

# **Gun Violence**

## **The Incidence of Gun Violence Remains Intolerably High**

Despite an overall decline in the number of gun homicides during the last 15 years, the incidence of gun violence remains intolerably high. In 1999, guns were involved in over one-third of one million violent crimes; 10,128 people were murdered with guns; and 41 of the 42 law enforcement officers killed in the United States died from gunshot wounds. Homicides are most often committed with guns, especially handguns. In 1999, 51 percent of homicides were committed with handguns and 14 percent with other guns.

### **Enforcement helps reduce gun violence in several ways:**

It reinforces the message that the community will not tolerate gun violence.

It removes serious violent offenders from the streets and out of our neighborhoods.

Under federal law, felons, drug dealers, and other specified individuals can face 10 to 15 years in prison for illegally possessing a gun or ammunition.

It increases the risk faced by potential offenders.

### **Prevention also plays a key role in gun violence reduction:**

It necessitates a proactive approach to gun crime.

It promotes cohesion within communities. Studies show that communities that engage in communication and cooperation are safer, regardless of socioeconomic factors.

Through community outreach and cooperation, it sends a message of non-tolerance from the community to potential offenders.

It can result in a dramatic decrease in the number of homicides, as evidenced in the city of Boston; after initiating their juvenile gun crime program, juvenile homicides fell from 152 in 1990 to just 43 in 1997.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN): America's Network Against Gun Violence is a new federal initiative to reduce gun violence. The nation's U.S. Attorneys are taking the lead in bringing PSN to the states and communities they serve. They will spearhead enforcement task forces, work with local officials to identify the most effective laws to use against gun-carrying criminals, and help focus community attention and energy on preventing and reducing gun violence. The project provides funds for state and local governments to employ additional prosecutors focused on enforcing gun laws; target gun traffickers, armed violent offenders, and those prohibited from buying guns; and improve record keeping.

\*\*Information obtained from the National Crime Prevention Council\*\*