

Puerto Rico Criminal Justice System Strategic Plan



Fiscal Years
2014-2018

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Puerto Rico Department of Justice

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Puerto Rico Criminal Justice System Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

The Puerto Rico Department of Justice (PRDJ) is the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) State Administering Agency (SAA) for Puerto Rico. The PRDJ coordinated the development of the Puerto Rico CJS Strategic Plan for the years 2014-2018. A Task Force of four agencies and the Society for Legal Assistance (a public defense organism), identified critical issues facing the criminal justice system in Puerto Rico. The Task Force included representatives of the Police Department, the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, the Society for Legal Assistance, the Courts Administration Office, and of the Department of Justice: the State Prosecutor Office, the Office of Victims Compensation and the Office of the Secretary of Justice. Several meetings were held during a span of seven months to discuss the statistical trends of crime incidence and prosecution of cases in the criminal justice system, their professional experiences in all phases of the criminal justice system and Puerto Rico's socio-economic environment. The dialogues produced a list of needs and ideas in distinct areas.

All ideas were submitted to an exercise to determine challenges and opportunities in their implementation. The dialogue proved to be rich in ideas and discussions, resulting in many new and varied proposals. The exercise was also helpful in the selection of priorities.

This plan is intended to serve as a guideline for the development of specific public policy and planning activities of the Criminal Justice System in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Our aim is to reduce crime and increase the quality of life in Puerto Rico. It will be the framework used to determine decisions to fund programs and projects that will allow the implementation of strategies required to meet identified needs. The plan will be the guiding instrument in establishing priorities among increasing requests for funding in an era of diminishing resources.

In recent years, funds were directed toward the improvement of the operational effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in order to reduce the flow of illegal drugs and narcotics into and through Puerto Rico, to reduce the flow of illegal firearms into Puerto Rico and to reduce the incidence of violent crimes. Funds were also directed to improve the Criminal Justice System so as to strengthen the operational capacity and effectiveness of the criminal investigation and processing system with emphasis on those offenders involved in violent crimes, murders, drugs dealing, child and sexual abuse. Priorities included funding to the forensic laboratories to conduct better analysis of evidence related to violent crimes and the development of a new improved Criminal Justice Record. Improvements to the Juvenile Justice System were also a priority with the intention of reducing juvenile delinquency cases and recidivism and protecting minors in judicial procedures established by law.

In neighborhoods and communities, effective collaborative efforts were encouraged among government, local non-profit organizations, community leaders and law enforcement agencies in order to prevent and control crime and improve the quality of life. As to the correctional system, special emphasis was given to the reduction of use and abuse of controlled substances in penal institutions and the enhancement of the security level and safety of the institutional environment.

A critical part in the selection of JAG 2012 sub-grantees was the gap of resources available vs. needs. Proposals were submitted mostly for Prevention and Education, Law and Order, Corrections and Correctional Community and Criminal Prosecution and Courts. Other areas

with needs were Victims of Crime and Witnesses, Drug Treatment and Planning, and Evaluation and Use of Technology.

The plan is presented in four (4) parts. The first part includes the analysis of information and statistics that were used to determine needs and gaps of each criminal justice program area to be included in the plan. The second part is the summary of needs and the third part constitutes the plan for the next five years organized according to the five strategic imperatives selected for the plan. The last part includes the performance standards and annual evaluation plan.

Various sources were used to obtain the data and provide analysis of program's needs. These included the Uniform Crime Reports, criminal justice plans, researched national data, and multi-agency criminal justice meetings and statistics. Representatives of the agencies and organizations participating in the Strategic Planning Committee also provided valued information.

The agencies and organizations in charge of investigating and prosecuting suspect persons submitted statistics of actions taken in the different stages of the prosecution of criminal cases. The Puerto Rico Police offered information of crime incidence while the Society for Legal Assistance, the State Prosecutor Office and the Courts Administration Office submitted information on cases investigated and processed in the criminal justice system. The Office of Victims Compensation offered information of services rendered to victims and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation of services offered to inmates.

The needs of the programs and agencies were identified not only through the statistical data but through the criminal justice professionals participating in the Planning Committee and the solicitation of JAG 2013 funds of more than 120 organizations, agencies and municipalities.

The strategies selected by the Committee address major criminal justice challenges that need resources in order to increase public safety. These are: reduction of crime, drug traffic, and drug related crimes and the flow of illegal arms; improve data collection efforts; promote the reorganization of the prosecution system, including training for criminal justice professionals; promote technology and information systems improvement efforts; and promote citizens education and crime and drug prevention campaigns.

Vision

The Committee selected the following as its vision for next five years:

Promote order and peace so as to improve the quality of life of the people of Puerto Rico, through the reduction of violence and the incidence of crime; by means of, promoting education and prevention programs, reducing impunity, promoting rehabilitation programs for addicts and inmates, and fostering, for the common good, a culture of work and the sense of belonging and hope in the communities.

Data Analysis

1. Drug Traffic and Drug Use in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico was designated in 1994 as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) because of the Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) accounted for trafficking of cocaine from Colombia using multiple transportation methods.

The United Nations estimated that by 1999 the Caribbean had, for the first time in years, outstripped the Mexican border as leading point of entry for cocaine into the United States. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico is located close to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which is considered the primary Caribbean drug hub and a major source of drug trafficking via Puerto Rico. The geophysical composition of the Caribbean islands, with more than 50 small islets facilitates clandestine activities. The more than 700 miles of coastline and tropical forests in the inland make it also ideal for drug smuggling.

A report by the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control of September 2012 states that Puerto Rico serves as an important entry point for illicit drugs to the U.S.A. Once drugs enter Puerto Rico, the drugs are inside the U.S. customs zone and no longer subject to subsequent inspections. It is then relatively easy to transport them to United States by plane. It is estimated that 70 to 80 percent of cocaine that transits Puerto Rico is destined to the continental United States.

According to this report, the Drug Enforcement Administration reported that cocaine seizures along maritime routes between Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands increased from two metric tons in 2009 to seven metric tons in the first three quarters of 2010.

Cocaine, marihuana and heroin enter the island primarily via maritime routes in container ships and private vessels. Go-fast boats and small, island –hopping freighters are among sea vessels used.

The Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) was created to unify efforts of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the Puerto Rico Police Department’s Maritime Unit. The CBIG conducts maritime interdiction efforts based on intelligence provided by law enforcement agencies. Routine patrol activities are also conducted by these entities.

Between September 2012 and October 2013 the CBIG has seized 27,650 kilograms of cocaine in partnership with regional law enforcement authorities in the Caribbean. The wholesale value for these seizures is worth more than \$829 million.

Along with the traffic of drugs, drug related violence in Puerto Rico has increased in recent years. This high level of violence is due to local use of drugs and gang problems related to drug distribution and to the Island strategic point of entry to the continental United States. Puerto Rico drug consumption is estimated at about 30 percent of the drugs transshipped and the predominant drug of choice is cocaine.

The transportation of illegal firearms through airports and ports has also increased, according to the Puerto Rico Police. The information is that firearms and parts of firearms enter the Island to be used by gangs in violent crimes. A total of 1,494 illegal firearms were seized last year by the PR Police.

As of 2009, the number of drug addicts and alcohol abusers was estimated at 100, 000 and 191,000, respectively. A total of 10,499 drug addicts received detox and ambulatory treatment in 2011, of which, 59% was between 21- 30 years of age and 47% had dropped out of school. The total population of the Drug Courts Program for 2011 was 1,039 with a retention rate of 89.7 percent. The TASC Program offered services to 1,222 participants. The profile of inmates as of June 30, 2010 showed that over 60% were regular drug users in the street and that 61.3% of the inmates showed some kind of drug abuse and dependency.

A study conducted in the School Years 2010 and 2012 for the Administration of Mental Health and Drug Addiction Services among middle and high school students in 120 public and private schools, shows that 48.6% were using alcohol and 15.1% were using illicit drugs. The study also shows that the prevalence of marihuana use increased from 6.1% in the period of 2005-2007 to 12.4% for the period of 2010- 2012. This alarming statistic together with a high dropout rate from school makes young people more vulnerable to be lured into the world of organized crime.

2. Violent Crime in Puerto Rico

In the year 2012, there were 978 murders and homicides in the island of Puerto Rico, a reduction of 186 from the previous year. In 2011 the total murders and homicides were 1,164, for a rate of 31.50 per 100,000 inhabitants. The World Health Organization considers that a country with more than 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants suffers an epidemic of violence; Puerto Rico rate is three times this standard.

The table below illustrates the violent crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants for 2012 compared with various previous years.

Violent Crime Rate in Puerto Rico

Year	Violent Crimes (Rate per 100,000 inhabitants)
2012	273.81
2011	285.91
2008	243.13
2005	245.62

Source: Statistics Division, Puerto Rico Police; Census of Population

Although the number of murders and homicides present a reduction from last year, the violent crimes rate has increased compared to the previous four years. According to the Puerto Rico Police, over 70% of the murders were connected to drug trafficking activity. Statistics show that 80 percent of the murders occur among the population between the ages of 10 to 39 years. In 2009, the male population between 15 and 29 years of age were the prime victims of murders.

The most popular drugs in the market are marihuana, cocaine and heroin. HIDTA officials estimate that 20 to 30 percent of the cocaine that arrives in Puerto Rico is consumed in the island. The Office of National Drug Control Policy also mentions in its publication “Puerto Rico Profile of Drug Indicators” (March 2007) that cocaine poses a significant drug threat to Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has experienced many socio-economic transformations in the last decades

which have contributed to an increase in crime and violence. Among these changes is the transformation of the family structure from a traditional family to diverse families, most of which are single mother's families. A high percentage of single mother's families are teenagers that became pregnant at school and do not have the maturity and preparation to raise children. These dysfunctional families usually live in unsecure environments; use public assistance programs and manifest more materialistic values than their parents.

Experts of the social conduct have also cited the lack of formal education due to a high dropout rate from high school and lack of access to formal employment as factors affecting crime and violence. Poverty has increased and young professionals are leaving the island looking for jobs and better quality of life. The informal underground economy of drugs distribution provides an alternative to young adults that enter the life of crime, since compensation in underground economy is higher than a full time job at minimum wage.

3. Robbery, burglary and auto thefts

The incidence of robbery has fluctuated with a tendency to increase between 2008 and 2012. The table below shows a rate per 100,000 inhabitants of 145.36 in 2008, while the rate for 2012 was of 169.03 per 100,000 inhabitants. The rate for the Nation was 113.7 in 2011 and two states, with similar population as Puerto Rico, had a rate of 102.7 (Connecticut) and 86.6 (Oklahoma) in 2011.

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Robbery rate per 100,000 inhabitants
Years 2008 to 2012

Year	Number of robberies	Rate per 100,000 inhabitants
2008	5,467	145.36
2009	6,096	162.97
2010	6,590	176.87
2011	6,465	173.52
2012	6,298	169.03

Source: Statistics Division, Puerto Rico Police; Population estimated by the Puerto Rico Planning Board

On the other hand, burglary crimes have declined through the last five years. The rate per 100,000 inhabitants showed a decline from 508.87 in 2008 to 410.30 in 2012. The national rate was 733.0 in 2008 and 702.2 in 2011.

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Burglary rate per 100,000 inhabitants
Years 2008 to 2012

Year	Number of burglaries	Rate per 100,000 inhabitants
2008	19,138	508.87
2009	18,539	495.64
2010	17,880	479.89
2011	16,591	445.30
2012	15,287	410.30

Source: Statistics Division, Puerto Rico Police; Population estimated by the Puerto Rico Planning Board

Auto thefts were significantly reduced from 7,003 in 2008 to 5,847. This tendency was sustained during the five year period. The reduction was mostly the result of new powers given to the P.R. Police by a new law enacted by the Legislature in 2009. During the five year period

for which statistics are available, the rate of auto thefts per 100,000 inhabitants was as follows: 186.20 (2008), 182.70 (2009), 182.80 (2010), 157.09 (2011), 156.93 (2012). The rate for Nation in 2011 was 229.6 per 100,000 inhabitants.

4. Incidents of youth offenses reported by the Police

The Puerto Rico Police reported a substantial decrease in the minors intervened for offenses against persons between the years 2009 and 2012. The trend observed during the last four years is due to a reduction of 45.8% of minors intervened for assaults offenses.

Offenses against property show a high incidence of burglary, vandalism and larceny, while offenses against society are mostly related to drugs and weapons.

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Number of Minors Intervened by Type of Offense, Years 2009 to 2012

Type A Offenses	Year			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Against Persons	5,271	4,206	4,027	2,915
Assaults	4,823	3,828	3,615	2,611
Homicide	5	8	6	4
Sex offenses/forcible	285	217	208	198
Sex offenses/non-forcible	158	153	198	102
Against Property	1,761	1,445	1,528	1,269
Against Society	1,121	950	904	865

Source: Statistics Division, Puerto Rico Police

The Administration of Juvenile Institutions reported in 2011 that a total of 41 percent of all offenders in the institutions were adjudicated for drug related offenses. The intake information of the population in the institutions for the same year shows that 86.9 percent were using alcohol and illicit drugs, 59.6 percent of which were using marihuana.

5. Criminal and Delinquency Cases Submitted to the Courts

Trends in Criminal Cases

All criminal cases investigated and submitted to the Courts showed a tendency to decrease in the last five years. The reduction of criminal cases submitted to the Courts was of 17.6 % between the FY 2007-08 and the FY 2011-12. Offenses submitted to minors in the Courts in the same period of time showed a reduction of 18.6 percent.

Around 45% of all criminal cases were related to illegal drugs, illegal arms and domestic violence. Cases against the Weapons Law showed a tendency to increase, 7.95% from FY 2008 to FY 2012.

Disposition of cases submitted to the Superior Courts by type of crime, Fiscal Years 2009-10 to 2011-12							
Fiscal Year	Total Cases Submitted	Cases resolved	Convictions	Percent of convictions of disposed cases	Cases filed	Percent of filings of disposed cases	
Type of crime							
2009-10							
Total	74,915	55,409	30,111	54.30%	21,585	38.90%	
serious crimes	41,413	30,224	21,825	72.20%	6,427	21.26%	
misdemeanors	33,502	25,185	8,286	32.90%	15,158	60.10%	
2010-11							
Total	69,855	51,643	29,313	56.70%	19,203	37.10%	
serious crimes	39,954	28,911	21,857	75.60%	5,506	19%	
misdemeanors	29,901	22,732	7,456	32.70%	13,697	60.25%	
2011-12							
Total	69,050	52,841	31,224	59%	18,466	34.90%	
serious crimes	41,382	31,537	23,995	76%	5,879	18.60%	
misdemeanors	27,668	21,304	7,229	33.90%	12,587	59%	

Source: Statistics Office, Courts Administration Office

Serious crimes and misdemeanors

Most of criminal cases under the consideration of the Superior Courts for the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 were serious crimes. The percentage of serious crimes under the consideration of the Courts increased during the last three years to 59.9% in the fiscal year 2011-2012. The number of serious crime cases resolved represented 72 percent of all serious crime cases under consideration in 2009-10, 72.3% in 2010-11 and 76.2% percent in 2011-12. Convictions represented 76% of the disposition of serious crimes in the last fiscal year while 18.6% were dismissed.

As to misdemeanors, the percentage of convictions was 33.9% of the cases solved during the fiscal year 2011-2012. The cases dismissed represented 59 percent of misdemeanors solved. These percentages are similar to the two previous years.

Special Laws: Domestic Violence and Weapons Law

The percentage of domestic violence cases that were solved, with a conviction of the suspect, increased from 58.4% to 63.9% during the last three years. There was a 25% decrease in the number of cases dismissed for the same period of time.

Disposition of Domestic Violence Law cases in Puerto Rico: Fiscal Years 2009-10 to 2011-12

Fiscal Year	Total cases solved	Convictions	Acquittals	Dismissed
2009-10	3,524	2,061	512	924
2010-11	3,470	2,129	425	863
2011-12	3,283	2,099	438	693

Source: Statistics Office, Courts Administration Office

Between FY 2009-10 and FY 2011-12 there was an increase in convictions in weapons law cases of 10.4% and a 20.6% increase in cases dismissed. Convictions were in the range of 68 to 63 percent of all weapon law cases solved.

Disposition of Weapons Law cases in Puerto Rico: Fiscal Years 2009-10 to 2011-12

Fiscal Year	Total cases solved	Convictions	Acquittals	Dismissed
2009-10	6,157	3,869	492	1,721
2010-11	6,040	4,108	281	1,594
2011-12	6,677	4,270	270	2,076

Source: Statistics Office, Courts Administration Office

Trends in Delinquency Cases

It has been proven that environmental, cultural, social and psychological risks and protection factors increase or reduce the probabilities that a person begin or remain using drugs or develop troublesome behavior. Experts on human behavior, particularly in Puerto Rico, have recognized that the lack of discipline and good role models in the family leads to disruptive violent behavior or drug abuse. At the middle school level we encounter more frequent problems with disruptive students, which translate into absenteeism and constant challenge to the authority. The statistics of the PR Department of Education show that 34% of students dropped out of school in 2010, 32% of them were middle and high school students. In 2013, the Secretary of Education estimates that the dropout rate in public schools has increased to 40 percent.

The movement of delinquency cases in the Minors Prosecutors Office shows a tendency to a decrease in complaints investigated and petitions submitted to Courts in the last two fiscal years. Also the offenses adjudicated and minors adjudicated show a decrease in the last two years.

**Puerto Rico Minors Prosecutors Office
Movement of Delinquency Cases
FY 2011 and FY 2012**

Delinquency cases	2011	2012	Change	Percentage of change
Complaints investigated	9,073	8,528	-545	-6.01%
Petitions submitted to Courts	6,429	5,641	-788	-12.26%
Petitions submitted for probable cause	6,106	5,387	-719	-11.78%
-Probable cause determined	5,042	4,709	-333	-6.60%
Petitions submitted to adjudicatory hearings	5,038	4,745	-293	-5.82%
Offenses adjudicated	4,282	4,151	-131	-3.06%
Minors adjudicated	2,265	2,019	-246	-10.86%

Source: Division of Planning and Statistics, Department of Justice

The total offenses submitted and disposed by the Courts also show a tendency to decrease during the last five years. There was a reduction of 26.8% in the offenses disposed in 2011-12 compared to the FY 2007-08. However, the resolution index increased from 104.8 in 2007-08 to 106.7 in 2011-12.

**Number of Minors Offenses Submitted to the PR Superior Courts
FY 2007-2008 to FY 2011-2012**

Fiscal Year	Number of cases at the beginning of the year	Submitted during the year	Total offenses	Disposed offenses	Number of cases pending at the end of the year
2007-2008	2,769	6,875	9,644	7,159	2,485
2008-2009	2,485	5,937	8,422	6,147	2,275
2009-2010	2,275	5,442	7,717	5,463	2,254
2010-2011	2,254	5,426	7,680	5,373	2,307
2011-2012	2,307	4,911	7,218	5,242	1,976

Source: Statistics Office, Courts Administration Office

The five types of offenses most frequently submitted to the courts were for aggravated assault, offenses against traffic laws, illegal arms possession or distribution, disruptive conduct and drug related crimes.

The profile of the minors which committed offenses during the year 2011-12 was as follows:

- 80% were masculine and 20% feminine
- 83.4% did not had previous offenses
- 73% were between 15 and 17 years of age
- 72.7 were attending school
- 53.8% reported that their families were depended of some type of public assistance

Needs

One of the areas extensively discussed by the Strategic Planning Committee was the data collection and analysis of criminal incidence. It is the understanding of the members of the Committee, that citizens have the impression that the number of criminal incidents are higher than those reported to law enforcement authorities. This is considered an effect of victim's lack of trust in Police effectiveness, specifically when called to intervene in misdemeanor cases. The time lapsed from the citizen's call and the Police response is too long and often considered of no effect in order to take action or prosecute delinquents. Consequently, incidents are not informed to the Police.

The lack of resources in the Police Force limits the number of policemen assigned to patrol the communities, a condition which is also cited as a possible variable in the decrease of minor crimes incidents reported. Many hours were spent discussing the theory of the broken window and its success in other jurisdictions. The members of the Committee recommended that policemen should be assigned to risk communities and offenders should be prosecuted for

misdemeanors. These actions will help deter the increase of criminal incidents in high risk communities.

Scientific studies in selected communities are alternatives proposed to complement official crime incidents statistics. Several professionals and organizations have also made public their concern for the lack of records and collection of incidents of human traffic and cybernetic crimes. However, statistics of cybernetic crimes are collected by the P.R. Police and the P.R. Department of Justice.

Disappointment among the victims, and possible witnesses, as to the way policemen and prosecutors manage their participation in the prosecution of criminal cases, is well known among the professionals that intervene in the criminal justice area. Many witnesses also distrust the law enforcement officers capability to offer them a secure environment during the prosecution of the cases they are involved. Most of the witnesses reside in neighborhoods controlled by gangs and are afraid of being threatened and their family being harmed.

Also, many rural and urban communities are suffering the incidence of continuous vandalism and property crimes. These crimes are seldom reported because residents are aware they will not recuperate their belongings and will be subject to a difficult and time consuming prosecution process if crimes are cleared. There is a need to educate the victims of the important role the witness has in the fight against crime. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors must be trained to manage adequately their interaction with victims and witnesses during the investigation and prosecution process. In order to reduce impunity, prosecutors need to team with witnesses programs to facilitate social and protection services for the victims and witnesses, according to their needs.

There has been an increase in new prosecutors and judges selected to occupy vacant positions in the criminal prosecution system. The Puerto Rico Police has also recruited many new officers to substitute well trained policemen that opted for retirement in the last few years. All of these officers must receive training in investigation techniques and other areas of the criminal process. Continuous education for experienced policemen, prosecutors and judges must be enhanced with practical workshops. Case protocols and recruiting and supervision procedures are also areas that have to be reviewed and new processes implemented in order to effectively prosecute criminal cases.

One area where efforts are currently focused is the development of information systems and technology resources. The State Prosecutors Office, the State Minors Prosecutors Office, the Courts and the P.R. Police are among the criminal justice system agencies engaged in the development of new systems and technologies. Other agencies are aware of the need to develop or update their systems so as to be more efficient and effective and will be working toward that goal in the next few years. One of these agencies is the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation which must develop new technologies to provide a secure environment in its institutions. The Puerto Rico Criminal Justice Information System is giving support to all agencies in this effort.

The federal law enforcement agencies in the Caribbean have organized several strike groups to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations and secure the borders of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands against illegal migrant and drug smuggling. Puerto Rico ports and airports are also under surveillance due to illegal arms and drug traffic. The Puerto Rico Police participates through its Joint Forces of Rapid Actions in this effort.

The P.R. Police Department (PRPD) has a Strike Force to intervene the local drug distribution sites. More efforts are needed to investigate and prosecute those who finance the drug market and are major distributors in the insular area. Police intervention in public housing neighborhoods has been increasingly difficult due to the strong participation of all residents in drug distribution within their complex. Some communities and geographical sectors are also subject to the control of drug dealers. New techniques and strategies have to be developed to cope with this problem.

The Puerto Rico Police Department enter into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice this year in order to deliver policing services in a matter that upholds civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the U.S. and the Commonwealth of P.R. The agreement recognizes that public safety, constitutional policing, and community's trust in its police force are interdependent. In order to comply with the agreement, the PRPD is working on a reform that will provide the police officers with the training, resources, guidance and tools to fight crime effectively.

In the correctional institutions, cellular and drug traffic has increased in the last years. There is an urgent need to install and update technology used for the detection of cellular and drug smuggling. Otherwise, the leaders of organized criminal gangs will continue to communicate with and use inmates in their criminal activities. Also better identification and validation of inmates' identities and an inmate management system must be developed in order to enhance security in the correctional institutions.

Overall, the citizens of Puerto Rico have little knowledge of how criminal cases are investigated and of the criminal justice prosecution system. There is also little knowledge of the effects of drug use and its consequences. Education and prevention campaigns are required on a continuous basis. Low cost but effective strategies are needed to involve children and youth in constructive dialogue of drug use effects and criminal acts prevention.

Strategic Imperatives, Goals and Strategic Objectives

Overview of Puerto Rico Socio-Economic Conditions

Several conditions were determinant in the selection of priorities and strategies. Among the areas considered relevant to criminal behavior and the prosecution system was the transformation of the social and economic systems of Puerto Rico, the incidence of crime and the perception of the citizens of the criminal justice system. A summary of the highlights of these areas follows.

Puerto Rico's economy is closely linked to the United States economy. Around 71% of our exports go to the United States, while 42% of our imports come from the United States. Since 2006, Puerto Rico entered a recession that has prevailed for the last seven years. Puerto Rico economy continues to show a tendency to contraction of its real gross national product (RGNP). Last year, the RGNP decreased by 0.4 %, the current forecast for FY 2014 is that it will grow by 0.2%. The unemployment rate for FY2013 was 14.0%.

Actual economic conditions are in part the effect of serious transformations in our economic structures in the last decades. The economy of the island has been moving toward a strong

service sector and a reduction of labor intensive manufacturing investment. Construction and government jobs have also showed a reduction due to the recession and the government fiscal conditions.

The social structure has also suffered changes. Many young professionals have left the island looking for jobs and to seek a better quality of life. The last Census reflected a reduction in population and an increase in the number of old age population. Around 50.6% of families live under the poverty index, while single women represent 30% of all heads of households.

Since 1999, the Caribbean outstripped the Mexican border as leading point of entry for cocaine into the United States. The increase of drug transshipment and distribution in and near Puerto Rico's borders produced continuous threats to the island's security and an increase in drug related crimes. Various organized crime groups have been dismantled in the last two years by the Federal and State Strike Forces. However, although there is a tendency to a reduction in violent crimes, the number of murders and homicides maintain a high incidence rate.

There is a negative perception of the citizens of the effectiveness of the law and order agencies. Several factors fuel this perception. One is that streets and public spaces have become frequent places for mafia type executions. The other is citizen's perception that policemen are ineffective in answering calls to intervene in misdemeanors cases in their communities.

As to the justice system, citizens perceive that low bails in courts and high bonus in the penal institutions benefit criminals beyond public accepted criteria. Also there is a general concept that the prosecution of criminal cases is slow and that witnesses do not receive adequate protection and orientation of prosecutors and policemen so as to promote their participation in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases.

On the contrary, many community leaders and families of victims have organized diverse groups to promote crime prevention, establish shelters for victims and promote support services for victims and their families.

Strategic Imperatives, Goals and Strategic Objectives

Five strategic imperatives were selected for this plan and are presented in order of priority. The five strategic imperatives are: Crime, Drugs and Illegal Arms Control; Prevention of Crime and of Drugs Use and Abuse; Restructure the Criminal Justice System; First Rate Technology Resources and Updated Information Systems; and Enhance the Criminal Incidence Statistics System. The first two imperatives were considered at the same level of priority, that is, first priority.

The plan comprises goals and strategic objectives for the next five years. The goals and strategic objectives were organized according to the strategic imperatives to which they belong. The next section will include the performance standards and evaluation plan for the next five years.

Strategic Imperative I: Crime, Drugs and Illegal Arms Control

Goal I.1 Improve the effectiveness of activities to control crime and the traffic of illegal drugs and arms.

Strategic Objectives

I.1.1 Identify amendments needed in enacted laws in order to provide Police with authorization to intervene in specific instances and offenses.

I.1.2 Provide additional resources to the Strike Forces in order to identify big dealers and finance lords of the illegal drugs market.

I.1.3 Train the Police Force and provide them with resources to intervene communities with a high criminal incidence rate and those identified as high risk communities.

I.1.4 Organize P.R. Police Strike Teams with the participation of criminal analysts and undercover agents and agencies, such as, the Treasury Department and the Transportation and Public Works Department, to intervene with high scale drug dealers.

I.1.5 Modify protocols so that all misdemeanors cases must be submitted to the Prosecutor's Offices

I.1.6 Investigate, arrest and prosecute perpetrators of misdemeanors cases.

I.1.7 In coordination with the Treasury Department, increase inspection of shipping containers for arms, drugs and fireworks, and fine violators that import unauthorized fireworks.

I.1.8 Maintain and expand pretrial diversion programs in order to reduce offenders' recidivism.

I.1.9 Maintain and strengthen the services of the Centers for Assistance of Victims of Crimes.

Goal I.2 Improve security and services in the correctional facilities

Strategic Objectives

I.2.1 Provide drug treatment services to inmates in the Correctional Institutions.

I.2.2 Provide mental health treatment services to inmates in the Correctional Institutions.

I.2.3 Increase security in the Correctional Institutions with new technology and new protocols.

I.2.4 Control drugs, arms and cellular illegal traffic in the Correctional Institutions.

Strategic Imperative II: Prevention of Crime and of Drugs Use and Abuse

Goal II.1 Promote education and prevention campaigns using diverse medias on a continuous basis.
Strategic Objectives
II.1.1 Increase and sustain without interruption campaigns that educate on the effects and consequences of using illegal drugs.
II.1.2 Develop prevention campaigns and services for high risk youth, such as, school dropouts and children of the correctional system's inmates.
II.1.3 Promote the design of prevention campaigns by media professionals with the participation of citizens and students active in their communities efforts to reduce crime.
II.1.4 Distribute through social networks and cellular messages campaigns designed by citizens and students with the support of media professionals.
II.1.5 Develop with media professionals, videos to educate the public on issues such as the purpose and use of bails in criminal cases and the use of bonus in the correctional institutions to reduce time served; and publish them through monitors in public waiting rooms.
II.1.6 Promote prevention activities and community agreements to reduce violence in high risk communities through the empowerment of community leaders and organizations.
II.1.7 Promote that employees of the criminal justice system agencies offer, as a community service, conferences to educate the students and their parents on relevant issues.

Strategic Imperative III: Restructure the Criminal Prosecution System

Goal III.1: Increase the effectiveness of the criminal cases prosecution system.
Strategic Objectives
III.1.1 By 2015, review the process of recruiting prosecutors, judges and public defense lawyers and offer recommendations to improve the selection of lawyers to these positions.
III.1.2 Offer training on new investigative techniques to policemen and prosecutors on a continuous basis.
III.1.3 Provide immediate basic trainings to new policemen, prosecutors and judges recruited each year.
III.1.4 Provide staff support and technology resources to prosecutors, public defense lawyers and judges in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases according to needs and resources available.
III.1.5 Offer continuous trainings to policemen and prosecutors in order to establish effective interaction with victims and witnesses.
III.1.6 Develop curriculums for the Academies and Institutes of the Criminal Justice System that include best practices, a common message and transversal education.
III.1.7 By 2015, review case protocols to make them more efficient and effective.

Strategic Imperative IV: First Rate Technology Resources and Updated Information Systems

Goal IV.1 Increase availability and use of technology resources and the exchange of information among the law enforcement agencies.

Strategic Objectives

IV.1.1 Continue the implementation of the following information systems:

- SUMAC and OPA- Courts Administration Office
- RCI- State Prosecutors Office- P.R. Department of Justice
- MIR- Minors Prosecutor Office- P.R. Department of Justice

IV.1.2 Increase security in the correctional institutions through the use of new technology and the development of inmates identification and management information systems.

IV.1.3 Provide new technology to the Puerto Rico Police for the prevention and investigation of criminal incidents.

IV.1.4 Improve the technology used by the Forensic Sciences Institute for the analysis of evidence in criminal cases.

IV.1.3 By 2015, obtain the exchange of information between the law enforcement agencies on a continuous basis.

Strategic Imperative V: Enhance the Criminal Incidence Statistics System

Goal V.1 Provide the justice system with new and reliable data to support decision making.

Strategic Objectives

V.1.1 Collect data of cybernetic crimes and human traffic.

V.1.2 Promote that universities and social researchers develop periodic studies of citizens' perception of criminal incidence, safety and police effectiveness.

V.1.3 2 Promote studies and surveys of specific communities and age groups that can be useful to design prevention campaigns and activities.

V.1.4 Maintain data bases of criminal incidence and prosecution of cases that are valid, reliable, accurate and timely.

Evaluation and Performance Measurements

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan will be evaluated every two years to determine accomplishments and problems encountered in the implementation of the plan. All the projects financed through JAG funds will be assessed as to programmatic completion, use of funds and strategic goals and objectives met.

Those problems identified will be analyzed and new strategies will be designed to overcome difficulties in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. If needed, changes or modifications to proposed goals and objectives will be approved.

Application Evaluation and Project Monitoring

The Division of External Resources (DER) of the Department of Justice will make available to the public the goals and objectives of JAG Strategic Plan, when publishing the request for proposals to sub-grantees. Public comment and feedback will be documented and when applicable, may be included in the plan.

The staff of the DER will continue to evaluate the sub-recipients applications before submitting the proposals to the Review Committee. During the evaluation process, the staff will review the applications so as to determine if they comply with JAG regulations and with the requirements of the proposals submission; that is, a clear problem statement including description of target population, a plan that includes goals, objectives and activities that address the problem statement, and an evaluation plan with performance indicators to measure process outputs and program outcomes. Other components subject to evaluation will be the methods of data collection included in the application and compliance with strategic goals and objectives.

All JAG sub-grantees are informed by the DER, upon the awarding process, of the data collection requirements as well as the performance measures that the project will be measured by. A critical portion of compliance by the sub-awarded projects is timely and adequate compliance with these requirements.

JAG sub-grantees are subject to monitoring activities as part of an ongoing evaluation process of project implementation and their compliance with programmatic and fiscal requirements. Technical assistance to project personnel is offered as requested or when deemed necessary by the monitoring staff.

The monitoring process includes a desk monitoring to compile programmatic and fiscal reports that must be submitted by grant recipients. It includes telephone contacts with grant recipients to require additional information or reports not submitted. All documents are reviewed to determine compliance with laws, regulations and contractual agreements, and risk factors that can constitute barriers to the implementation of the project.

Site monitoring visits are conducted at least once a year to each project. The monitoring report is shared with the grantee at the draft and final stages of the report; corrective action reports are required when needed. Follow up to site monitoring is accomplished by either desk or site monitoring.

The monitoring cycle to each project comprises four areas: Review of the organization regulations, certifications, administrative procedures and fiscal system; Organization and administration of the project; Operational systems and services and performance standards; and

Closeout documents, evidences and procedures, fiscal and programmatic. A site monitoring is required for each of the above areas during the life of the project.

Besides, sub-recipients are required to submit those reports and performance measures needed to comply with the Bureau of Justice Assistance regulations.