

Office of Highway Safety and Justice
Programs



south carolina
DEPARTMENT *of* **PUBLIC SAFETY**
PROTECT. EDUCATE. SERVE.

Justice Programs:
Multijurisdictional Task
Force Grant
Application Tool

Foreword

This document is provided for law enforcement officials who are assessing their present progress in combating illicit drug and/or violent crime activity and have come to the conclusion that there is potential for greater success if law enforcement agencies coordinate their resources (i.e. time, manpower, equipment, funds, intelligence, etc.). This introduction is provided by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, Office of Highway Safety and Justice Programs, to facilitate an understanding of the intent of Multijurisdictional Task Forces and some of the key elements that must be present. Although the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) mandates that certain components be present before federal funding is provided, BJA also recognizes the need for each task force to tailor or adapt their policies and procedures to formulate the appropriate strategy to better address drug and violent crime activity within the region of expected task force operation. The result most anticipated from the formation of a task force is increased coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

The advantages of implementing a MJTF are many and can very easily make a case for the creation of one in any region with violent crime and drug problems. First, MJTFs concentrate their efforts on mid to high-level criminal organizations that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Second, displacement is no longer an issue when adjacent law enforcement agencies pool their efforts and resources to deal with crime problems which frequently move from one jurisdiction to another. Third, law enforcement agencies can avoid wasting resources which occurs when agencies duplicate efforts on the same offenders, sites, or operations. This also greatly reduces the risk of endangering law enforcement officers which occurs when efforts are not coordinated. Fourth, law enforcement agencies can provide mutual aid by providing additional intelligence, offender records, equipment, expertise, training, manpower and planning operations. In addition, MJTFs, which are organized in cooperation with state or federal agencies have access to individuals with specialized skills, alternate venues of prosecution (state and federal) and advanced investigative techniques (wiretaps or financial records). They can also provide on-the-job training, since these officers historically tend to have more advanced credentials and experience in complex investigations. By accomplishing all of this, MJTFs can make solid cases against the high-level criminal organizations within their regions.

Since the task force establishes its own identity, this implies that it should have its own central office and administrative staff headed by a municipality or county law enforcement agency. The success of a task force seems to rely on the formation of a true, separate and distinct entity which operates through the pooling of manpower, equipment, intelligence and other pertinent resources. Success will also rely heavily upon the governing board of the task force and its commitment to ensuring full implementation of the project. The governing board will be composed of representatives from each agency participating in the MJTF, as well as a representative from the prosecuting agency and will meet at least once a month. At these meetings, the lead agency presents case progress reports including additional funding requests, significant developments or changes and problems.

The overall objective of a MJTF is to identify, investigate and prosecute members of mid or high-level criminal organizations that participate in illicit drug distribution, street sales, financial backing, crop cultivation, manufacturing, diversion, importation, violent crime, money laundering, official corruption and/or gang activity.

The formation of a MJTF must be implemented in three stages. The first stage is the creation stage in which a problem is identified upon which the MJTF will focus its efforts. This problem statement should address the current criminal activities occurring within the MJTF's region and other related crime problems they may be causing. It should also indicate the current efforts being used to address the problem and analyze gathered intelligence concerning crime patterns and criminal records. During this stage, the funding and mechanics should be determined, cooperation from concerned agencies should be obtained, a tentative organizational structure should be formulated and a reasonable but definite time frame for the duration of the task force should be documented. A written interagency agreement should also be drafted during this stage to document the establishment, agreements and operating procedures of the MJTF. This agreement will outline the strategic plans of the MJTF to include such matters as lead agency for the MJTF; names of the other agencies involved; number of agents involved; process for sharing forfeited assets among participating agencies; annual training requirement; name of the prosecutorial liaison; process for implementing the MJTF; plan for evaluation of task force procedures, operations and effectiveness; type of offender(s) being targeted by the MJTF; press relations/assigning credit for cases; arrest powers and jurisdiction of participating agencies; etc. If this stage is planned poorly, the MJTF will eventually fail. The second stage deals with the activation of the MJTF and usually takes approximately six months. This stage involves receiving and disbursing funds, recruiting and hiring personnel, formulating operating procedures, procurement of equipment and conducting planning and operational meetings. The third and final stage of implementation is the maturation stage. This stage involves establishing the operational procedures, training personnel, initiating regular meetings, developing an intelligence database and network, monitoring the MJTF and its activities and monitoring the status of the problems which called for the initiation of the MJTF. This stage usually takes approximately one and a half years.

In addition, a prosecutorial liaison will be identified and assigned to the MJTF. The assignment of a prosecutorial liaison will be from the judicial circuit or the S.C. Attorney General's Office. This prosecutor will participate in the planning of investigations and in the day-to-day operations of the MJTF. He or she will also handle civil proceedings to expedite asset seizures into forfeitures for the MJTF, facilitate the expeditious handling of cases, act as legal counsel for the MJTF, keep members apprised of changes in legal opinions or criminal procedures, conduct training sessions on report writing and courtroom testimony and assist members in developing uniform guidelines for working with confidential informants.

Preface

This section is intended to provide guidance to the applicant on the content expected in select programmatic sections of the grant application. Information provided by the applicant on each subject area should be applicable to their particular project and should be tailored to meet the needs of the community in which the program would be implemented. However, the applicant is invited to utilize the “Standard Examples” provided in this document when applicable.

Problem Statement

- Specific and current information from your jurisdiction must be included in this section.

The Problem Statement presents the reason that you are applying for the grant. (It **should not** include what you will do with the grant funds).

1) Discuss the **actual problem that exists** in the participating jurisdictions.

Talk about the nature of the problem and include any background information that helps to explain the difficulties.

- Population and economic level of area, unemployment rate, etc.
- Specific and serious criminal incidents that have recently occurred
- Include any data/statistics that support your statements (from past 2-3 yrs.)
 - Crime rates of participating jurisdictions
 - Calls for service/incident reports
 - Breakdown of overall caseloads (numbers, type)
 - Number of drug-related or violent crime cases investigated
 - Case clearance rates
 - Prosecutorial rates and convictions

2) The second part will discuss the current resources and existing efforts being made to address the problem.

- Explain what resources (personnel/equipment) your jurisdictions are currently using to address the problems and why they are insufficient.
- Review the efforts being made by participating agencies and any community/citizen groups to address the problems noted above.
- If the grant application is for a continuation grant, information should be taken from the Progress Reports to show progress of the project.
- Provide information on whether or not funding has been requested from your municipal/county governments and results (i.e. partial funding received, funds not available in current budget or request denied)

Project Purpose

The Project Purpose states the broad goals of the project and a specific plan that will be followed.

- 1) The Goals state the purpose of the grant project in general terms.
- 2) The Plan discusses what activities will be done to achieve the goals. This is basically an overview of what will take place over the entire grant year. Include all duties and responsibilities, such as hiring grant-funded personnel, purchasing equipment, the training plan for officers assigned the equipment, and the tasks that will be undertaken.

Project Objectives – Standard Example

1. Increase the arrest and conviction of high-level drug traffickers through identification, dismantling money laundering operations and enabling the government to seize assets and profits derived from high-level drug trafficking.
2. Improve grant-funded MJTF member investigative techniques.
3. Strengthen cases against mid-or-high-level illicit drug traffickers, dealers and users through the use of surveillance equipment.
4. Increase the quantity of drugs and assets seized by targeting, arresting and prosecuting high-level drug distributors, street-level dealers and street-level users.
5. Increase coordination and cooperation among law enforcement and criminal justice agencies through the development of a written interagency agreement to document the establishment, agreements and operating procedures of the MJTF and through monthly meetings of the governing board.
6. Facilitate the processing of MJTF cases through criminal and civil courts.
7. Develop the capacity to conduct multijurisdictional investigations involving agencies in addition to project-funded agencies during the grant period.

Performance Indicators – Standard Example

1. A record will be kept of all cases that have been initiated and all the individuals that have been arrested and prosecuted, including all cases in which financial techniques or tax laws were used to arrest and prosecute high-level drug traffickers, dismantle money laundering operations, or enabled the task force to seize assets or profits derived from illegal activities.
2. All grant-funded MJTF task force members and other personnel funded by a JAG grant should attend training courses during the grant year. Documentation of training will be maintained by the Project Director.
3. Data will be maintained on cases documented with surveillance equipment. The Project Director will maintain control of surveillance equipment through a log or other mechanism and will coordinate with the Solicitor's Office on the impact that video or audio tapes have on plea agreements or during jury trials.
4. A record of the quantities and types of drugs seized will be kept.
5. A written interagency agreement will be developed, signed by all agencies involved, to document the establishment, agreements, and operating procedures of the MJTF. A copy of the signed interagency agreement will be maintained by the lead agency, the agencies involved, and the funding agency. A list of governing board members and minutes of monthly governing board meetings will be kept by the lead agency and will be attached to bi-annual progress reports.
6. A prosecutorial liaison will be appointed to monitor the criminal investigations conducted by the MJTF, to ensure expeditious handling of cases and to guarantee that proper legal procedures are being followed. He or she will also handle civil proceedings to expedite asset seizures into forfeitures. A record will be maintained documenting his or her involvement in all cases.
7. The MJTF commander will keep a record of all investigations involving agencies IN ADDITION to the project-funded agencies. This will include the name of the agency, the names of the agents involved and the extent of their involvement.

Project Evaluation – Standard Example

- The purpose of the project evaluation is to assess how well the project was implemented and the extent to which the project activities achieved the stated goals. The results of the completed evaluation should be a major basis on which to modify and improve the project's goals and objectives to more effectively address drug crimes.

- The evaluation plan must describe how the evaluation will be accomplished and the range of activities that will serve as vehicles for obtaining general qualitative and specific quantitative information. Special attention should be given to identifying the lessons learned during key stages of the implementation process, as well as the project as a whole. The plan should state who will gather what data and how often and by what process decision-makers will decide if adjustments need to be made in either the methods or objectives.

- An acceptable plan will include such elements as the following:
 1. The evaluation of this grant will be conducted by the Project Director, who will compile information on all cases initiated, closed, dropped and active, along with arrest information by type of offense and by drug-related activity. The Project Director will maintain asset seizure and forfeiture records. Data will be compiled on types and quantities of drugs seized and marijuana eradicated as the seizures occur. The Project Director will compile data on convictions and other dispositions of cases by drug offense and by drug-related activity. The Project Director and the prosecutorial liaison will jointly assess the quality of investigations made by the MJTF, evaluate the overall effectiveness of meetings held to discuss cases and ensure that changes in the state law with respect to narcotics enforcement are communicated to all MJTF members. The Project Director will maintain records of participation by state and federal agencies. Comparisons between current and past statistics will be made through this compilation of data in order to determine progress.
 2. The Project Director will document all training received.
 3. Records of all meetings will be kept and reviewed by the Project Director to determine what, if any, changes or additions need to be made.
 4. The Project Director will compile and submit progress reports.

Attachments

1. Inter-agency agreement should be attached (copy can be requested from OHSJP)
2. Letters of support from each agency participating in the task force should also be attached