



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of New York

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## **SYRACUSE - ONE OF NINE IN THE NATION TO RECEIVE FUNDING TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE**

**Albany, New York** – United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced today that the Syracuse community has received one of only nine grants awarded nationally from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Violent Gang and Gun Crime Reduction Program. Under the Department of Justice’s Project Safe Neighborhoods Program, the grant will provide \$300,000 to fund “Syracuse Truce,” an innovative collaboration between law enforcement and community service agencies to reduce gun crime and gang violence and diminish tension between law enforcement and the community. Syracuse Truce will be implemented with the assistance of the Rosamond Gifford Foundation.

Since 2001, the Department of Justice’s Project Safe Neighborhoods Program has sought to reduce gun and gang crime in America by forming partnerships to enhance local programs and provide them with additional tools necessary to be successful. Approximately \$2 billion has been committed to this nationwide initiative. In Syracuse, the partnership of law enforcement agencies and community leaders has included establishment of a gang violence task force, collaboration of federal and local officials to review and prepare gun cases for prosecution in the most appropriate forum, federal prosecution of members of 7 gangs in Syracuse since 2003, and education and prevention efforts. The success of this partnership has demonstrated the need for and provided the opportunity afforded by this grant.

Syracuse Truce involves focused deterrence by integrating the community message that gun and gang violence will not be tolerated with offers of assistance to reduce criminal activity. In addition to day-to-day enforcement of the criminal law, gun crime committed by one gang member will result in enhanced law enforcement scrutiny of the entire gang. The Syracuse Truce strategies include:

**Enhanced Enforcement** - 40 street saturation patrols, warrant details, code enforcement and probation/parole home visits of offenders in the gang's area will be conducted on the South and West side of the City of Syracuse.

**Street Outreach** - The City-funded Trauma Response Team will communicate with those most affected by gun violence and help mobilize the affected communities.

**Call-In Meetings** - High risk offenders (on probation/parole) will be mandated and/or invited to attend meetings to hear about the consequences of continued criminal activity which they can relay back to fellow gang members. Options for assistance in changing their lives will be provided by social service providers including CNY Works, Salvation Army, OCC, Jobs Plus!, New Justice Services, Syracuse Trauma Team, Boys and Girls Club, and Center for Community Alternatives.

**Media** - Convictions for gang related activity will be featured on billboards and bus signage to send a strong message about the consequences of continued criminal activity. Media messages will also be used to promote anti-violence norms.

**Community Organizations** - Individuals from neighborhood organizations and clergy will be invited to call-in meetings to provide a strong message that violence will not be tolerated and assistance will be provided to those who want to change their lives in a positive way.

**Evaluation** - The John F. Finn Institute of Public Safety will conduct process and outcome evaluations of the project. The Finn Institute has been a long time partner in Operation IMPACT and Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives in Onondaga County.

Mr. Hartunian expressed his appreciation to the Syracuse Community Intervention Committee chaired by Linda Wright, Executive Director for the Syracuse Salvation Army, the Mayor's Office, the Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office, and the Rosamond Gifford Foundation for their efforts in obtaining this grant, and for their work combating gun and gang violence.

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