



ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ulster County District Attorney Donald Williams Announces Operation Impact Award

Ulster County District Attorney Donald Williams announced today that the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services has awarded Ulster County law enforcement agencies \$388,197 to continue its initiative combating crime under the Operation Impact program. The award represents a 21% funding increase over the previous year's grant.

Operation Impact is a State funded initiative applied for by the District Attorney and jointly administered by District Attorney Williams and Kingston Police Department Chief Gerald Keller. It is designed to provide long term strategies to fight crime targeted by the District Attorney and local police. It is comprised of representatives from the federal, State and local law enforcement agencies.

Williams stated that, "working in conjunction with the County's URGENT Task Force, Operation Impact has provided the resources and long term strategies enabling local, State and federal authorities to act as one unit in the battle against gang violence, drug dealing, gun possession and crimes which affect our quality of life."

Williams advised that the principal part of this year's State award will be dedicated to maintaining efforts begun under last year's grant, including the Kingston Police Department's Neighborhood Stabilization Unit, as well as supporting the new multi-agency URGENT Task Force. Under the Operation Impact grant, the Kingston Police Department will receive \$112,000 to support increased patrols, as well as to enhance its crime analysis and mapping capabilities. The Ellenville Police Department, which joined Operation Impact last year, will receive \$24,000 to permit increased overtime police operations and to enhance its computer systems management. The Ulster County Sheriff's Office will receive funding to cover the salary and benefits of a certified field intelligence officer within its Correction Division to improve the collection and sharing of intelligence among County law enforcement agencies, especially regarding gang organization and membership. Additional monies will also be utilized to facilitate future undercover investigations.

In addition to funding the police agencies, the State Impact grant will also fund a full-time Assistant District Attorney assigned exclusively to handle Operation Impact cases and coordinate and prosecute arrests made by the URGENT Task Force. The Ulster County Probation Department will also receive grant funds in connection with its work supporting URGENT and other cooperative law enforcement operations in the County.

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Williams added that last year's grant included funds for community organizations designed to help reduce crime by diverting at risk youth from gang and drug activity. The District Attorney sought such funding again this year, however, DCJS elected not to fund these agencies for 2007-2008. The District Attorney has stated that he will continue to apply for State and federal funding to support these valuable programs. Williams stated that, "a multifaceted agenda including proactive outreach to individuals who may be drawn toward gang activity is essential in our efforts to eradicate gang violence in our community."

Williams added that this is Ulster County's third year of participating in Operation Impact. Of the 16 separate sites participating in this Statewide Operation Impact initiative, Kingston has consistently demonstrated the highest statistical decline in targeted crime.

In announcing the grant award, District Attorney Williams stated:

"I thank Governor Spitzer and DCJS and am extremely encouraged by this grant award for 2007 and 2008. Each department participating in the Operation Impact initiative and URGENT Task Force must be commended for setting aside traditional jurisdictional boundaries and territorial issues to work for the common good. Although Kingston has experienced three consecutive years of decline in the most violent and disturbing crime that effects our quality of life, we must not rest on these accomplishments. Resources, cooperation and coordination of all law enforcement agencies must be continued to send a clear and unequivocal message that those who choose to follow a life of violent crime and gang activity will not be tolerated in this community."