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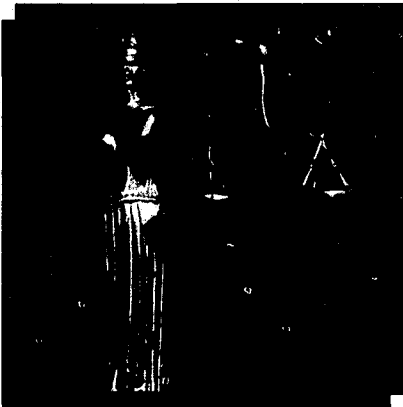
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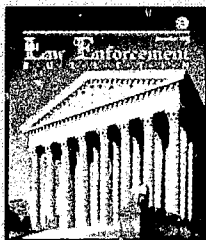
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**On the Cover:** During the 1991-1992 term, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down several decisions of particular interest to law enforcement. See article p. 25. (Cover photo © Pete Salutos, 1992, Tony Stone Worldwide.)

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William S. Sessions, Director

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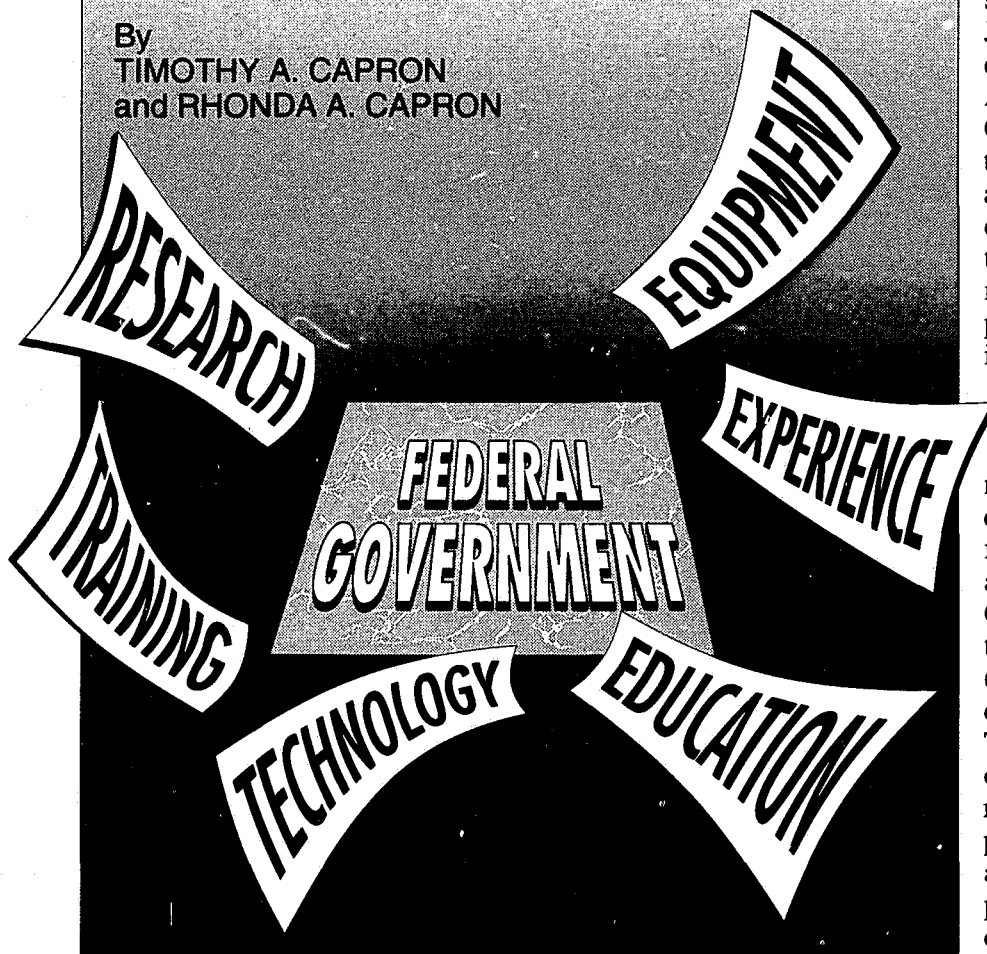
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# Federal Assistance to Law Enforcement

By  
TIMOTHY A. CAPRON  
and RHONDA A. CAPRON



**T**oday, Federal laboratories, research facilities, and agencies cooperate with colleges and universities, State and local governments, and private businesses to promote the transfer of technology and the sharing of other resources. However, only a few criminal justice professionals tap this resource in search of solutions to existing law enforcement

problems, perhaps because policing, and indeed the administration of justice, remains very decentralized, with over 19,000 law enforcement agencies of various kinds throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> Because these agencies face serious problems, such as shrinking budgets and reduced staff levels, it becomes even more imperative that law enforcement administrators explore

the possibility of using available Federal research, databases, and resources to solve some of their problems.

Most criminal justice professionals contact the Department of Justice (DoJ) when they need Federal assistance. In fact, the Justice Assistance Act of 1984 created the Office of Justice Programs in order to coordinate the joint efforts of DoJ and State and local agencies. However, reduced resources may require the Federal Government to provide more assistance than it has in the past. Criminal justice professionals, in turn, must recognize and make use of this valuable asset.

The Federal Government already invests large amounts of money in research projects that could possibly render valuable information to other agencies. For example, over a 2-year period, the Government invested \$16 billion in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) Program for the research and development of new technology.<sup>2</sup> This figure represents the cost of only *one* program. In addition to receiving funds for such specific projects, many laboratories and agencies also receive annual appropriations that exceed some State and criminal justice agency budgets.

How can law enforcement agencies take advantage of these vast resources? They can begin by familiarizing themselves with applicable legislation. This article discusses legislation relevant to law enforcement agencies, as well as how to apply this legislation successfully.

## LEGISLATION

Legislation exists to encourage Federal laboratories and agencies to share information, technology, and

even products. National Defense Authorization Bills and other Federal legislation deal specifically with technology transfer, some of which may impact on law enforcement. This legislation promotes the transfer of technology to benefit the U.S. economy. Examples include the Stevenson-Wylder Technology Innovation Act of 1980, the Bayh-Dole University and Small Business Patent Procedure Act of 1980, the National Cooperative Research Act of 1984, the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986, and the National Competitiveness Technology Transfer Act of 1989.

Universities and States can now work together with defense laboratories to establish forensic science departments. Also, Federal laboratories can lend both equipment and employees, who serve as instructors in the joint projects, and private individuals can now receive data on military technology. This, in turn, allows agencies to identify transferable technology that may prove helpful.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, there exists the Federal Laboratories Consortium for Technology Transfer (FLC), composed of more than 500 Federal laboratories and research centers. Divided into regions, the FLC has regional coordinators to locate laboratories, divisions, and other individuals who could assist inquiring agencies.

Both the FLC and the existing legislation promote cooperative ventures. For example, the California State Department of Justice recently opened a DNA crime lab in a collaborative agreement with a government-owned facility.<sup>4</sup> However, while these cooperative agreements



*Lieutenant Colonel Capron, U.S. Army, is commander of the Nuclear Weapons Training Detachment at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico.*



*Mrs. Capron is a branch chief, Personnel Security Division, Department of Energy, Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

provide avenues into the Federal system, agencies need to apply this legislation in specific areas that they might find helpful.

## **SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning provides overall guidance and direction to organizations, usually for a 10- to 15-year period. Criminal justice agencies benefit from long-range plans that pinpoint the agencies' goals, programs, and likely resources. Agencies should base their long-range plans on demographic projections, technological developments, etc. The process of developing an effective long-range plan can, however, be perplexing.

To begin, officials need to review plans written by Federal experts. These plans provide "how to" guidance and methodology, and they ensure that officials consider all major issues.

In some cases, reviewing long-range plans prepared for other agencies also reveals information relevant to law enforcement. For instance, a long-range plan developed for the Army revealed the following information that could also impact on law enforcement planning strategies:

- Technology improvements will continue at a fast pace. Law enforcement officials should ensure that their agencies have compatible computer systems that they can upgrade when necessary.
- The workforce of the future will grow slowly, become older, and will be comprised of more minority employees. Law enforcement officials should consider how these conditions may impact on training.
- Telecommunications is rapidly moving to the integration of

## Manpower and Training Research Information System Research Categories

- Recruitment
- Selection/classification/assignment
- Training/education
- Instructional technology development
- Personnel measurement/evaluation
- Personnel management/administration
- Organizational development
- Manpower management
- Human performance measurement
- Human factors engineering
- Human resources data
- People-related research and development management

voice and data. Computers, phones, and fax machines will be combined into one piece of equipment that uses only one phone line.

- Users of information management systems will have increased capabilities and flexibility through artificial intelligence (officers may talk into computers that "learn" from past information), video conferencing (a witness from California may appear "live" at a trial in New York), and executive support systems that "look" for similar modus operandi in high-priority crimes and perhaps assist in pinpointing serial criminals.

### Research

Before conducting research on a State or local level, law enforcement agencies need to review existing in-

formation. Many Federal agencies contribute government-sponsored research information to the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). While much of this information is very technical and specific to weapons systems, a great deal of the available research also relates to existing criminal justice problems.

Yet another important resource is the Department of Defense Technical Information Center's Manpower and Training Research Information System (MATRIS). MATRIS provides users with a directory that lists current research efforts in 12 categories that apply to both criminal justice agencies and academics. Human resource personnel, in particular, should investigate this system prior to beginning new projects.

State and local administrators with particular research needs oftentimes reduce their costs by de-

termining ahead of time what topics other agencies have researched. Most likely, the research is readily available and more expansive than the inquiring agency could possibly expect to complete on its own.

### Personnel

The Federal Government can help broaden the work experience of many workers, including those employed by law enforcement agencies. Through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1973, law enforcement and other agencies can send employees to Federal agencies for 1 year to gain experience, or they may ask government employees to work with their departments for a 1-year period. This opportunity exists for virtually anyone who works for a Federal, State, or local agency, as well as those employed by private or State colleges and universities.

For example, a correctional administrator from California currently works on a project that combines aerospace technology and corrections. In this case, the National Institute of Corrections and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) agreed to study both NASA technology and criminal justice needs. This research project resulted in some interesting possibilities, such as inmates being identified and tracked by voice analysis, electromagnetic scanners that can detect contraband in the human body, and a literacy tutoring program that uses artificial intelligence and pattern recognition and communicates verbally with the users.

Criminal justice personnel from both Federal and State agencies should educate themselves on this

exchange program. The exchange of ideas, the networking, and the problem-solving potential create new opportunities for law enforcement agencies.

### Technology

Technology is another area where various agencies can share information and products. For example, LIDAR, a laser radar device under current development by a national laboratory, could impact on law enforcement. LIDAR has one variant that senses hydrocarbons and determines the presence of a vehicle or aircraft. The second variant senses precursor chemicals (materials used to grow drugs) and drugs.

Other technology also in the testing stage includes specialized ground sensors and a portable "sniffer" that sniffs chemicals, drugs, and explosives. Imagine a backpack with a vacuum cleaner attached that can "sniff" a vehicle or building to determine the presence of drugs, explosives, or the chemicals used to produce them.

Law enforcement officials should bear in mind, however, that the availability of technology at a Federal or national lab does not mean that all agencies can have immediate access to the information. First, labs and agencies produce ideas and prototypes. Then, technology transfer sections work with developers and agencies to determine whether a need exists for that specific idea or model. And finally, contractors bid on producing and marketing the device, eventually delivering a finished product.

As with any new program, problems still arise in the attempt to

transfer technology and information. Special concerns include copyrights, patents, protection from Freedom of Information programs, and profit sharing.

However, agencies have already worked together to share technology. For example, under the directive of the Omnibus Crime Bill, a government-owned laboratory, in conjunction with the New Mexico National Guard, recently conducted the Southwest Border Test Bed. This effort brought together the Department of Defense and Federal, State, and local police agencies, as well as eight private contractors, to test various technologies with respect to their usefulness in drug-related cases. These technologies included satellite communications, doppler radar, and special operations aircraft.

In addition to testing various technologies, this same national laboratory also conducted an exercise that emphasized intelligence-driven, counter-drug operations and how the military and various police agencies could work together successfully. This particular exer-

cise included personnel from 27 different agencies on Federal, State, and local levels.

### Evaluation

State and local administrators must concern themselves with how to evaluate programs, systems, and processes. Because they oftentimes lack the expertise necessary to evaluate these areas properly, they may find Federal laboratories helpful.

For example, the director of a State corrections department determines that a new prison is needed. The corrections department probably does not have an employee who routinely evaluates physical plants or security systems; yet, poor design of either could be disastrous. However, in this age of sharing information, the director can now contact laboratories that produce security systems and structures for the most sensitive programs in the United States. These laboratories can then recommend viable prison designs and security systems.

In fact, Federal laboratories currently work on law enforcement-

### Research Agencies

- National Technical Information Service (NTIS)  
5285 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, Virginia 22161  
(703)487-4600
- Defense Technical Information Center  
MATRIS Office, DTIC-DMA  
San Diego, California 92152-6800  
(619)553-7000

# Bulletin Reports

related projects, such as security systems for airports, robots that replace personnel, security sites that minimize personnel requirements, mobile sensor systems, and radars that can guard structures or equipment.

These examples illustrate that Federal laboratories have both experience and expertise in areas important to law enforcement. They emphasize the need for law enforcement to turn to Federal laboratories for assistance.

## CONCLUSION

The Federal Government offers organized assistance programs. However, unless State and local administrators of agencies and universities familiarize themselves with existing legislation and how they might receive Federal assistance, valuable resources will remain untapped.

Mind-boggling technological developments continue at a rapid rate. This makes it even more imperative that a mutual understanding and cooperation exist between State and local agencies and the Federal Government—a critical first step toward sharing important new information and technology. ♦

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Walker, *Sense and Nonsense About Crime: A Policy Guide*, 2d. ed. (California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> *Technology Applications Program*, Strategic Defense Initiative, Department of Defense, April 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Tompkins, "The Pentagon is Pitching In," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, March 6, 1988, p. C4.

<sup>4</sup> Lynn Yarris, "State Opens DNA Crime Lab," *Currents*, June 11, 1991, 1.

## ADA Guide

A guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) employment, public services, and public accommodations provisions is now available from the American Bar Association's (ABA) Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law. The publication, entitled "The Americans with Disabilities Manual: State and Local Government Services, Employment, and Public Accommodations," features a series of articles and legal resource materials prepared by the commission.

The manual summarizes the ADA in "less-technical" terms and provides practical examples of compliance. It explains the effective dates and enforcement mechanisms in each title and offers advice on researching key provisions. The information covers Federal regulations and existing case law, as well as provisions that affect State and local government programs and activities.

*To order copies, or for more information, write the ABA Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, 1800 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or phone 1-202-331-2240.*

## Bloodborne Pathogens

Because of the nature of their work, law enforcement personnel risk exposure daily to such bloodborne pathogens as HIV and hepatitis B viruses. The U.S. Department of Labor, recognizing the need for safeguards against these health hazards, published a booklet entitled "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens: Precautions for Emergency Personnel."

The booklet informs emergency responders and law enforcement and corrections personnel of the risks of occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens and how to reduce these risks. It will also help employers to understand and to comply with OSHA's regulations on bloodborne pathogens. The contents of the booklet, however, is not a substitute for requirements of the bloodborne pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030).

*A copy of this booklet can be obtained from the OSHA Publications Office, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-3101, Washington, DC 20210. Agencies should send a self-addressed label with their requests.*