

## **Review of Twin Cities Safe Streets Violent Gang Task Force (TCSSVGTF)**

### **Purpose**

The Statewide Coordinator is charged with “coordinating and monitoring all funded multi-jurisdictional enforcement activities and monitoring compliance with investigative protocols.” He is also to submit audits and corrective actions based on audit results of the Violent Crime Enforcement Teams (VCET) to the Commissioner of Public Safety.

### **Background**

The TCSSVGTF differs significantly from other VCET as it operates under a Federal memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the FBI, the City of Minneapolis, the City of the St. Paul and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The MOU designates the FBI as the responsible agent for the overall management of TCSSVGTF and further outlines the purpose, mission, supervision, case assignments, resource control, operations, reports and records, Information sharing, prosecutions, investigative methods/evidence, undercover operations, shooting incident policies, deputations, vehicles, compensation, property and equipment, funding, forfeitures, dispute resolution, media releases, security clearances, liability, duration and training. The MOU states that law enforcement activity is to be conducted in accordance with the United States Attorney General Guidelines.

In 2010, the Commissioner of Public Safety accepted the MOU and FBI supervision in lieu of adherence to the Violent Crime Coordinating Council (VCCC) Operating Guidelines Manual which governs law enforcement activities for other VCET. Funds were awarded to both the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul to support personnel costs to establish and maintain optimal staffing levels for the TCSSVGTF.

This is the first review of the TCSSVGTF

### **Review**

In preparation for the review, the statewide coordinator spoke with current and former employees, members of other task forces as well as prosecuting attorney’s from the United States Attorney’s Office. On October 11, the statewide coordinator met with the supervisors of the Twin Cities Safe Streets Violent Gang Task Force (TCSSVGTF) at their office in Minneapolis. He spoke to each supervisor individually and assessed the same areas that he had reviewed at the other VCET. He used the best practices guidance in the VCCC manual to evaluate operations.

He acknowledged the successful outcomes, the hard work and commitment of the TCSSVGTF and also identified several areas of concern.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Executive Director of the Office of Justice Programs met with the supervisory staff, Deputy Chief Rob Allen of the Minneapolis Police Department and Rick Thornton of the FBI, on behalf of the statewide coordinator, to ask additional follow –up questions. This follow-up session is customary when issues are identified in the initial assessment.

## **Corrective Action Issue 1**

### **Advisory Board**

Minnesota Statute 299A.642, subd. 11 requires a governing body of at least six members, consisting of the chief law enforcement officer or designee, from each participating agency, a prosecutor for one of the participating agencies, and up to three additional members selected by the governing board.

The 2010 TCSSVGTF application(s) from the local participating agencies stated: "The Safe Streets initiative requires an active, advisory board that will govern the actions of the task force. .... It will be comprised of members from each of the involved agencies and will include one member of the St. Paul Police Department, one member of the Minneapolis Police Department, one member of the Federal Bureau of Apprehension, one member of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, one member of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and one member of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office....the advisory board will meet quarterly, with minutes taken, and will have a significant role in developing and monitoring of task force priorities, budgets, and operational policies and procedures. The board will also ensure meaningful, strategic results. " This body was never convened.

At the follow-up meeting on November, 3<sup>rd</sup>, supervisory staff indicated that they had no knowledge of this requirement as they did not write the applications.

**Corrective Action: *The TCSSVGTF must immediately identify and convene governing board members to meet the legislative requirement.***

## **Corrective Action Issue 2**

The statewide coordinator also identified deficiencies in the areas of: supervision, communication, target selection and prosecution.

In the follow-up session, the supervisory and command staff stated that in their opinion, his assessment of these areas was subjective, ill-informed and incomplete.

### **Corrective Action 2:**

Whether the deficiencies identified by the statewide coordinator are pervasive, exist to a certain degree or are merely perceived by others to exist, they must be clarified and addressed. The immediate creation of the required advisory board is a vehicle to accomplish this objective. Board meetings will provide a forum for operations, policy and procedure review, problem-solving, conflict resolution, strategy development and resource allocation. Their primary role is to provide oversight and assistance to ensure that the mission remains clear and that the law enforcement team obtains "meaningful and strategic results."

**Corrective Action: *The TCSSVGTF must immediately identify and convene governing board members to provide local oversight and guidance.***