

# HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS ASSESSMENT



Sound investigative practices and aggressive prosecution of violent offenders increase clearance rates and achieve greater justice. However, homicides can be extremely difficult to investigate and prosecute because of challenges or inefficiencies with practices, staffing, funding, equipment, or training. Through the Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) program, CNA offers sites assessments of homicide investigations and prosecutions to aid local efforts to reduce violent crime, conduct high-quality investigations, and produce successful prosecutions for homicide cases. This assessment help sites identify strengths, gaps, and areas for growth throughout the homicide investigation and prosecution process.

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- Make general observations about the overall homicide investigative process.
- Collect relevant data, such as the homicide clearance rate.
- Identify weaknesses in the homicide investigations and prosecution process.
- Develop recommendations and feedback related to homicide investigation processes and procedures.



## THE PROCESS

The key steps of the assessment process include the following:

1. **Pre-assessment questionnaire:** The PSN TTA team asks the requesting agency to complete a pre-assessment questionnaire, which provides the subject matter experts (SMEs) with a preliminary review of the agency's capacity and needs.
2. **Kick off call:** CNA will host a kick off call with the PSN TTA team—including the requesting agency's TTA liaison, analyst, and DOJ support team member—to identify the desired goals and objectives of the assessment and potential dates for the on-site portion of the assessment.



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3. **Site visit:** During a two- to three-day site visit, SMEs will conduct interviews with key personnel at the requesting agency and with representatives from relevant local, state, and federal partners. SMEs will also observe homicide investigation meetings and case files, and provide a half-day training on investigation and prosecution best practices.
4. **Assessment report:** The assessment team will develop an assessment report with findings and recommendations to enhance homicide investigations and prosecutions. SMEs will discuss their findings with the site while developing the report. The PSN TTA team will provide a final report to the site within six weeks of the site visit. The SMEs can debrief the findings of the report via a conference call, at the request of the site.

## SAMPLE ON-SITE VISIT AGENDA

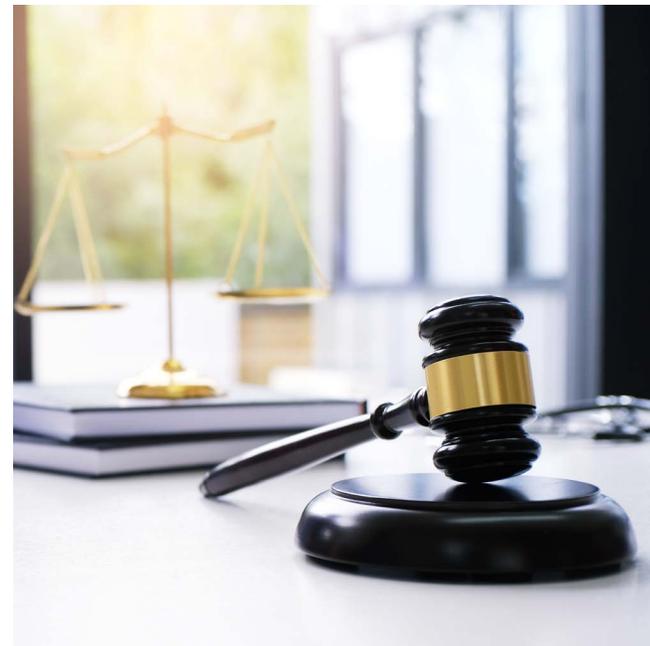
- Hold interviews with local law enforcement agency representatives.
  - Executive command staff
  - Commanders, supervisors, detectives, and investigators
- Hold interviews with prosecutorial personnel.
  - Senior prosecutors
  - Homicide trial prosecutors
  - US Attorney's Office
- Hold interviews with federal law enforcement partners and/or task forces.
  - Federal counterparts involved in homicide investigations and prosecutions
- Tour police department facilities.
- Review an active homicide investigation case file.
- Attend a case briefing meeting and observe internal briefings.
- Review crime data, policies, procedures, and other documents related to the management and operations of homicide investigative functions.

## POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

- Modified practices or implementation of new practices based on lessons learned
- Increased public safety as homicide clearance rates improve
- Improved ability of the participating agencies to investigate and prosecute homicide cases

## QUESTIONS AND MAKING AN ASSESSMENT REQUEST

If you have questions about this assessment or would like to request the assessment, please consult with your TTA liaison or PSN TTA analyst. You can also complete the PSN TTA request form below



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