



# Department of Justice

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## **ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO R. GONZALES ANNOUNCES SIX SITES FOR COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-GANG INITIATIVE**

### *The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex to Receive \$2.5 Million in Grant Funds from New Initiative*

DALLAS – Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales today announced six locations for a new \$15 million Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative that will devote extensive resources to defeating some of the most violent and pervasive gangs in the country.

The Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex is one of six target areas chosen that also include Los Angeles, Tampa, Fla., Cleveland, the “222 Corridor” that stretches from Easton to Lancaster, Penn. (near Philadelphia), and Milwaukee. Supported by \$2.5 million in grant funds per site, this new initiative will incorporate prevention and enforcement efforts, as well as programs to assist released prisoners as they re-enter society. By integrating prevention, enforcement and prisoner re-entry, this new initiative aims to address gang membership and gang violence at every stage.

“Every American deserves to live free from the fear of violent gangs,” said Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. “The Department of Justice’s anti-gang initiative will help us prevent gang membership, prosecute gang violence, and prepare offenders to return to society and resist the allure of gang activity.”

The initiative was first announced by the Attorney General on Feb. 15, 2006, during his speech on the key priorities for the Department of Justice. The Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative complements existing Department of Justice programs to combat gangs and reduce gun-related crime throughout the country. Those programs include the Violent Crime Impact Teams, Safe Streets Task Forces, and the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative, under which the number of federal firearms prosecutions has increased 73 percent in the past five years. This year, the Department will devote \$30 million in grants to expand PSN to include new and enhanced anti-gang efforts, and \$10 million in grant funds to support PSN’s gun crime reduction programs.

Richard B. Roper, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas, said, “This bold strategy addresses gang violence comprehensively allowing us to expand successful anti-gang enforcement and prevention initiatives while adding new prisoner re-entry programs to stop the cycle of violence caused by gangs.” U.S. Attorney Roper continued, “I am grateful to the Attorney General for choosing the Dallas-Fort Worth area for this exclusive grant and for the Texas Congressional Delegation's support. Our strong federal-state law enforcement partnerships with local community groups and the organizational structure we have established, show that we are poised and ready to aggressively deal with gang violence here in North Texas.”

These six locations were selected to receive comprehensive anti-gang resources based on a variety of factors, including the severity of the gang problem, established infrastructure to support the envisioned prevention, enforcement, re-entry components, and existing partnerships prepared to focus intensely on the gang problem. United States Attorneys in the six locations selected today will be responsible for coordinating federal, state and local efforts under this initiative.

The Attorney General's strategy to combat gangs, which directed the development of this new initiative, is two-fold: First, prioritize prevention programs to provide America's youth, as well as offenders returning to the community, with opportunities that help them resist gang involvement. Second, ensure robust enforcement policies when gang-related violence does occur. Accordingly, each Attorney in the selected areas will work with state, local and community partners to implement strategies that address the following areas:

- *Prevention* – The Department will make available approximately \$1 million in grants per community to support comprehensive prevention efforts such as the Gang Reduction Program, which focuses on reducing youth-gang crime and violence by addressing the full range of personal, family and community factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and gang activity.
- *Enforcement* – The Department will make available approximately \$1 million in grants per community to help support enforcement programs that will focus law enforcement efforts on the most significant violent gang offenders.
- *Prisoner Re-entry* – The Department will make available approximately \$500,000 per community to create re-entry assistance programs that will provide transitional housing, job readiness and placement assistance, and substance abuse and mental health treatment to prisoners re-entering society.

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