



UNITED
STATES
SENATE

PARTY AT THE D.O.J.

**With America facing the threat of domestic terrorism and a \$13 trillion debt,
The Department of Justice parties on the taxpayers' dime**

Office of Senator Tom Coburn, M.D.
Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
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PARTY AT THE D.O.J.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Americans woke up to news of a car bomb in New York's Times Square and a national debt surpassing \$13 trillion in May.

At the same time, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) was preparing for a "Fun Day" celebration in Texas,¹ a luau in Tennessee,² and other parties and fun activities across the country.

With our nation facing the heightened threats of domestic terrorism and unprecedented debt and financial challenges, taxpayers should be shocked to learn DOJ crime prevention grant programs are paying for parties and rollercoaster rides for children rather than focusing on investigating crimes, locating and prosecuting terrorists, and administering justice.

This report, "Party at the DOJ," examines a number of recent recreational activities funded by DOJ and a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) review that found DOJ does not track the amount spent on recreational activities or the outcomes associated with those activities.³ The report also makes recommendations to help DOJ better adhere to its mission and protect taxpayers' funds from misuse.

Craft-making, bowling, and trips to water parks were among the activities GAO identified as being paid for by DOJ. The Department's own manual for grantees even recommends spending federal crime prevention funds on parties and trips. A review of recent activities sponsored by DOJ grantees identified luaus, a Mardi Gras party, block parties, a film festival, a carnival, skateboarding, dancing, fashion shows, and even a doughnut eating contest as among the recreational activities made possible with federal crime prevention funding.

While many of these may be fun or even educational, there is little data to demonstrate how these types of initiatives advance the mission of DOJ, which is "to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans."⁴

¹ "Weed and Seed 14th Annual Family Fun Day," Childs Park Rattlers website, accessed June 10, 2010; <http://www.childsparkrattlers.com/2010/04/weed-and-seed-14th-annual-family-fun-day/>.

² East Chattanooga Weed and Seed Facebook Photos, posted June 9, 2009; <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=181278&id=108492357166>.

³ In October 2008, the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security released a report entitled "[Justice Denied: Waste & Mismanagement at the Department of Justice](#)," which identified more than \$10 billion of waste, mismanagement, and duplication. Among the report's findings, numerous DOJ crime prevention grant programs were funding recreational activities for children and youth, such as white water rafting, field trips, summer camp, talent shows, and dances.

⁴ "Our Mission Statement," U.S. Department of Justice website, accessed July 8, 2010; <http://www.justice.gov/02organizations/about.html>.

Individually, these activities may not cost very much, but collectively they add up to millions of dollars that could be better spent aiding law enforcement in dangerous neighborhoods or enhancing domestic counter-terrorism efforts.

While fun activities to keep children out of trouble or improve their life skills are worthwhile, is it the responsibility of the federal government—specifically the Department of Justice—to be funding parties and other recreational activities?

Each child born in America today already owes more than \$42,000 of our \$13 trillion debt. So, while there is little evidence to demonstrate DOJ's recreational activities are actually protecting children, we do know the cost of these and other duplicative, unproven, and wasteful government programs poses a real financial threat to the future of the very same children it seeks to protect.

No amount of government spending on parties and roller coaster rides can protect today's youth from the higher taxes and lower standard of living they will inherit if Washington decision makers do not end wasteful spending and demand real results from government programs.

UPSIDE DOWN PRIORITIES



As the nation faces the threats of domestic terrorism and a \$13 trillion national debt, the U.S. Department of Justice spends taxpayer funds on parties, roller coaster rides and all kinds of fun!

The Proper Role of DOJ

Most Americans would agree the Department of Justice has a number of important roles, but party planning is not one of them.

Even if well intentioned, the recreational activities and parties supported by DOJ programs have not been proven to prevent crime and many of these activities siphon limited funds and needed attention away from DOJ's true mission.

At a time when real threats are posed to American citizens by drug cartels and domestic terrorists, it is irresponsible, and even dangerous, to mispend federal funds intended to protect our nation from these and other threats. For example, the FBI and other federal agencies "have had sizable translation backlogs, which means many pieces of foreign-language intelligence have gone unreviewed"⁵ while DOJ is sponsoring fashion shows and pool parties.

DOJ should focus on investigating, preventing, and prosecuting terrorism, espionage, fraud and other federal crimes, especially those that pose a threat to the security of American citizens, their property, and our country.

In a shocking revelation, Bassem Youssef, chief of the communications analysis unit in the FBI's counterterrorism division the FBI, admitted in 2008 that the FBI cannot properly defend the United States against "another catastrophic and direct attack by Middle Eastern terrorists" due to the shortages and a lack of experienced managers within the FBI's International Terrorism Operations Sections.⁶

This shortage of staff for critical positions impairs DOJ's ability to protect against terrorism as well as other federal crimes.

A shortage of FBI agents in Washington state, for example, "is making it harder to investigate, solve and prosecute the growing number of cybercrimes" including Identity theft, online sexual predators, credit-card fraud, according to local law-enforcement officials. Richard McCrea, Tacoma's assistant police chief, notes "cybercrime, identity theft, mail theft, credit-card scams" cross state and national borders.⁷

⁵Puneet Kollipara, "Government still trying to catch up on foreign language capabilities," The Hill, June 12, 2010; <http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/102833-government-still-trying-to-catch-up-on-foreign-language-capabilities> .

⁶ Jerry Seper, "Hill tells FBI to explain staff gap," The Washington Times, May 29, 2008, <http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/may/29/hill-tells-fbi-to-explain-staff-gap/> .

⁷ Natalie Singer, "FBI agent shortage hurting local cops," The Seattle Times, January 17 2008; <http://www.allbusiness.com/crime-law/criminal-offenses-cybercrime/12238069-1.html> .



DOJ could better ensure the safety of children by directing resources towards hiring skilled FBI agents to nab on-line predators rather than party planners to host luaus and other festive events.

DOJ spends taxpayer funds to pay for many of the same recreational activities to prevent crimes as other departments are funding to address a range of other issues from HIV/AIDS to urban renewal to education. Yet, there is little evidence to demonstrate these strategies are working to achieve any of those goals.

In fact, in some cases it appears the anti-crime prevention funds provided by the federal government are distracting local officials from focusing on basic safety, such as keeping street lights lit at night.

“Stats show dramatic increase in local break-ins,” exclaimed a newspaper headline in Muncie, Indiana, last summer, reporting 292 burglaries in the first half of 2009, an increase of over 100 during the same period in 2008.”⁸ Months later, the city decided save money by darkening streetlights, a decision many residents worry will lead to increased crime.⁹ Dark nights and fun days appear to be the city’s strategy to preventing crime.

In July, two different grantees of crime prevention funds in the city hosted competing recreational activities in Heekin Park.

The coordinator of one of the events—a weekend basketball tournament—stated “the reason I am doing this basketball tournament is to bridge the gap between police officers and the community.”¹⁰ Yet according to local press reports, “no officers were on hand Saturday for the

⁸ Seth Slabaugh, “Inner-city residents not united in fighting crime,” The Star Press, January 24, 2010.

⁹ Amanda Hamon, “Dimming city streetlights not such a bright idea,” Journal and Courier (Lafayette, Indiana), November 15, 2009, Page 3C.

¹⁰ Marwin Strong, “Basketball is a seed,” Muncie Star Press, July 2, 2010; <http://www.thestarpress.com/article/20100702/OPINION03/7020326> .

basketball tournament”¹¹ and three black-youth advocates called for a boycott of the tournament calling it a “farce” and “a joke.”¹²

One of those behind the boycott, Bill Keith with the Boys and Girls Club wanted to see more of the federal funds spent on walking and bike patrols and other the anti-crime events in addition to other “fun activities” and “neighborhood fairs.”¹³

Yet, more fun activities were being paid for with the DOJ grant on the same day, in the same town, in the very same park!

“We would like to make it clear the two-day basketball tournament in Heekin Park this weekend is not the only event going on. It is also a Family Fun Day with activities for kids, food vendors, music and fun sponsored by the Weed and Seed program and Muncie Crimestoppers,” the organizers of the event wrote in the local *Star Press*, concluding “When this is over, then all citizens need to rally and question the Weed and Seed program and write to the federal government about concerns.”¹⁴

The concern every taxpayer should have is that the federal government, particularly the Department of Justice, is overstepping its bounds and its constitutional authority which means it is not focusing on its intended role.

As the protector and defender of our nation’s laws, the Department of Justice should recognize the powers and responsibilities granted to the federal government by the U.S. Constitution do not include throwing parties, planning fun days and basketball tournaments in the park, building skateboard ramps, or even improving self esteem. None of these activities have any direct correlation to the administering of justice and serve no role envisioned or deemed to be a responsibility of the federal government by the U.S. Constitution.

This report examines a variety of the many questionable recreational activities supported by DOJ that appear to be primarily festive and fun in nature and appear to have little to do with the proper role of the Department and even less evidence that that are making any impact on preventing crime.

¹¹ Ivy Farguheson, “Weed and Seed, picnic go on without any fireworks,” Muncie Star Press, July 4, 2010; <http://www.thestarpress.com/article/20100704/NEWS01/7040328/Weed-and-Seed-picnic-go-on-without-any-fireworks> .

¹² Seth Slabaugh, “Black-youth advocates boycott Weed and Seed hoops event,” Muncie Star Press, July 1, 2010; <http://www.thestarpress.com/article/20100701/NEWS01/7010328> .

¹³ Seth Slabaugh, “Black-youth advocates boycott Weed and Seed hoops event,” Muncie Star Press, July 1, 2010; <http://www.thestarpress.com/article/20100701/NEWS01/7010328> .

¹⁴ James and Marlene Mitchell, “Family Fun Day,” Muncie Star Press, July 2, 2010; <http://www.thestarpress.com/article/20100702/OPINION03/7020329/Family-Fun-Day> .

GAO: DOJ Does Not Measure Outcomes or Costs of Recreational Activities Funded with Crime Prevention Grants

Craft-making, trips to bowling alleys and water parks, and a midnight basketball league were among the recreational activities identified by GAO as being funded by DOJ.

Supporters claim these initiatives could reduce crime while critics believe they simply waste taxpayers' funds and do little, if anything, to deter crime.

Yet, the agency providing the funds for the activities is unable to demonstrate which claim is right. In fact, DOJ cannot determine the impact or even the cost of any of these types of activities funded by the Department, according to GAO's analysis.

GAO found "in cases where grant recipients' program narratives identified activities that could be considered recreational in nature, such as trips to bowling alleys and water parks, we were consistently unable to determine funding amounts spent on these activities."¹⁵

GAO further noted "DOJ is not required to maintain information—nor does it require reporting by grant recipients—on specific expenditures for recreational activities or the outcomes associated with those activities."¹⁶

"Because DOJ does not require grant recipients to report on specific expenditures associated with particular activities," GAO explained, "and because it does not maintain or monitor any data on recreational activities, department officials told us that their overall grant management system was not designed to capture either their contributions to the overall program's effectiveness or the individual costs of particular activities like an after-school sports program."¹⁷

"As a result, DOJ is not positioned to determine how much money has been spent on recreational activities," according to David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at GAO.¹⁸

In short, GAO identified a number of DOJ grant programs paying for parties and other recreational activities without any demonstrated effectiveness at reducing crime, nor any accounting to determine how much these activities are costing taxpayers.

¹⁵ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., "Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities," June 18, 2010, page 4.

¹⁶ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., "Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities," June 18, 2010, page 3.

¹⁷ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., "Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities," June 18, 2010, page 3.

¹⁸ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., "Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities," June 18, 2010, page 3.

Department of Justice ... or Recreation?

With our nation confronting an economic downturn, waging a global war against terrorism, and coping with \$13 trillion of debt that is expected to increase by more than a trillion dollars every year over the next decade, our nation's leaders must start making hard decisions about how taxpayers' funds are spent.

The recent failed car bomb attempt in New York's Times Square reminded Americans once again the war against terrorism is not being fought just in faraway lands, but right here in our own cities and streets.

Likewise, as drug-related violence overtakes parts of Mexico, cartel-related crime—from kidnappings in Arizona to crimes in other areas far from the border—is on the rise in the U.S.

Due to their interstate and international nature, federal assistance is necessary to help interrupt, control, and prevent these crimes.

But instead of focusing resources to these types of crimes, DOJ funds are diluted over a multitude of initiatives, some without any direct connection to crime or safety. Multiple DOJ offices, for example, administer duplicative grant programs providing federal funding for local communities to pay for recreational activities, including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO).

The OJJDP Model Program Guide's prevention guide for grant recipients includes a section for recreation. Recreation programs and events are specifically listed as "the types of activities found in a quality afterschool programs [sic]".¹⁹

CCDO's "Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual" provides a number of specific "event ideas" for grantees, including sack races, three-legged races, water balloon and egg tossing competitions, dancing, bowling, roller skating, ice skating, kite flying, holiday parties, and even a trip to a local pizza restaurant.²⁰ The DOJ manual lists the objectives to these suggested activities, noting that the trip to a pizza restaurant could improve self-esteem and "citizenship/leadership" while the benefits of sack races include "prevention" and "self-esteem."²¹

¹⁹ "Afterschool/Recreation," OJJDP Model Program Guide, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention website, accessed June 9, 2010;

http://www2.dsgonline.com/mpg/program_types_description.aspx?program_type=Afterschool/Recreation&continuum=prevention .

²⁰ "Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual," U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, pages 113 and 114, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

²¹ "Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual," U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 111, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

Topic/Objectives							
Special Event	Relationships/ Conflict Management	Prevention	Physical Fitness	Hygiene/ Nutrition/ Urgent Aid	Self-Esteem	Citizenship/ Leadership	Goal Setting
Meet Your Mentor	X				X		
Halloween Party	X				X		
Community Cleanup Day				X	X	X	
Holiday Party/ Open House					X		
Television Station Tour					X	X	
Visit to City Hall					X	X	
Sports Event		X	X		X	X	
Volunteer/Soup Kitchen				X	X	X	
Drug-Free Event		X	X		X		
Trip to Local Pizza Restaurant				X	X	X	
Nature Appreciation					X	X	
Trip to Museum					X	X	
Career Day					X	X	X
DEFY Olympics		X	X		X		X

A DOJ grant implementation manual lists “Self-Esteem” as one of the outcomes of parties and field trips.²²

There is no question sports, music, the arts, and other activities provide meaningful outlets for teenagers and adolescents where they can learn, develop, have fun, and stay out of trouble.

But at a time of unprecedented debt, should the U.S. Department of Justice continue to fund parties and recreational activities in communities across the nation? And, if DOJ does assume such a role, the Department should be able to measure results from these programs, or at the very least be able to track how much money it is spending on these activities.

The annual budget for the Weed and Seed program has been \$25 million²³ while OJJDP is funded at more than \$453 million every year.²⁴ As GAO found, DOJ cannot “determine how

²² “Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 111, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

much money has been spent on recreational activities.”²⁵ If the total amount spent on parties and other fun activities is only a small percentage of the \$478 million combined Weed and Seed and OJJDP budgets, tens of millions of crime prevention dollars are being spent on parties and other recreational activities with little or no measurable impact whatsoever on crime every year. Over a five year period, this could amount to well over \$100 million, yet it is impossible to know for sure.

What we do know is that DOJ actively encourages grantees to spend federal crime prevention funds on parties and other fun activities, but is not tracking how much is being spent on these activities or if they are having any impact whatsoever preventing crime. This report looks at some of the questionable activities DOJ is supporting with taxpayers’ money.



DOJ recommends grantees spend federal crime prevention funds on activities like trips to pizza restaurants and kite flying.

Parties

From Mardi Gras to luaus to film festivals to birthday parties, there appears to be no limit to the type of parties DOJ grants support. DOJ funds even paid for a wedding reception.

The Weed and Seed Implementation Manual recommends grantees throw a variety of different parties.²⁶ The manual recommends holding a Halloween Party for children with mentors because the party will “provide an opportunity for them to work together to develop costumes and masks. A fun, casual atmosphere may help mentors and mentees feel more

²³ William J. Krouse, Nathan James, and Celinda Franco, “Department of Justice (DOJ) Appropriations for FY2008 and FY2009,” Congressional Research Service, April 13, 2009.

²⁴ Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice website, accessed June 24, 2010; <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/funding/fy09awards.html> .

²⁵ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., “Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities,” June 18, 2010, page 3.

²⁶ “Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, pages 113 and 114, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

comfortable in getting to know one another.”²⁷ Likewise, the DOJ manual says a “Holiday Party” can improve “self-esteem.”²⁸ Other grantees have been even more festive, throwing block parties, pool parties, and “Fun Days.”

In December 2009, the Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project held a “Mardi Gras” themed Christmas Party,²⁹ and the Weed and Seed program in Fairbanks, Alaska, holds an annual luau and pool party in January.³⁰



Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project’s “Mardi Gras” themed Christmas Party.³¹

The Weed and Seed of East Chattanooga, Tennessee, recently held a luau³² and a fiesta.³³ The Summer Luau held May 15, 2010 was “a day for orientation along with fun and life lesson skills ... to encourage self-esteem” that featured “a traditional, contemporary, and hip-hop

²⁷ “Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 113, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

²⁸ “Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 111, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

²⁹ Philadelphia Weed and Seed Facebook profile, added December 11, 2009; <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Philadelphia-Weed-and-Seed-Project/129362641885> .

³⁰ “Weed and Seed pool party,” KTVF local news, Fairbanks (Alaska), January 25, 2010; <http://www.thenewsroom.com/details/3985819> .

³¹ Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project’s Photos, added December 11, 2009; <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3534344&id=129362641885> .

³² East Chattanooga Weed and Seed Facebook Photos, posted June 9, 2009; <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=181278&id=108492357166> .

³³ East Chattanooga Weed and Seed Facebook page, accessed June 21, 2010; <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=102330189817706&index=1> .

luau.”³⁴ “The Summer of Fun Mexican Fiesta,” held June 26, 2010, by the same organization included “games, Mexican food, enrichment and development activities.”³⁵

Photos from Project Weed and Seed Fairbanks



Weed and Seed volunteer having fun at the Pool Party 2009

Added February 2, 2009

"Project Weed and Seed Fairbanks"

The Weed and Seed program holds an annual luau and pool party in Fairbanks, Alaska. This photo was taken at the pool party held in 2009.³⁶

According to its website, the “prevention/intervention/treatment” strategy of the United North Weed and Seed program in Toledo, Ohio, “strives to ensure that families within the Weed and Seed target area have access to all the services and support they need to make their lives and our neighborhood safe and healthy. Programs address the needs of youth, adults and the ex-offender population. This strategy enables residents to increase their social capital and become more productive community members. Current projects include ... the First Neighborhood

³⁴ “ECWS Announces Partnership with MYTD and New Youth Director,” East Chattanooga Weed and Seed press release, May 6, 2010; <http://www.multiculturalyouth.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=50166&PID=785151> .

³⁵ East Chattanooga Weed and Seed Facebook page, accessed June 21, 2010;

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=102330189817706&index=1> .

³⁶ Fairbanks Weed and Seed Facebook photo, posted February 2, 2009;

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?op=1&view=global&subj=58906532040&pid=823825&id=1625791653&oid=58906532040#!/photo.php?op=1&view=global&subj=58906532040&pid=129480&id=1625791653&oid=58906532040&fbid=1043525181469> .

Festival, Halloween Safe Night, and a Multicultural Festival.”³⁷ How these festivals make Toledo neighborhoods safer or more productive is not explained, but city residents may question why crime prevention funds are being spent on parties at a time when the layoff of more than 100 police officers has been considered due to the city’s budget crisis.³⁸

A Halloween Party and Fun Day held in the U.S. Virgin Islands featuring games and music was “sponsored through funding from the U.S. Department of Justice” as part of the Weed and Seed “program’s strategy to reduce juvenile delinquency.”³⁹

The United States District Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida sponsored the Weed and Seed 14th Annual Family Fun Day Festival held May 1, 2010, in St. Petersburg, Florida. “Each year, this event brings together community residents, friends and family, police, social service agencies and organizations, health care providers, churches, neighborhood associations and city officials for a day of positive interaction, sharing and uniting in a drug- and crime-free venue,” said Goliath J. Davis, III, the city’s senior administrator for community enrichment.⁴⁰

Weed and Seed programs in a number of areas, including Allentown, Pennsylvania⁴¹ and Las Cruces, New Mexico,⁴² recently sponsored block parties. The lucky winners of the Norristown, Pennsylvania, Weed and Seed’s “Best Beautiful Block Contest” received vouchers to spend at a summer block party.⁴³

The Weed and Seed in Huntington, West Virginia, recently held a block party,⁴⁴ but a recent shooting in the neighborhood may have some residents wondering if the festiveness of the area’s crime fighting strategy is having much of an impact making the community safer. The area where a woman was shot on the morning of July 12 “sits right in the middle of what’s known as the Weed and Seed area. It’s a federal grant program designed to target high-crime

³⁷ United North Weed and Seed website, accessed July 15, 2010; <http://www.unitednorth.org/CommunityServices/WeedAndSeed.html> .

³⁸ Ignazio Messina, “TOLEDO BUDGET CRISIS; Police layoffs on hold for now; business owners, residents relieved,” The Toledo Blade, March 18, 2010; <http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100318/NEWS16/3180368> .

³⁹ “SAY 'BOO TO DRUGS' THIS HALLOWEEN,” St. Thomas Source, October 24, 2000; <http://stthomassource.com/content/community/organizations/2000/10/24/say-boo-drugs-halloween> .

⁴⁰ “WEED AND SEED 14th ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY FESTIVAL MAY 1,” City of St. Petersburg press release, April 22, 2010; <http://www.stpete.org/news/4-23-2010-weed-and-seed-14th-annual-family-fun-day-festival-may-1.asp> .

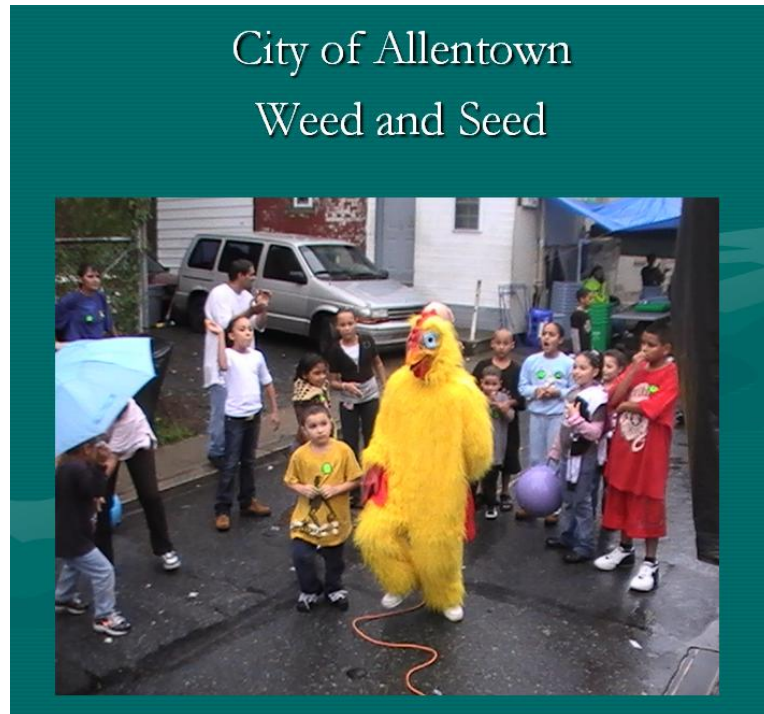
⁴¹ “Resident Involvement,” Allentown Weed and Seed website, accessed June 23, 2010; http://www.allentownweedandseed.org/index.cfm?organization_id=34§ion_id=504&page_id=2167 .

⁴² “City of Las Cruces - Operation Weed & Seed – Calendar, 2008,” City of Las Cruces website, <http://www.las-cruces.org/police/WS/calendar.shtm> .

⁴³ “NORRISTOWN WEED AND SEED ANNOUNCES ANNUAL BEST BEAUTIFUL BLOCK CONTEST,” MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS, June 23, 2006; <http://www2.montcopa.org/montco/cwp/view,A,11,Q,42197.asp> .

⁴⁴ “Basketball game, block party coming up May 21,” Huntington Herald Dispatch (West Virginia), May 19, 2010, <http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/briefs/x1860198777/Basketball-game-block-party-coming-up-May-21> .

areas,” local media reported, further noting “Neighbors say crime in this area is normal, but after two years of targeted police enforcement should it be?”⁴⁵



The Weed and Seed Block Party in Allentown, Pennsylvania.⁴⁶

“In hopes of bringing neighbors together and encouraging them to help curb gang violence,” the city of Salinas, California, organized a “party for peace.” The city spent about \$150 to buy hot dogs, while the rest of the food and other supplies were provided by a Weed and Seed program grant and local organizations.⁴⁷

DOJ specifically recommended its grantees sponsor sack races in its Weed and Seed implementation manual.⁴⁸ Sack races along with bingo⁴⁹ and board games⁵⁰ were among the activities featured at a “Fun Day” sponsored by the Weed and Seed program in East

⁴⁵ Carrie Cline, “NEW INFO: Woman Wounded in Huntington Shooting; Name Released,” WSAZ News Channel 3, July 13, 2010; <http://www.wsaz.com/news/headlines/98309834.html?ref=834> .

⁴⁶ City of Allentown Weed and Seed website, accessed June 23, 2010; http://www.allentownweedandseed.org/index.cfm?organization_id=34§ion_id=504&page_id=2167 .

⁴⁷ Maria Ines Zamudio, “Salinas organizing a block party for peace; Saturday event aims to curb gang activity,” The Salinas Californian (California), January 9, 2009; <http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/20090109/NEWS01/901090329> .

⁴⁸ “Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 14, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf> .

⁴⁹ Amy Katcher, “MYTD & ECWS Family Fun Day Saturday,” WDEF News 12 (Tennessee), May 29, 2010, http://www.wdef.com/news/mytd_ecws_family_fun_day_saturday/05/2010 .

⁵⁰ “Family Fun Day Set For May 20, The Chattanooga (Tennessee), May 21, 2010; http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_176153.asp .

Chattanooga, Tennessee. The St. Petersburg, Florida, Weed and Seed also sponsored a number of “Fun Days”⁵¹ with free food, raffles, and entertainment.⁵²



BINGO and sack races were the featured activities at the Fun Day in East Chattanooga, Tennessee, sponsored by a DOJ program.

The Rock Hill, South Carolina, Weed and Seed held a “Celebration Jam” to honor the program’s accomplishments featuring a carnival, a bicycle rodeo, train rides, and an obstacle course.⁵³

The Long Beach Weed and Seed co-sponsored a “Unity Festival” in April featuring a gala and entertainment showcase.⁵⁴

An audit of the Henderson-Vance Weed and Seed program in North Carolina found “expenditures with no link to fighting crime,” including participation in a banquet as well as decorations and flowers.⁵⁵

LOVE Social Services in Alaska received three grants totaling \$1.7 million from DOJ’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)⁵⁶ to help kids from low-income

⁵¹ “Weed and Seed 14th Annual Family Fun Day,” Childs Park Rattlers website, accessed June 10, 2010; <http://www.childsparkrattlers.com/2010/04/weed-and-seed-14th-annual-family-fun-day/> .

⁵² “Weed and Seed 13th Annual Family Fun Day,” Bartlett Park website, accessed June 10, 2010; <http://www.bartlettpark.net/search/label/Weed%20and%20Seed%20of%20St.%20Petersburg> .

⁵³ Mary Jo Balasco, “Saturday Jam will celebrate Weed and Seed success: Taking up a new hobby,” The Herald (Rock Hill, South Carolina), May 4 2008; <http://www.allbusiness.com/humanities-social-science/visual-performing-arts/12106540-1.html> .

⁵⁴ Long Beach Weed and Seed Facebook events page, accessed June 23, 2010; <http://www.facebook.com/LB.WeednSeed#!/event.php?eid=119042728138160&ref=mf> .

⁵⁵ William F. West, “Wrong use of dollars — Federal probe says Weed and Seed spending improper,” The Daily Dispatch (North Carolina), April 3, 2009.

⁵⁶ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, “Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

families,⁵⁷ but the group’s founders spent some of those funds to pay for their son’s wedding reception.⁵⁸

In July 2010, DOJ even threw a birthday party for McGruff the Crime Dog, the animated, trenchcoat wearing dog that was created in 1980 to help educate children and adults how to be safe and prevent crime. “In honor of his achievements, the National Crime Prevention Council and the Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs threw him a birthday party on the rooftop of the Venable LLP law firm building in Washington, D.C. Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, who heads the Justice Programs office, congratulated McGruff for his helping teach children about reducing crime in their communities.”⁵⁹



McGruff the Crime Dog and Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson⁶⁰

Dancing

“The Safety Dance” was a popular song in the 1980s, but can dancing really improve safety or prevent crime?

The Department of Justice must believe so since its Weed & Seed program⁶¹ has funded a number of dance programs in recent years, including hip hop, jazz, and step dancing classes, and has made dancing a component of many of its events.

⁵⁷ Sam Bishop, “Sen. Stevens steered funds to nonprofit,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), January 18, 2007.

⁵⁸ Christopher Eshleman, “Chris Hayes tells judge she was in charge of misused funds,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), May 1, 2008.

⁵⁹ Leah Nysten, “Happy Birthday McGruff!,” Main Justice website, posted July 1, 2010; <http://www.mainjustice.com/2010/07/01/happy-birthday-mcgruff/>.

⁶⁰ Photo by Christopher M. Matthews, “Happy Birthday McGruff!,” Main Justice website, posted July 1, 2010; <http://www.mainjustice.com/2010/07/01/happy-birthday-mcgruff/>.

⁶¹ Weed & Seed is a DOJ program that aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in neighborhoods across the country. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in “weeding out” criminals and community-based organizations collaborate to

The Weed and Seed in Bristol, Pennsylvania, funds a number of dance programs including Entourage which “provides dance classes for children from the Weed and Seed community” and “recently hired an assistant director with a degree in dance.”⁶²

Sunshine Arts at Upper Darby Weed and Seed Community Pride Day 2009



Sunshine Arts did face painting and had two dance performances at the 2009 Weed and Seed Upper Darby Community Pride Day.

Ballroom dancers were featured in one of the two dance performances at the 2009 Weed and Seed Upper Darby Community Pride Day.⁶³

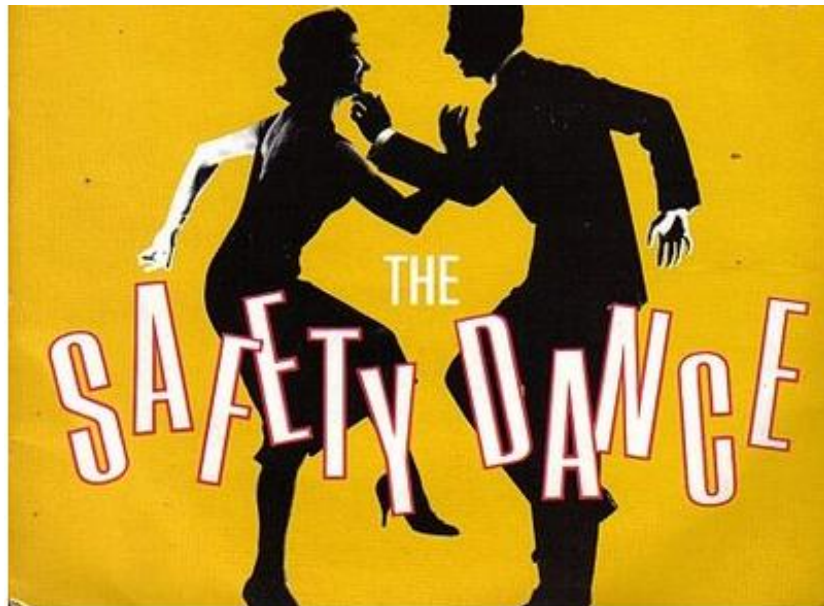
“seed” prevention, intervention, and treatment services as well as neighborhood restoration programs. “Weed & Seed,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office website, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html>, accessed June 3, 2010.

⁶² “Community Resources,” Bristol Weed & Seed website, accessed July 15, 2010; <http://www.freedomneighborhoodone.org/community.html>.

⁶³ “Sunshine Arts at Upper Darby Weed and Seed Community Pride Day 2009,” YouTube video, posted December 2, 2009; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTpcznMR4f8>.

Government grant money has been provided for a hip-hop class in Allentown, Pennsylvania.⁶⁴ The program was started in 2006, and 30 youth meet regularly to practice their hip-hop dancing skills.⁶⁵

In Modesto, California, the Paradise South Weed & Seed Project presented a break dance competition⁶⁶ and offered Hip-Hop/Modern Jazz dance classes. “The Hip-Hop and Modern Jazz dance class will focus on the fundamentals of contemporary dance techniques, including stretching, center floor techniques, movement across the floor, progressions and dance routines,” according to the city.⁶⁷



The Safety Dance: Do dance lessons provided by federal crime prevention grants improve safety?

The Bronx, New York, Weed & Seed program offers step dancing classes as well as drum classes. Its summer recreational program includes music and dance.⁶⁸

Dancing was one of the fun activities at the block party hosted by the East Orange Weed and Seed in New Jersey last year.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Jaye Kinnard, “Scene Makers; Local hip-hop producers Indaglo on bringing beats to Musikfest,” The Baltimore Sun, August 4, 2008, www.baltimoresun.com/topic/me-arc-indaglo.0.4213639.story .

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Eckley, M.A., et. al. “The City of Allentown Weed and Seed Initiative: Evaluation 2008,” Lehigh Valley Research Consortium, page 13; http://lehighvalleyresearch.org/files/articles/Allentown_Weed&Seed_Final_Report.pdf .

⁶⁶ The city of Modesto news release. “MIX AT 615' PRESENTS BREAK DANCE COMPETITION,” May 8, 2008; <http://www.modestocalifornia.us/cmo/releases/2008/nr08133.asp> .

⁶⁷ The city of Modesto news release. “FREE DANCE CLASSES AT MADDUX YOUTH CENTER,” May 28, 2008; <http://www.modestorda.net/cmo/releases/2008/nr08158.asp> .

⁶⁸ “Operation Weed & Seed; Bronx River/Bruckner Site,” Bronx District Attorney's Office website, accessed June 4, 2010; http://bronxda.nyc.gov/commoutreach/weednseed.htm#Seeding_Initiatives .

DOJ did, however, reprimand the Henderson-Vance Weed and Seed program in North Carolina for spending \$300 to hire a jazz band to perform at a banquet, noting “there was no connection to crime prevention through the arts,” according to documents obtained by *The Daily Dispatch*.⁷⁰

Art, Film Festivals and Fashion Shows

Police are investigating “a spate of violent crimes” in Millville, New Jersey this summer. In just one week in June, four crimes involving shooting or stabbing occurred within 10 blocks of each other.⁷¹

Yet, Liz Nicklus, director of the city’s Weed and Seed program funded by DOJ, said “she was not too concerned about the recent crimes, noting an increase in violence is expected when weather improves,” according to a local press report. “We don’t like it, but it does tend to happen,” Nicklus said.⁷²

The community didn’t like it and they want it to stop happening.

And when a crime symposium was held in Millville for local officials to discuss neighborhood crime issues with residents to seek solutions, Nicklus, who is paid by the taxpayers to address neighborhood crime, did not attend. “If the person taxpayers are paying to deal with issues of crime is not concerned enough to attend such an important meeting and publicly states she is not concerned about the recent crimes, how can we expect the public to get involved?,” asked one local resident.⁷³

It turns out drawing, painting, and sculpting are among the ways the Weed and Seed program is attempting to get the public involved in Millville by steering thousands of dollars of federal crime prevention funds into a children’s art program this summer.⁷⁴ The program will include ceramics, photography, spoken word, creative writing, painting and sketching.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ “Weed and Seed Celebrates National Night Out,” Weed and Seed Insights, Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, Winter 2009; http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/insites/prevention_3.html .

⁷⁰ William F. West, “Wrong use of dollars — Federal probe says Weed and Seed spending improper,” *The Daily Dispatch* (North Carolina), April 3, 2009.

⁷¹ Alex Harcharek, “Shots fired, victim stabbed in Millville,” *The Vineland Daily Journal*, June 8, 2010; <http://www.thedailyjournal.com/article/20100608/NEWS01/6080315/Shots-fired-victim-stabbed-in-Millville> .

⁷² Alex Harcharek, “Shots fired, victim stabbed in Millville,” *The Vineland Daily Journal*, June 8, 2010; <http://www.thedailyjournal.com/article/20100608/NEWS01/6080315/Shots-fired-victim-stabbed-in-Millville> .

⁷³ Robert A. Tesoroni Jr., “Weed and Seed head should’ve attended meeting,” *The Vineland Daily Journal*, July 8, 2010; <http://www.thedailyjournal.com/article/20100708/OPINION03/7080336> .

⁷⁴ Edward Van Embden, “Millville saves children’s summer art program,” *Press of Atlantic City*, June 7, 2010; http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/cumberland/article_cacca1e2-728b-11df-91de-001cc4c03286.html .

⁷⁵ Joel Landau, “M’ville program inspires young artists,” *Vineland Daily Journal*, July 15, 2010; <http://www.thedailyjournal.com/article/20100715/NEWS01/7150330> .

Sculpting and painting may seem like an unusual strategy to preventing more stabbings and shootings, but other areas have been even more creative by spending federal anti-crime funds to host fashion shows and film festivals.

The Weed and Seed in South Dade, Florida, was one of the sponsors of a fashion design program in which students created a fashion show.⁷⁶ The Weed and Seed of Bristol, Pennsylvania, also provided funding to a group that organized a fashion show and went on a field trip to the New York City Fashion District.⁷⁷

Woodstock Film Festival Inc. (WFF) received a \$30,000 congressional earmark in the FY 2010 appropriations conference report for a “youth at risk” initiative.⁷⁸ The organization presents “a year-round schedule of film, music, and art-related activities,” also holds an annual film festival, and its Youth Initiative includes screenings, seminars, and workshops. The 2009 film festival featured “Santa, the Fascist Years” which “uncovers and explores Santa’s flirtation with politics and greed,” according to the group’s website.⁷⁹



“Santa, the Fascist Years” is one of the recent features at an annual film festival put on by the Woodstock Film Festival which received a \$30,000 DOJ congressional earmark to support at risk youth.

The City of Nogales, Arizona, charged taxpayers for movie tickets for a city-sponsored Halloween event. The mayor claimed the tickets were donated by the local cinema, but the tickets had the logo for the Weed and Seed program and the theater denied donating them. Vice

⁷⁶ “Art Education,” enFamilia, Inc. website, 2009,

http://www.enfamiliainc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=11 .

⁷⁷ “Community Resources,” Bristol Weed & Seed website, 2006;

<http://www.freedomneighborhoodone.org/community.html>

⁷⁸ Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 conference report to accompany H.R. 3288, December 2009, page 876; http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_reports&docid=f:hr366.111.pdf .

⁷⁹ Woodstock Film Festival, Inc. website, accessed June 4, 2010;

<http://www.woodstockfilmfestival.com/festival2009/details.php?id=20952> .

Mayor Arturo Garino revealed the tickets were purchased by the Weed and Seed program from Oasis Cinema for its annual film festival. The city then refunded the cost of the tickets to the Weed and Seed and claimed the tickets were donated by the theater. The theater's general manager Clarke Morales reported the incident to the police department. "In my mind there is no difference between an individual who shoplifts at a store and a city official or officials who present to the public they are entitled to this business' merchandise simply by affixing the municipality's mailing stamp to the back of a bogus ticket."⁸⁰

DOJ's spending on movie related activities hasn't been just for kids either. The DOJ Office of Inspector General found the Office of Justice Programs provided, at no cost to 30 of its employees "a themed 'at-the-movies' snack, consisting of candy, popcorn, and soft drinks, for \$25 per person."⁸¹

Arcade Games, Flat Screen TVs and Other Gadgets

Are sword wielding ninjas part of DOJ's crime fighting efforts?

The use of DOJ funds to purchase several Japanese-style swords costing \$200 each might lead some to believe so.

In addition to the swords, a \$4,400 65-inch flat screen TV, 40 pairs of binoculars, and several arcade games costing \$800 each are just some of the items Oklahoma City officials purchased for local youth centers with federal Weed and Seed funds.

The swords had no legitimate purpose, acknowledged Police Chief Bill Citty, and most of the 40 pairs of binoculars were never used. Citty said "I don't think there was a need for two pairs of binoculars for the program, let alone 40." One pair ended up in a local pawnshop.⁸²

Like other recreational activities paid for with DOJ funds, there is no evidence to indicate these purchases made with crime prevention funds actually stopped any crimes from occurring. A federal audit, however, is being conducted to determine if some of the funds were illegally spent.⁸³ The tragic irony, of course, is that federal anti-crime funds are at the center of an investigation that may involve criminal activity, diverting resources away from investigating other crimes.

⁸⁰ Manuel C. Coppola, "Mayor defends \$324 paid for movie tickets," Nogales International (Arizona), December 4, 2009; <http://www.nogalesinternational.com/articles/2009/12/07/news/doc4b19343d83af0229068691.txt> .

⁸¹ "DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES," U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Audit Division, Audit Report 07-42, page 48, September 2007; <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/plus/a0742/final.pdf> .

⁸² Bryan Dean, "Audit finds misspending in Oklahoma City's Weed and Seed program; Employees abuse Federal program,"The Oklahoman (Oklahoma), June 26, 2010; <http://newsok.com/audit-finds-misspending-in-oklahoma-citys-weed-and-seed-program/article/3471544> .

⁸³ Bryan Dean, "Audit finds misspending in Oklahoma City's Weed and Seed program; Employees abuse Federal program,"The Oklahoman (Oklahoma), June 26, 2010; <http://newsok.com/audit-finds-misspending-in-oklahoma-citys-weed-and-seed-program/article/3471544> .

Bowling and Rollercoaster Rides

Cities, like Milwaukee, Wisconsin, have spent the last decade struggling with spikes in juvenile crime as a surge in violence involving gangs and weapons has raised crime rates from historical lows a decade ago.⁸⁴ The city has been making progress, but due to budget shortfalls, it was faced with the possibility of reducing its police force last year.

With the city facing the possibility of laying off police right when crime rates were starting to drop, Congress provided federal funds for efforts to improve safety in the city.

The FY 2008 DOJ appropriations bill contained a \$223,000 earmark through the Office of Justice Programs for the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) of Wisconsin “to continue safe summer sites.”⁸⁵ While this brief description provided for the earmark may sound as if it was intended to keep kids safe by enhancing police presence and supporting enforcement in dangerous neighborhood, the funding actually had little to do with actual safety. The funds instead paid for fun summer recreational activities.

According to the Milwaukee Public Schools, 2008 “safe summer programs” include video games, music, dance, bowling, arts and crafts, field trips, “enrichment classes,” as well as reduced price tickets for attractions like Six Flags.⁸⁶ While these activities may be fun or even educational for children, they do little to ensure children’s safety or fight crime.

At the same time the federal government was paying for bowling and amusement park entrance fees with DOJ funds, the city was faced with laying off 50 new officers from the police academy. Receiving more than \$11 million in other federal funds allowed Milwaukee to pay for the salaries of police officers, according to Mayor Tom Barrett.⁸⁷

Amusement parks and bowling can never take the place of law enforcement, and taxpayers should never be forced to pay extra for police protection while available funds are being spent on such recreation when the evidence is lacking to demonstrate such activities reduce crime.

⁸⁴Kevin Johnson. “police tie jump in crime to juveniles,” USA Today, July 13, 2006;

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-07-12-juveniles-cover_x.htm

⁸⁵Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (H.R. 2764; Public Law 110–161) Appropriations Committee Print, Division B—Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, Page 266,

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_house_committee_prints&docid=f:39564b.pdf

⁸⁶Milwaukee Public Schools press release, “Last day of school brings launch of safe summer programs at MPS,” June 13, 2008; <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Jun08/jun13/0613mpslastday.pdf>

⁸⁷ Sharif Durhams, “Milwaukee police get federal help; other cities get stiffed,” The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin), July 29 2009; <http://www.allbusiness.com/government/government-bodies-offices-regional/12597091-1.html> .



Are roller coaster rides at Six Flags and bowling keeping kids in Milwaukee safe from crime?

Playing Pool, Skateboarding and Rafting

Like bowling and riding amusement park rides, playing pool, skateboarding and rafting are all fun activities funded with DOJ crime prevention funds.

Vermont received two earmarks costing \$848,350 from DOJ's FY 2008 appropriations for "at-risk youth" programs, including \$133,950 for the "Vermont Department of Public Safety, Waterbury, VT, for an outreach program for at-risk youth" and \$714,400 for the "Vermont Department of Children and Families, Waterbury, VT, for programs to help at-risk youth."⁸⁸

George Karpoff, unit director of the Montpelier teen center, says the teens decide what projects to fund with the congressional earmark.⁸⁹ "In Montpelier, at Basement Teen Center, youths can go apple picking; take pie-making classes; play pool, guitar, and Ultimate Frisbee; or just hang out," according to the Associated Press.⁹⁰

The city of Barre, Vermont, received \$66,000 to help build a skateboard park. "We have a lot of youngsters, especially in Barre City, who like to skateboard," said Stephanie Quaranta, recreation director.⁹¹

⁸⁸Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, H.R. 2764/Public Law 110-161; Division B -- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, page 428;
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/house/appropriations/08conappro.html> .

⁸⁹John Dillon. "Sanders announces grants for teen centers," Vermont Public Radio, September 5, 2008;
http://www.vpr.net/news_detail/81969/

⁹⁰Lisa Rathke. "Vermont teen centers get \$133,000 US grant," Associated Press, September 5, 2008;
http://www.boston.com/news/local/vermont/articles/2008/09/05/vermont_teen_centers_get_133000_us_grant/

⁹¹Lisa Rathke. "Vermont teen centers get \$133,000 US grant," Associated Press, September 5, 2008;
http://www.boston.com/news/local/vermont/articles/2008/09/05/vermont_teen_centers_get_133000_us_grant/

Weed and Seed recently sponsored “SK8 Jam” for skateboarders in Rome, New York, which provided numerous skate ramps for skaters, a rock climbing wall, raffles, door prizes, gaming music and fun.⁹²

Photos from Project Weed and Seed Fairbanks



Skate Park clean up, 8/22/09. Messages like "Aim High," "Say no to drugs, say yes to skating" and "Project Weed and Seed Faith Hope" were painted onto the structures.

Project Weed and Seed
Fairbanks

Added August 25, 2009

Weed and Seed activities include building and maintaining skateparks. This photo was taken at a skate park clean up event sponsored by Weed and Seed in Fairbanks, Alaska, last summer.⁹³

Miami Beach’s Gang and Drug Prevention Program spent some of a \$50,000 federal grant to take members of the club white water rafting in Tennessee. In 2008, the group received another \$651,500 from the Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. “That’s a lot of white water rafting trips,” joked Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who, along with Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Shultz, requested the earmark that made the grant possible.⁹⁴

A Vermont teen center also spent federal funds to take a group of youngsters whitewater rafting in Maine.⁹⁵

⁹² “SK8 Jam,” Rome Weed & Seed website, June 10, 2010; <http://www.romeweedandseed.com/news.html> .

⁹³ Fairbanks Weed and Seed Facebook photo, posted August 25, 2009; <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=398633&op=1&o=global&view=global&subj=58906532040&id=1625791653&ref=pf&fbid=1150460694790#!/photo.php?pid=398633&op=1&o=global&view=global&subj=58906532040&id=1625791653&ref=pf&fbid=1150460694790> .

⁹⁴ Lazaro Fraga. “Miami Beach Teen club gets \$680,000 grant,” Miami Herald, April 20, 2008.

⁹⁵ Lisa Rathke, “Vermont teen centers get \$133,000 US grant,” Associated Press, September 5, 2008; http://www.boston.com/news/local/vermont/articles/2008/09/05/vermont_teen_centers_get_133000_us_grant/ .

Again, while these activities may be fun for children and teens, it is difficult to understand how skateboarding, playing pool and rafting prevent crime.

Contests

The Youngstown, Ohio, Northside Weed and Seed sponsors a Criminal Justice Fair that includes a doughnut-eating contest featuring city police.⁹⁶ In 2008, the winner of the contest was a high school student who ate seven doughnuts in three minutes. The runner-up was Youngstown Police Department detective sergeant Chuck Swanson who ate six-and-a-half. “The contest was the highlight of the fair” for some who attended, according to a local news report.⁹⁷



A doughnut-eating contest featuring local police is the highlight of a fair sponsored by DOJ in Youngstown, Ohio.

This was just one of many contests sponsored by DOJ programs with no obvious crime deterrent potential. Some others include:

- In Florida, rap and poetry contests are being held as part of an effort to reduce gun violence. The “Spoken Word Café Contest Against Guns and Gangs” is “a new crime prevention program aimed at reducing crimes involving guns and gangs” sponsored by the Weed and Seed program in Brevard County. Contestants create original poems, raps, readings or any other oral presentation promoting the crime prevention message. “We

⁹⁶ “Criminal Justice Fair planned for Saturday,” *Youngstown Vindicator* (Ohio), February 17, 2009.

⁹⁷ Jeanne Starmack, “Chief Wiggum would be so ashamed..,” *Youngstown Vindicator* (Ohio), February 17, 2008, <http://positiveleo.wordpress.com/2008/02/17/chief-wiggum-would-be-so-ashamed/> .

think this is a great way to get the youth involved in the community in a positive crime prevention campaign,” said Sgt. Steve Bland of the Palm Bay Police Department.⁹⁸



“Prize patrols” notifying the winners of a DOJ-funded rap contest.⁹⁹

- In 2005, the Brevard County Weed and Seed paid to hire a producer and the Seminole County Weed and Seed paid for the video and tee shirts for the rap contest.¹⁰⁰
- The Henderson-Vance Weed and Seed program in North Carolina gave away federal funds as cash prizes at a Weed and Seed event at Vance-Granville Community College;¹⁰¹
- The Community Capacity Development Office held a national poster contest, which according to CCDO, “promotes the goal of the Weed and Seed programs nationwide to encourage the talents of young people;”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ “‘Spoken Word Café’ takes aims at gangs, guns,” Florida Today, July 8, 2010;

<http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20100708/BREAKINGNEWS/100708010/1006/NEWS01/+Spoken+Word+Cafe++takes+aims+at+gangs++guns> .

⁹⁹ “2005 ‘Rap Against Violence’ Contest,” Website for the Office of the State Attorney of Florida, accessed June 10, 2010; http://sa18.state.fl.us/rap/slides_r1/06_slides.htm .

¹⁰⁰ “2005 ‘Rap Against Violence’ Contest,” Website for the Office of the State Attorney of Florida, accessed June 10, 2010; <http://sa18.state.fl.us/rap/info.htm> .

¹⁰¹ William F. West, “Wrong use of dollars — Federal probe says Weed and Seed spending improper,” The Daily Dispatch (North Carolina), April 3, 2009.

¹⁰² “2007 WEED & SEED NATIONAL POSTER CONTEST,” The Community Capacity Development Office, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/2007_poster_contest_rules.pdf .

- The Weed and Seed in Rome, New York, sponsored a “SK8 Jam poster contest that either concentrates on the physics of skating or the safety issues involved with skating” judged by a representative from the US Attorney’s office;¹⁰³
- The Weed and Seed program in Indianapolis, Indiana, is sponsoring a talent show in September 2010;¹⁰⁴
- Other Weed and Seed program have also put on talent shows, including those in Las Cruces, New Mexico,¹⁰⁵ and Rock Hill, South Carolina;¹⁰⁶ and
- The New Kensington Weed and Seed Program held a contest in 2009 to design a logo to represent the program. The winner received a \$100 gift card.¹⁰⁷

Golf

Golfing is a favorite pass time for many Americans, but does it deter crime? There is no evidence it does, but that has not stopped DOJ from making the game part of its crime prevention strategy.

The Weed and Seed of North Charleston, South Carolina, held an annual “Golf Camp” for students in the fifth to the eighth grades who did not appear to be likely trouble makers or future gang members. “The students chosen were not the schools’ best students or their worst—these students have average grades and no attendance or behavioral problems,” according to DOJ. “The Golf Camp was taught by a golf professional who was assisted by police volunteers. Together they taught the fundamentals of the game of golf and the importance of staying away from drugs and gangs.”¹⁰⁸

DOJ’s golf outings are not limited to children. Golfing has been a regular feature of the department’s conferences and meetings.

The 2010 National School Safety Conference, funded by DOJ, features a “brand new” golf course attached to the resort hosting the conference. While the topics for the conference are

¹⁰³ “SK8 Jam,” Rome Weed & Seed website, June 10, 2010; <http://www.romeweandseed.com/news.html> .

¹⁰⁴ Diana Penner, “Riverside Park peace show seeking performers,” Indianapolis Star, July 7, 2010; <http://www.indystar.com/article/20100707/LOCAL/7070386/-1/ENTERTAINMENT/Riverside-Park-peace-show-seeking-performers> .

¹⁰⁵ “Weed & Seed to Host Talent Show,” City of Las Cruces, March 13, 2008; http://www.las-cruces.org/police/news/news_item.asp?NewsID=566 .

“Weed & Seed digging up local talent,” Las Cruces Sun-News, March 14, 2008.

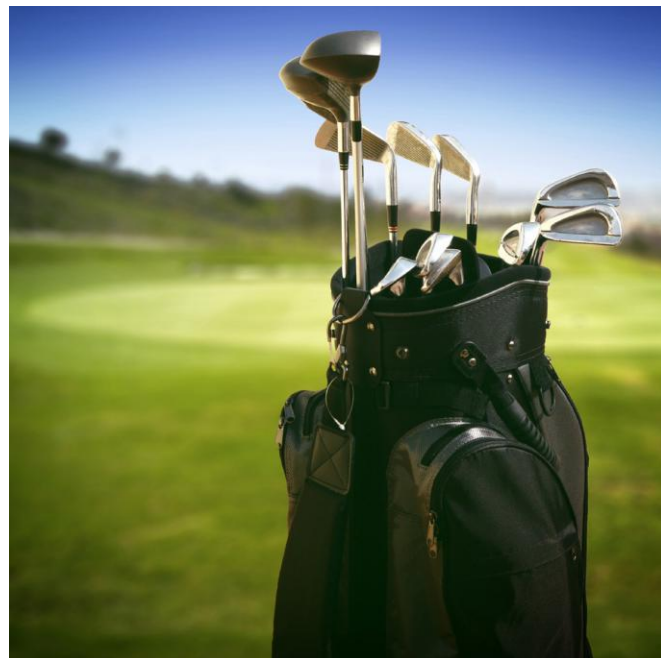
¹⁰⁶ “Community Events and Notices; ‘Showcase of Talent’ Inner City Talent Show,” Urban Rock Hill Weed and Seed website, accessed July 15, 2010; <http://www.urhweedandseed.com/calendar.html> .

¹⁰⁷ New Kensington - Arnold Weed and Seed Initiative website, 2009; <http://www.nkaweandseed.com/logocontest.html> .

¹⁰⁸ Sharon Bumeder, “North Charleston’s Police Department Impressing Area Youth,” Weed & Seed In-Sites Volume VIII, Number 3, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Executive Office for Weed and Seed, August/September 2000; <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/healthy.pdf> .

important and serious, the event’s organizers provide a far less serious tone: “The 2010 National School Safety Conference is scheduled for the week of July 26-30, 2010 at the BRAND NEW Hilton/Waldorf Astoria Bonnet Creek, located directly next door to Disney’s EPCOT Center. Exhibitors, Attendees and their family’s will be treated to FREE transportation to all Disney Theme Parks, as well as Downtown Disney located less than a mile from the hotel. The Hilton/Waldorf Astoria has something for everyone. . . . You and your family will be able to enjoy the brand new Trent Jones Golf Course attached to the resort as well as the specially designed Lazy River Pool, with water slides.”¹⁰⁹

A 2006 Department of Justice sponsored Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program Conference was held at a Waldorf-Astoria Collection resort in Palm Springs, California, which—with five golf courses—boasts to be “the perfect destination” for golf vacations.¹¹⁰ DOJ spent over \$278,000 on the event, although the total cost was likely much higher because grantees attending the event were encouraged to use federal grant money from the Office of Justice Programs to pay for travel, lodging, meals and incidentals related to the conference.¹¹¹



Golf outings are popular DOJ activities, as crime prevention programs for children and as well as escapes for department officials attending conferences.

¹⁰⁹ “5th Annual; 2010 National School Safety Conference,” School Safety Advocacy Council website, access July 13, 2010; <http://www.schoolsafety911.com/event.html> .

¹¹⁰ La Quinta Resort & Club website, accessed July 13, 2010; <http://www.laquintaresort.com/golf/> .

¹¹¹ DOJ November 15, 2006, follow-up to questions for the record by Senator Coburn from the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management 2006-2007, line item 1639, http://coburn.senate.gov/ffm/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=5562f9b6-d8eb-407b-be65-c935837be7111 .

One DOJ official made golf a frequent part of his work day. During his time as the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, J. Robert Flores' official travel "always included golf and/or tennis," according to staff members interviewed by ABC News. "Flores would golf during the day while on official travel around the country on tax payer funds," said Scott Peterson, a former staff member at OJJDP who traveled with Flores on various occasions.¹¹²

According to an investigation by the DOJ Inspector General, "Flores played golf with an OJJDP grantee without paying the golfing fees. Flores acknowledged playing golf with World Golf Foundation officials at the First Tee Network Meeting in February 2006, while attending the conference as a guest speaker on behalf of OJJDP. The conference was sponsored by the World Golf Foundation. World Golf, through its First Tee Initiative, received 'earmarked' -- legislatively directed -- grants from OJJDP each year from FY 2003 to 2006 and an OJJDP discretionary award in FY 2007."¹¹³

Flores, not by coincidence, awarded a \$500,000 DOJ grant to the World Golf Foundation's First Tee program, even though the Department rated the program 47th on a list of 104 applicants.¹¹⁴

The coordinator of the Henderson-Vance Weed and Seed program in North Carolina also spent federal funds to travel to an event DOJ determined had nothing to do with Weed & Seed in Pinehurst, which is "home of golf courses and spas."¹¹⁵

DOJ Grant Programs that Fund Recreational Activities Have Long Been Criticized for Lack of Results and Oversight

The GAO's findings that DOJ could not demonstrate the cost or effectiveness of recreational activities funded by the Department's grants echoes other recent evaluations of these same programs by a number of different investigations and reviews, all concluding results are not being demonstrated, oversight is lacking, and funds may be being misused.

Over the past fifteen years, GAO has repeatedly identified shortcomings in the monitoring of the programs and offices run by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). GAO has noted "the monitoring of grant activities is a key management tool to help ensure that funds

¹¹²Anna Schecter, "Fore! DOJ Probes Official Golfing on Government Trips," ABC News, June 18, 2008; <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=5192879&page=1>.

¹¹³"Report of Investigation Relating to J. Robert Flores, Former Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention," Office of the Inspector General of the United States Department of Justice, April 27, 2009, page 4; <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/OJP/e0904.pdf>.

¹¹⁴Anna Schecter, "Fore! DOJ Probes Official Golfing on Government Trips," ABC News, June 18, 2008; <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=5192879&page=1>.

¹¹⁵William F. West, "Wrong use of dollars — Federal probe says Weed and Seed spending improper," The Daily Dispatch (North Carolina), April 3, 2009.

awarded to grantees are being properly spent. Over the last few years, we and others, including OJP, have identified various grant monitoring problems among OJP's bureaus and offices."¹¹⁶

"An overarching theme of these reviews is a need for improvements in monitoring and evaluating the myriad grant programs that OJP oversees," according to GAO testimony before Congress. "Our work has shown longstanding problems with OJP grant monitoring and has begun to raise questions about the methodological rigor of some of OJP's impact evaluation studies. Monitoring and evaluation are the activities that identify whether programs are operating as intended, whether they are reaching those that should be served, and ultimately whether they are making a difference in the fight against crime and delinquency. In other words, these are major elements of assessing results."¹¹⁷

"While OJJDP has developed performance measures for its grant programs and collects performance measurement data from its grantees, the office is making limited use of these data because it is not verifying these data to ensure their quality, which is inconsistent with leading management practices in performance measurement," GAO wrote in a letter to Congress dated September 2009.

The GAO letter explained "according to OJJDP officials, they have not taken action to verify performance data because since 2002 they have focused on the collection of such data rather than on its utilization. Specifically, since 2002, OJJDP has developed performance measures for each of its grant programs and implemented requirements for all grantees to report on measures at least once a year. Although these officials said that OJJDP has processes in place to assess whether the data are appropriate for the performance measure, they stated that OJJDP does not have data verification processes in place and is dependent on grantees to report complete, accurate, consistent, and timely data. These officials also stated that because OJJDP does not know the quality of the data submitted, they do not use performance data to make resource allocation decisions."

The GAO further noted "it is important that OJJDP officials and congressional decision makers have accurate performance information to be able to make funding decisions that are in line with performance results."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Laurie E. Ekstrand, Director, Justice Issues for the Government Accountability Office, "OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS; Problems with Grant Monitoring and Concerns about Evaluation Studies," Government Accountability Office testimony before the Subcommittee on Crime, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, March 7, 2002, page 2, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02507t.pdf> .

¹¹⁷ Laurie E. Ekstrand, Director, Justice Issues for the Government Accountability Office, "OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS; Problems with Grant Monitoring and Concerns about Evaluation Studies," Government Accountability Office testimony before the Subcommittee on Crime, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, March 7, 2002, page 1, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02507t.pdf> .

¹¹⁸ Correspondence from Eileen Regen Larence, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office to Congressman Robert C. Scott, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, "Juvenile Justice: A Time Frame for Enhancing Grant Monitoring Documentation and Verification of Data Quality Would Help Improve Accountability and Resource Allocation Decisions," September 22, 2009; <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09850r.pdf> .

The result of this longstanding lack of emphasis on performance results and relying on grantees to police themselves may be best exemplified by LOVE Social Services in Alaska which received three grants totaling \$1.7 million from OJJDP¹¹⁹ to help kids from low-income families.

Like most OJJDP grants, those given to LOVE Social Services were not selected through an open competition. The funds were steered directly to the organization in a series of earmarks contained with the annual appropriations bills. Then-Senator Ted Stevens, who was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee at the time, earmarked the funds to LOVE Social Services because he was friends with the organization's founders, Jim and Murilda "Chris" Hayes. The Hayes' son, James, also worked for Senator Stevens in both Alaska and in Washington as an aide on the Senate Appropriations Committee.¹²⁰

Stevens said "there's nothing personal in" the earmarks and that the funds would help kids from low-income families." The Hayes family, according to the Senator, "don't get any personal gain out of it."¹²¹

As it turns out, nearly a half-million dollars from the earmarks were spent for personal gain, including paying for a year's worth of car insurance, a wedding reception for their son, a plasma television, and an ornamental lighthouse for their home.¹²²



DOJ funds intended to support low income children paid for a wedding reception in Alaska.

¹¹⁹ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, "Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹²⁰ Sam Bishop, "Sen. Stevens steered funds to nonprofit," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), January 18, 2007.

¹²¹ Sam Bishop, "Sen. Stevens steered funds to nonprofit," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), January 18, 2007.

¹²² Christopher Eshleman, "Chris Hayes tells judge she was in charge of misused funds," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), May 1, 2008.

The federal government's "spotty oversight"¹²³ of the funds allowed the couple to misspend nearly a half-million dollars of federal funds intended to support at risk youth over a five year period.¹²⁴ Neither the executive branch department responsible for administering the grants or the legislative committee that continued to earmark the funds for LOVE Social Services was paying attention to how the millions of taxpayer dollars intended for youth were being spent.

The quarterly federal reporting forms, which LOVE Social Services submitted, did not "require any financial details beyond the amounts of money drawn on the grant accounts and the dates on which the draws occurred," according to a press report titled "Nonprofit leaders express dismay at lack of federal oversight." One nonprofit leader noted "the actual reports from OJJDP, or from pretty much any federal agency, are pretty minimal."¹²⁵

"Once they had passed the money to LOVE Social Services, the federal agencies did not review how it was spent," according to documents obtained by the Alaska newspaper *The Daily News-Miner*. The paper noted "agencies required detailed budgets before they released the money, but they did not determine whether the budgets were followed. The agencies also required quarterly reports on how much LOVE Social Services had spent from the grants," but "the reports do not describe how the money was spent."¹²⁶

"A lot of people seem to think I should have paid more attention, etc., etc., and I tried to tell them 'That's not my job,'" Stevens said. "We don't have any investigators on Appropriations," he said, claiming "I don't have any way of oversight on these things. Oversight is clearly an executive branch function, and we rely on them to do that."¹²⁷

But executive agencies apparently do not believe it is their job to conduct the oversight of earmarked projects either. Managers from OJJDP say it is difficult scrutinizing grants earmarked by Congress so they rely on the recipients to follow the rules.¹²⁸

The lack of oversight of these projects has been repeatedly brought to the attention of lawmakers.

A 2003 report issued by the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth singled out earmarks for programs for disadvantaged youth as "an especially problematic situation," noting "earmarked programs do not receive the oversight that enables agencies to make sure they

¹²³ Sam Bishop, "Nonprofit leaders express dismay at lack of federal oversight," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 25, 2007.

¹²⁴ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, "Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹²⁵ Sam Bishop, "Nonprofit leaders express dismay at lack of federal oversight," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 25, 2007.

¹²⁶ Sam Bishop, "Sen. Stevens steered funds to nonprofit," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), January 18, 2007.

¹²⁷ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, "Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked," Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹²⁸ Christopher Eshleman, "Former Mayor Jim Hayes found guilty on 16 counts," Fairbanks News-Miner, February 12, 2008.

are actually helping youth, achieving their goals, and making wise use of limited funds. The earmark process also keeps federal agencies, charged with implementing the statutes, from making funding decisions based on a coordinated, identified need to address a specific problem.”¹²⁹

Two years later, the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice issued a report calling for the elimination of all earmarks funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the agency that handled the three LOVE Social Services grants. “Earmarked programs are not held accountable for their effectiveness (or ineffectiveness),” the report stated. “Because these programs bypass the competitive grant process by going directly to a member of Congress, they do not have to meet performance standards nor demonstrate that they work. In fact, it is often difficult for federal agencies to monitor earmarked programs as program staff believe they are not subject to agency oversight because their funding came directly from Congress,” it added.¹³⁰

In the end, it was neither the Senate Appropriations Committee nor DOJ that eventually uncovered the misuse of funds by LOVE Social Services, but rather the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The organization received two other earmarks from Stevens appropriated through HUD and the HUD IG identified irregularities¹³¹ that eventually uncovered the misuse of DOJ funds as well.

Like the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention programs, the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) grants have also been criticized for their inability to demonstrate results.

Weed & Seed is a CCDO program that aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in neighborhoods across the country. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in “weeding out” criminals and community-based organizations collaborate to “seed” prevention, intervention, and treatment services as well as neighborhood restoration programs.¹³²

While Weed & Seed’s goals may be laudable, few studies are available to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. In fact, for well over a decade, GAO reviews have criticized the program for its lack of performance measures.

In its most recent report, GAO found while the Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS) “collected data on a variety of activities taking place at Weed and Seed sites, they

¹²⁹ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, “Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹³⁰ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, “Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹³¹ Rod Boyce and Sam Bishop, “Federal earmarks help support Alaska programs. Too often, how that money is used goes unchecked,” Fairbanks News-Miner (Alaska), March 28, 2007.

¹³² “Weed & Seed,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office website, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html>, accessed June 3, 2010.

generally did not measure the extent to which grantees were weeding crime from neighborhoods and preventing it from recurring.”¹³³

In 1999, GAO identified a number of management shortcomings in the Weed and Seed program and made recommendations for improvements. GAO reassessed the program five years later and concluded “EOWS has not fully implemented any of the management improvement recommendations in 1999.”¹³⁴

GAO concluded “EOWS has not developed outcome performance measures that can be used to adequately track progress toward program outcomes of the Weed and Seed program” and “without requirements to monitor improvements and assign accountability, progress will be difficult to achieve.”¹³⁵

The Performance and Management Assessments of the Weed & Seed conducted by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) also concluded results from the program have not been demonstrated and the program’s measures are inadequate. OMB’s review found:

“1. While Weed and Seed had selected good performance objectives, such as lower homicide rates, it lacks the data to specify a ‘baseline’ against which improvements can be measured. Furthermore, DOJ has been averse to setting goals implying that any level of crime is ‘successful.’

“2. Despite the program’s 11-year history, only a limited number of Weed and Seed sites have been independently evaluated. Those results have been promising, but difficult to generalize given the wide variation in local strategies and effectiveness.”¹³⁶

Local reviews have also failed to identify results from DOJ’s Weed and Seed programs.

The Weed and Seed program of Española, New Mexico, which has received \$600,000 in Weed & Seed grants since 2005, has released no data to show whether its initiatives have reduced crime. “The program struggled in its early years to actually spend that money, and what was spent went to program overhead,”¹³⁷ according to *The Rio Grande Sun* which has concluded that the city’s Weed and Seed has “a blank slate of accomplishments following a \$600,000 spending binge.”¹³⁸ The paper also reported that “the Española Weed and Seed program spent

¹³³ “GRANTS MANAGEMENT: Despite Efforts to Improve Weed and Seed Program Management, Challenges Remain,” Government Accountability Office, March 2004, Page 3; <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04245.pdf> .

¹³⁴ “GRANTS MANAGEMENT: Despite Efforts to Improve Weed and Seed Program Management, Challenges Remain,” Government Accountability Office, March 2004, Page 2; <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04245.pdf> .

¹³⁵ “GRANTS MANAGEMENT: Despite Efforts to Improve Weed and Seed Program Management, Challenges Remain,” Government Accountability Office, March 2004, highlights page; <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04245.pdf> .

¹³⁶ “Performance And Management Assessments,” White House Office of Management and Budget, 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2004/pma/weedandseed.pdf> .

¹³⁷ Sarah Welsh. “Weed/Seed Program Spends \$20,000 on Seven Pages,” *Rio Grande Sun*, February 5, 2009.

¹³⁸ R. Braiden Trapp. “A \$20,000 Survey...Why? Española's Weed and Seed program thought it a good idea to spend \$20,000 on a seven-page report,” *Rio Grande Sun*, February 6, 2009.

\$20,000 last year to commission an evaluation that has provided very little new information, analysis or measures of program outcomes. The evaluation is being conducted by the Taos-based I2I Institute, which billed Weed and Seed last fall for a total of 40 days of work, at \$500 per day. The result, so far, has been two slim reports totaling seven pages, which is the equivalent of \$2,857.14 per page. The primary report summarizes Weed and Seed activities through June 2008 and says it is focused on process, not outcomes.¹³⁹

An audit of the Henderson/Vance Weed and Seed (W&S) program in North Carolina found thousands of dollars in unjustifiable expenses. “It is very apparent that we have no control over the budget or of the W&S coordinator,” admitted then-City Manager Jerry Moss.¹⁴⁰

For well over a decade, independent analyses have concluded that DOJ grant programs are not adequately tracking outcomes. As a result, millions of taxpayer dollars are at risk of being wasted.

DOJ Recreational Activities Duplicate Similar Activities Funded By Other Departments

Funding for recreational activities is not limited to the Department of Justice.

Many of the DOJ’s recreational activities are funded as part of mentor programs or initiatives to prevent drug abuse. There is no shortage of federally funded mentoring programs. Over 100 programs supporting youth mentoring within 13 agencies have been identified by the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth.¹⁴¹

The Department of Education also provides grants with nearly identical goals, missions, and allowable uses of funds. For example, the U.S. Department of Education administers 21st-Century Community Learning Centers funded at \$1.1 billion in FY 2010. Grantees of this program may use funds to support a broad array of activities, including drug and violence prevention programs. The U.S. Department of Education also funds smaller initiatives. For example, it spends over \$300,000 a year fund one cooperative agreement for the development and dissemination of *The Challenge* newsletter, a source of information about effective practices to prevent drug use and violent behavior among youths. The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) provides federal assistance for activities intended to prevent drug abuse and violence prevention and promote the health and well being of students including character and civics education.

¹³⁹ Sarah Welsh. “Weed/Seed Program Spends \$20,000 on Seven Pages,” Rio Grande Sun, February 5, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ William West, “Weed & Seed warning,” The Daily Dispatch (North Carolina), April 5, 2009; <http://henderson.southernheadlines.com/index.cfm?section=68&story=14649> .

¹⁴¹ “Terminations, Reductions, and Savings; Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2010,” White House Office of Management and Budget, page 61; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2010/assets/trs.pdf> .

A number of agencies within the Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) also provide grants for recreational activities intended to prevent drug abuse and promote health and wellness.

From parties to skateboarding to fashion shows and zoo trips to rafting and amusement park rides, federal funds from a variety of government agencies, programs and grants have paid for many of the same recreational activities DOJ is currently paying for with crime prevention funds.

From Texas¹⁴² to West Virginia,¹⁴³ the U.S. Census has hosted block parties across the country this year. Thousands of dollars of Department of Education funds have been spent on party favors and give aways.¹⁴⁴ Funds from a Department of Labor job training grants paid for hotel parties in Ohio¹⁴⁵ and Florida.¹⁴⁶ Federal stimulus funds have paid for a garden party in Ohio¹⁴⁷ and thousands of dollars worth of party supplies in Baltimore, Maryland.¹⁴⁸



This skatepark in El Paso, Texas, was paid for with a \$625,000 grant from HUD's Community Development Block Grant program.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² Hailey Persinger, "Community throws 2010 Census block party," Killeen Daily Herald (Texas), March 27, 2010; <http://www.kdhnews.com/news/story.aspx?s=40295> .

¹⁴³ Kathryn Gregory, "Block party aims to promote census cooperation," The Charleston Gazette (West Virginia), May 28, 2010; <http://dailyme.com/story/201005280002491/block-party-aims-promote-census-cooperation.html> .

¹⁴⁴ Kent Fischer and Molly Motley, "DISD misused federal grants; Exclusive: Federal aid paid for banned items bought with credit cards, records show," The Dallas Morning News, September 24, 2006; <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/localnews/stories/092406dnmetDISD.33f6db4.html> .

¹⁴⁵ Eric Eyre, "State wants \$87,150 in misused Workforce grant funds returned," Charleston Gazette (West Virginia), March 21, 2010; <http://sundaygazette.com/News/Business/201003210353> .

¹⁴⁶ Steve Andrews, "Workforce agency responds to state claims it misspent money," News Channel 8 (Florida), February 24, 2010; <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/feb/23/workforce-agency-responds-state-claims-it-misspent/>.

¹⁴⁷ "Seniors invited to tea, garden party at Schedel Arboretum," Fremont News Messenger (Ohio), June 1, 2010; <http://www.thenews-messenger.com/article/20100601/NEWS01/6010310>.

¹⁴⁸ Annie Linskey, "Baltimore OKs using stimulus funds for prenatal health rally; Almost \$18,000 to go for food, party rentals," The Baltimore Sun (Maryland), September 17, 2009; http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bal-md.ci.rally17sep17_0,6680413.story .

¹⁴⁹ "EL PASO AREA SKATEPARKS," El Paso Skateboard Association, <http://www.ci-el-paso.tx.us/parks/documents/EP%20AREA%20SKATEPARKS%20inventory.pdf> .

DOJ funds cover the costs of constructing skateparks, but at least three other federal departments also pay for skateparks. “If a skatepark is built in conjunction of an old rail bed, there may be federal money through the USDOT [U.S. Department of Transportation]. Other sources include CDBG [Community Development Block Grant program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development] funds,” according to Suburban Rails, which has been designing and building skateparks for more than 25 years.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, the Department of the Interior’s National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund¹⁵¹ currently provide federal funds for skateparks.

DOJ’s Weed and Seed program has sponsored zoo trips as a type of crime prevention,¹⁵² while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also sponsored zoo trips as a form of HIV/AIDS prevention.¹⁵³ Neither department could provide evidence to demonstrate the zoo trips had either outcome.



The federal government has sponsored zoo trips and fashion shows with funds to prevent both crime and HIV/AIDS.

DOJ crime prevention grants have also been spent to put on fashion shows and at least three other Departments—Transportation, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Agriculture (USDA)—have spent federal funds for fashion shows. A USDOT grant is paying for a bicycle “helmet fashion show.”¹⁵⁴ At HHS, a fashion show was held in February as part of “*The Heart*

¹⁵⁰ “Skatepark Planning Guide,” <http://suburbanrails.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/PWDA.woa/wa/loadPage?pageId=1673> .

¹⁵¹ Jody Murphy, “Skate park receives \$100K grant,” News and Sentinel (West Virginia), May 20, 2010, <http://www.newsandsentinel.com/page/content.detail/id/530025.html?nav=5061> .

¹⁵² “In The News,” Erie Weed and Seed website, accessed June 9, 2010, <http://www.erieweedandseed.org/press.html>.

¹⁵³ CDC officials on a conference call with the House Government Reform Committee in response to congressional inquiries, April 19, 2002.

¹⁵⁴ “National Center for Safe Routes to School Announces 34 Fall 2010 Mini-grant Recipients,” National Center for Safe Routes to School press release, June 10, 2010; http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/2010-06-01_mini-grant_recipients_announced.cfm .

Truth” campaign sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)¹⁵⁵ and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has provided support for a “HIV Vaccine Awareness Day” fashion show and reception in Massachusetts.¹⁵⁶ The USDA Cooperative Extension System held a “fashion show depicting costumes in different countries” in Alabama.¹⁵⁷

Like DOJ grants, Department of Education funds have been spent on trips to amusement parks and to go rafting.¹⁵⁸

Video games have been purchased with grants from a variety of federal agencies and departments in addition to DOJ, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services,¹⁵⁹ National Science Foundation,¹⁶¹ and even the Department of Labor.¹⁶²

If DOJ reduced, or even eliminated, funding for any recreational activities that could not demonstrate a reduction in crime, plenty of other sources of funding for these programs remains available across the federal government.

There is even significant overlap and duplication within and among DOJ programs themselves.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) identified “the current overlap within the juvenile justice grant programs” and suggested “possible policy options could include altering the current grant programs to target funding for specific activities in each grant program or consolidating the different grant programs into one large program.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁵ “The Heart Truth® Debuts the Red Dress Collection 2010,” National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website, accessed June 22, 2010; <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/index.htm> .

¹⁵⁶ “HIV Vaccine Awareness Day; Local and National HIV Vaccine Awareness Day Activities,” The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases website, accessed May 17, 2007; <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/NIAID/Templates/General/LeftNavOnly.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID=%7bCC376694-C0A8-49DF-99C2-D3EFF0199F84%7d&NRORIGINALURL=%2fnews%2fevents%2fHVAD%2factivities%2fDefault%2ehtm&NRCACHEHINT=Guest#DC> .

¹⁵⁷ “ANNUAL REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS; THE COMPREHENSIVE ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM;” Alabama A&M University Auburn University Tuskegee University; Fiscal Year 2002, USDA website, accessed June 23, 2010;

<http://www.reeis.usda.gov/web/areera/Combined.CES.AL.report.2002.pdf> .

¹⁵⁸ Eric Kelderman, “GAO Questions How Minority-Serving Colleges Spent Federal Funds,” Chronicle of Higher Education, May 27, 2010; <http://chronicle.com/article/GAO-Questions-How/65720/> .

¹⁵⁹ “Library offers football and rock band for teens,” The Murfreesboro Post (Tennessee), December 31, 2009; <http://www.murfreesboropost.com/library-offers-football-and-rock-band-for-teens-cms-21191> .

¹⁶⁰ Michael Sadowski, “Rowdy seniors enjoy video games at Clymer Library,” Pocono Record (Pennsylvania) May 24, 2010; <http://www.pocorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100524/NEWS/5240311/-1/NEWS01> .

¹⁶¹ “World of wolves open to gamers,” Sydney Morning Herald (Australia), January 2, 2008; <http://www.smh.com.au/digital-life/games/world-of-wolves-open-to-gamers-20090618-cj28.html> .

¹⁶² James Ewinger, “Portage County ordered to repay over \$700,000 in jobs funds,” The Plain Dealer (Ohio), May 18, 2010; http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2010/05/state_portage_mishandled_hundr.html .

¹⁶³ Kristin Finklea, “Juvenile Justice: Legislative History and Current Legislative Issues,” Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2009, page 21.

The Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP Act) includes four major grant programs, funded at \$423.5 million in FY 2010:

- State Formula Grant program;
- Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant program;
- Challenge/ Demonstration Grant; and
- Title V Grant programs.

Another DOJ program, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, also provides funding for juvenile justice efforts.

These juvenile justice programs not only duplicate each other, but also other Department of Justice programs, including the following list, all of which allow funding to be used for juvenile justice programs and efforts:

- Byrne Discretionary Grant Program, which was funded at \$185.3 million in FY 2010, and exists “to prevent crime, improve the criminal justice system, provide victims’ services, and other related activities;”¹⁶⁴
- Byrne Competitive Grant Program, which was funded at \$40 million in FY 2010, and funds broad categories of activity such as preventing crime and drug abuse, enhancing local law enforcement, enhancing local courts, enhancing local corrections and offender reentry;
- Part B State Formula Grants (\$75 million) and Part C Delinquency Prevention Block Grants (not funded this year) “both feature a wide array of purpose areas...that are largely similar. For example, both grant programs include purpose areas for: counseling, mentoring, and training programs; community based programs and services; and after school programs, [among others].”¹⁶⁵
- Part E Challenge Grants (\$91.1 million-earmarked) and Title V Incentive Grants (\$65 million) “all include language allowing OJJDP to provide funding for additional programs not included in the specific purposes areas identified.”¹⁶⁶
- The JABG (\$55 million), Part C Delinquency Prevention Block Grants, and Part B State Formula Grants all allow grant awards to address substance abuse, gang prevention and mental health.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ “Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010,” House Report 111-366, page 680.

¹⁶⁵ Kristin Finklea, “Juvenile Justice: Legislative History and Current Legislative Issues,” Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2009, page 20.

¹⁶⁶ Kristin Finklea, “Juvenile Justice: Legislative History and Current Legislative Issues,” Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2009, page 21.

¹⁶⁷ Kristin Finklea, “Juvenile Justice: Legislative History and Current Legislative Issues,” Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2009, page 21.

The purposes and allowable uses of funds under these programs are very broad with significant overlap and duplication.

Recommendations

The party is over for Washington politicians who spend money we do not have on things we do not need. Our national debt now exceeds \$13 trillion, with every American owing more than \$42,000.

The Department of Justice's primary responsibility is to protect Americans. Yet, future generations of Americans are not being protected when \$1 trillion is being added to the national debt every year to pay for programs that have not demonstrated results.

President Obama pledged to go through the budget line by line and cut programs that do not work or whose benefits are not worth their cost.

For fifteen years, reviews have concluded some DOJ grant programs that fund recreational activities and parties cannot demonstrate success or effectiveness. After a recent review of these programs, the GAO concluded DOJ does not track specific expenditures for recreational activities or the outcomes associated with those activities.¹⁶⁸

Taxpayers deserve better than this.

Congress and the Attorney General should immediately require all DOJ grants to track spending by activity, especially those activities required or recommended as part of the grant. DOJ recommends, for example, Weed and Seed grantees throw parties¹⁶⁹ as a component of crime prevention efforts. As a result, communities across the country have put on all types of parties, from luaus to block parties to Mardi Gras, yet the Department does not require the grantees to account for how taxpayers funds were spent to support these parties or even the amount spent on the parties.

Congress and the Attorney General must also identify measurable goals that can be used as metrics to determine funding for programs and activities. Program administrators should identify the intended outcome of each program and every activity it funds. Then, they should evaluate the actual outcomes to determine how well the goals were met. The goals should be clear and related to the mission of the Department, such as a reduction in certain crimes, rather than self-evaluations of participants. Initiatives demonstrating a greater impact at reducing crime should receive priority in funding over those that show little or no impact. If a program or

¹⁶⁸ Letter from David C. Maurer, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Issues at the Government Accountability Office, to Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D., "Oversight of DOJ Funds for Recreational Activities," June 18, 2010, page 3.

¹⁶⁹ "Weed and Seed DEFY Program Implementation Manual," U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Community Capacity Development Office, accessed June 7, 2010, page 111, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/defypgd.pdf>.

activity repeatedly fails to demonstrate results, it should be eliminated. Duplicative programs that fund similar activities and share similar goals should be consolidated to reduce the cost of overhead and administration.

The House and Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committees must also become more aggressive with oversight of how federal funds are being spent, including funds earmarked by Congress that are not subjected to open and fair competitive bidding. Routine oversight hearings should be conducted to hold DOJ officials, programs, and grant recipients accountable for how funds are being spent and to determine if the activities supported with those funds are effective.

Finally, there is no question DOJ's mission is largely dependent upon effective coordination and cooperation with state and local law enforcement. Yet, a better understanding of the role and responsibility of federal, state, and local governments needs to be set. Local communities, for example, should take a greater role in financing recreational activities and DOJ should focus on those efforts communities are less prepared to address such as terrorism and drug cartel activities.

Again, cooperation is vital to ensuring success, but limited budgets demand Congress eliminate programs that are not demonstrating results and federal funding be prioritized for those activities that only the federal government is capable of performing.