

enforcement agencies. Without meaningful case coordination, law enforcement agencies may inadvertently investigate identical suspects and organizations, target undercover operatives of other law enforcement agencies, or disrupt clandestine investigations of other agencies.

- The obvious need for interagency cooperation and coordination has sustained interest in maintaining standards for ICAC undercover investigations. Representatives from Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies have repeatedly expressed concern about initiating investigations that are based on referrals from outside agencies—referrals that may be predicated on information acquired through inappropriate officer conduct or investigative techniques.

- The clandestine nature of undercover operations, the anonymity of Internet users, and the unclear jurisdictional boundaries of cyberspace significantly exacerbate these investigative concerns. Undercover operations, when executed and documented properly, collect virtually unassailable evidence regarding a suspect's predilection to sexually exploit children. These operations allow law enforcement agencies to go on the offensive and, most important, protect children from revictimization. Although carefully managed undercover operations by well-trained officers can be very effective, these operations also generate concerns regarding legal, coordination, communication, and resource management issues.

3. Although Internet awareness appears to be growing, many children, teenagers, and parents are not sufficiently informed about the potential dangers and repercussions of releasing personal information to, or meeting with, individuals encountered online.

4. Although Federal agencies are responsible for monitoring illegal interstate and telecommunications activities, protecting children is primarily the responsibility of State and local law enforcement agencies. The production of child pornography or the sexual assault of a child—whether originating online or not—usually creates both a jurisdictional interest and a responsibility for State and local authorities.

- Despite the belief that these cases are usually manufactured by undercover operations in which officers pose as minors in chat rooms, most ICAC investigations are initiated in response to a citizen complaint or a request from law enforcement. Unfortunately, these cases often involve multiple victims

who require a response by both local law enforcement and victim services.

5. The Internet is placing a new demand on forensic resources. Computers are piling up in evidence rooms across the country because many agencies do not have the forensic capacity to meet the needs of investigative efforts.

6. A generation ago, officers beginning their law enforcement careers would be issued a uniform, a service weapon, and a notebook. Those items rarely changed during a 20-year career. Today, changes in equipment and software occur seemingly overnight. Officers are hard-pressed to stay current not only with the technological changes but also with a motivated offender community that is adapting these new technologies to exploit children.

To address these observations and concerns, the ICAC Task Force Program implements the following management strategies:

- Maintaining and expanding the nationwide network of State and local law enforcement agencies participating in the program.
- Ensuring that ICAC Task Force personnel are adequately trained and equipped.
- Establishing and/or maintaining ICAC Task Force investigative standards to facilitate interagency case referrals.
- Advocating coordination and collaboration among Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies investigating ICAC offenses.
- Fostering meaningful information-sharing to avoid redundant investigations or activities that could disrupt the ongoing investigations of other agencies.
- Maintaining an ICAC Task Force Board composed of local law enforcement executives and prosecutors to advise OJJDP, formulate policy recommendations, and assess the law enforcement community's needs for training and technical assistance related to investigating Internet crimes.
- Convening an annual ICAC Task Force training conference to focus on child exploitation, emerging technology, and its relevance to criminal activity and enforcement efforts and to enhance the networking essential for sustaining an effective State and local law enforcement response to online crime.

OJJDP established the ICAC Task Force Program Standards through a collaborative process involving the ten original ICAC Task Force agencies, the FBI, NCMEC, USCS, USPIS, CEOS, and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys. The standards were designed by the task force agencies to foster information-sharing, coordinate

investigations, ensure the probative quality of undercover operations, and facilitate interagency case referrals by standardizing investigative practices. In 2002, the ICAC standards were revised and updated to reflect twenty additional ICAC Regional Task Forces and an expanded program focus on the protection of children.

OJJDP has also established an ICAC Task Force Board (the Board) to help administer the ICAC Task Force Program. As a condition of the award, each grantee must designate a policy-level law enforcement official or prosecutor to be a Board member. Although its primary responsibility is to serve as an advisory group to OJJDP, the Board also encourages case coordination and facilitates information-sharing on trends, innovative investigative techniques, and prosecution strategies. Technical advice is provided to the Board by NCMEC, CEOS, the FBI, USCS, and USPIS.

The award also requires that each ICAC Regional Task Force member send at least one investigator and one policy-level official to an ICAC Task Force Program orientation seminar. The seminars, which were developed by OJJDP and NCMEC in consultation with Federal law enforcement agencies, provide information on legal issues, specific investigative techniques, undercover operation documentation requirements, behavioral characteristics of preferential sex offenders, and other topics relevant to child exploitation cases.

To learn about the next seminar scheduled at NCMEC's Jimmy Ryce Law Enforcement Training Center in Alexandria, VA, contact NCMEC at <http://www.missingkids.com>. Expenses associated with attendance at the orientation seminar will be reimbursed by OJJDP and NCMEC. Expenses associated with Board responsibilities will be covered by grant funds.

Goal

The program's goal is to enhance the ICAC investigative response of State and local law enforcement agencies.

Objectives

Projects must accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop or expand multiagency, multijurisdictional regional task forces that include, but are not limited to, representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, and child protective services agencies. Regional task forces should include large regional geographic areas, entire States, or, when applicable, multiple States. Relevant nongovernment organizations may also