been a previous census of gang units operating within large law enforcement agencies. Therefore, there is no current information regarding the operations, workload, staffing, procedures, policies or tactics of these gang units on a National scale.

7. Special Circumstances that would Increase Respondent Burden

None. There are no special circumstances that would require a respondent to report more than once, report in less than 30 days, retain records over three years, or in any other foreseeable way increase the respondents' burden to provide information.

8. Adherence to 5 CFR 1320.8(d) and Outside Consultations

BJS has consulted with researchers and practitioners with specialized knowledge of gangs and gang violence prevention. Some of the specialists who were consulted include social scientists, State and local law enforcement officers, members of gang investigator associations, and government officials.

BJS has published the 60 day and 30 day notices in the Federal register to inform and seek comment from the public. No comments were received.

During the development of the survey, the following persons were consulted:

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9. Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents

Not applicable. The Bureau will not provide any payment or gift of any type to respondents. Respondents participate on a voluntary basis.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The data collected will detail characteristics, policies and procedures for publicly funded law enforcement gang units and are, therefore, in the public domain and not subject to confidentiality guarantees. All data, except for names of respondents, are available for public use.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no questions of a sensitive nature. Information is requested on the organization, workload and general policies and tactics utilized by law enforcement gang units.

12. Estimate of Respondent Burden

The Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units questionnaire will be sent to the approximately 450 gang units operating within law enforcement agencies of 100 or more officers across the country. Each agency/unit will be asked to respond once. The average time required for each jurisdiction is 1.0 hours, with the respondent burden estimated at 450 hours. The estimated burden was derived from past experience with surveys of similar complexity.

13. Estimate of Respondent's Cost Burden

This data collection will require only information that is already generated and maintained by the respondents. BJS does not foresee additional costs to respondents other than the time spent filling out the questionnaire.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The total annual cost to the Federal government for this survey is estimated at \$330,816 and is described below. The total cost to the Government includes \$215,276 for work performed by the grantee, which will be funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and \$115,540 for work at BJS, the cost of which will be borne by BJS.

<u>Cost estimate summary</u>
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<b>BJS Costs</b>	
Salary (50% GS-14 & GS-09 Statistician)	\$68,000
Benefits @ 33%	\$22,440
Travel	\$5,000
Equipment and supplies	\$1,500
Consultants and contacts	\$5,000
Other costs	\$0
Indirect costs @ 20%	\$13,600
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$115,540</b>
Collection Costs (grantee)	\$215,276
<b>Total cost to government</b>	<b>\$330,816</b>

15. Reason for Change in Burden

New collection.

16. Publication Plans and Schedule

Information collected from the Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units will be reported in several Bureau of Justice Statistics reports. The data then will be made available to the public through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, operated by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

The questionnaires for the Survey of Law Enforcement Gang Units will be mailed out in December of 2007. The data collection period will continue for six months and will include the opportunity for follow-up telephone calls and faxes to non-respondents. Data is scheduled to be delivered to BJS by September 2008. Analysis of the information and preparation of the various reports by BJS will be completed by January 2009. After the publication of the BJS reports, the data will be archived at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.

17. Display of Expiration Date

The expiration date will be shown on the survey form.

18. Exception to the Certificate Statement

None. There are no exceptions identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.