

The local law enforcement community does not have the resources or ability to develop, test, and integrate the new technological tools that its agencies need. Training needs are going unmet, the forensics community is significantly underresourced, and the full resources of the federal government—in particular, the national laboratories—have not been turned toward the needs of local law enforcement agencies. This comes at a time when law enforcement is becoming increasingly complex and dangerous because many criminals have access to greater firepower and are more disposed to use it than the police are.¹

In 1994, the Clinton administration developed a program to help fight crime by putting 100,000 new police officers on the street. This significantly strengthened the “thin blue line” and enabled communities to commit extra police resources in areas, such as community-oriented policing, that previously had been neglected.

The administration also recognized that law enforcement was not taking full advantage of technology and infrastructure developed for other purposes—at the cost of billions of dollars of investment—but which could also be applied to law enforcement. Accordingly, an agreement between the Departments of Justice and Defense was signed in 1994 initiating a five-year pilot program designed to in-

¹The best known instance of this is the “North Hollywood shoot-out,” which occurred on the morning of February 28, 1997. Outgunned by two bank robbers wearing body armor, Los Angeles police officers had to commandeer higher-power weapons from a local gun shop. Eleven officers and six civilians were wounded in the exchange—during which more than 2,000 rounds were fired.

crease the capacity of state and local law enforcement to fight crime through the application of technology.

The President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2000 proposes the new 21st Century Policing Initiative, which would, in part, help state and local law enforcement agencies tap into new technologies to share information and communicate more effectively, to solve more crimes, and to conduct comprehensive crime analysis. Specific proposals include the following:

- *Information Sharing.* Includes planning grants to states, technical assistance, and demonstration programs under the Public Safety Telecommunications Assistance Program; planning grants to states, technical assistance, and other expenses necessary to develop the Global Criminal Justice Information Network; the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Centers (NLECTCs); and other police communications improvements.
- *Crime Solving.* Includes grants, technical assistance, and other expenses to state and local forensic labs to reduce the DNA sample backlog; DNA technology research and development; improvements to the general forensic science capabilities of state and local labs; and grants to (1) upgrade criminal history, criminal justice, and identification records systems, (2) promote compatibility and participation in federal, state, and local systems, and (3) capture information for statistical and research purposes.
- *Crime Analysis.* Includes research, technical assistance, evaluation, grants, and other expenses to utilize and improve crime solving, data sharing, and crime-forecasting technologies, including funds to promote crime mapping nationwide and to promote sophisticated crime analysis models.²

We believe that these initiatives will be welcomed by local law enforcement agencies.

This report provides background and contextual information on some of these proposals and what they might reasonably hope to ac-

²President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2000, Budget Appendix, p. 658.

comply.³ We begin, in Chapter Two, with a brief overview of crime and law enforcement in the United States as well as a discussion about the need for and limits to federal assistance. Then, in Chapters Three through Six, we discuss each of four technology-related areas in which the federal government has played and can continue to play an important role: technology assistance, technology deployment, crime labs, and training. For each of these, we present information on the current state of affairs, needs for improvement, instances of past or ongoing assistance, and prospects for improvement through further application of technology. Chapter Seven presents our recommendations. Table 1 outlines the topics addressed in this report and relates aspects of the three components of the 21st Century Policing Initiative to chapters most directly focusing on them.

Table 1
Overview of This Report

Chapter	21st Century Policing Initiative		
	Information Sharing	Crime Solving	Crime Analysis
1. Introduction	-----	Cuts across all areas	-----
2. Context	-----	Cuts across all areas	-----
3. Technology Assistance	NLECTCs		
4. Technology Deployment			Crime mapping Analysis models
5. Crime Labs		Lab improvements DNA technology DNA sample backlog	
6. Training	-----	Cuts across all areas	-----
7. Recommendations	NLECTCs	DNA and labs	Mapping and models

³At the outset we should note that, to date, there has been no comprehensive survey of which crime-fighting technologies are currently being used by state and local law enforcement agencies. Nor has there been a systematic study of what resources would be needed to help bring all agencies up to minimum essential capabilities—given today’s state of the art or tomorrow’s expectations. Thus, the information brought together in this report should properly be viewed as suggestive, rather than definitive.