

# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity Along the Southern Border— July 2009–September 2013

## *Final Report*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
PERFORMANCE MEASURES .....	3
Combatting Criminal Narcotics Activity Along the Southern Border.....	3
Enhancing Southern Border Jails, Community Corrections, and Detention Operations .....	6
Facilitating Justice Information Sharing, Collaboration, and Problem Solving .....	6
ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	7
CONCLUSION.....	8
SUMMARY FINDINGS.....	9

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Active Grantees and PMT Completion Rate among ARRA CCNA Competitive Grantees: July 2009–September 2013 .....	1
Table 2. ARRA CCNA Competitive Grants and Funding Levels by Organization Type: July 2009–September 2013.....	2
Table 3. ARRA CCNA Competitive Grants by Funding Category: July 2009– September 2013.....	2
Table 4. Number of Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted or Dismantled: July 2009–September 2013.....	3
Table 5. Drug Amounts Seized in Kilograms: July 2009–September 2013.....	5
Table 6. Average Percent Reduction in Community Correctional Officer Caseload: July 2009–June 2012 .....	6
Table 7. Amount of Electronic Information Exchanged: January 2012–June 2013.....	7

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Number of Drug-Related Investigations that Led to an Arrest or Conviction: July 2009–September 2013.....	4
Figure 2. Value of Assets Seized: July 2009–December 2012.....	5
Figure 3. Tips or Leads Referred to Other Agencies: January 2012–June 2013.....	7

## OVERVIEW

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 was passed on February 13, 2009, as a one-time stimulus response to the economic crisis. Under this provision, several targeted programs were started to address specific problems in addition to creating and maintaining current jobs. One such program was the Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity Stemming from the Southern Border of the United States (CCNA) Grant Program. The ultimate goal of ARRA CCNA was to help law enforcement agencies along the U.S. Southern border combat criminal narcotics activity, especially in high-intensity drug-trafficking areas (HIDTAs) affected by the border activity.

The ARRA CCNA program featured several key objectives/initiatives under which grantees could apply:

- Combating criminal narcotics activity along the Southern Border.
- Enhancing Southern Border jails, community corrections, and detention operations.
- Facilitating justice information sharing, collaboration, and problem solving.
- Offering national training and technical assistance.<sup>1</sup>

To foster transparency and accountability for Recovery funding, data specifically concerning job creation and maintenance was overseen by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in a separate database and was posted online. Data specific to the creation and retention of jobs through Recovery funding can be found at <http://www.recovery.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2009, Congress appropriated \$30 million in funding to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) for the CCNA program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the “Recovery Act”). Of the \$30 million appropriated, OJP designated \$29.7 million for ARRA CCNA program grants and \$300,000 for the National Institute of Justice to complete an evaluation of activities supported by the ARRA CCNA program.

The ARRA CCNA program sought to address the needs of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in stemming the flow of illicit narcotics across the U.S. Southern border with Mexico. As a Recovery Act program, the ARRA CCNA program was also intended to create and preserve jobs and promote economic recovery.

BJA received 237 applications for the ARRA CCNA program, determined that 148 applications met solicitation requirements, and referred these applications for peer review. Based on the peer-review results and other factors, BJA awarded 21 grants totaling \$29.7 million.

### **Table 1. Active Grantees and Performance Reporting Completion Rate among ARRA CCNA Competitive Grantees: July 2009–September 2013**

Table 1 shows the number of active grantees and the number of grantees completing their performance reporting requirements by quarter.<sup>2</sup> Overall, 98% of grantees completed their quarterly performance reporting requirements in the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT).

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<sup>1</sup> Grants made for National Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) are not required to report in the PMT. They are required to report TTA activities in a separate system instead. As a result, TTA grant activities were excluded from this report.

<sup>2</sup> The term “active grantees” refers to the total number of grantees in the PMT during the quarter. Once grantees close out their grants, they are no longer required to report and will subsequently not be active in the PMT.

Reporting Period	Grantees Completing PMT Report	Active Grantees	PMT Completion Rate (%)
July–Dec. 2009*	19	20	95
Jan.–March 2010	19	20	95
April–June 2010	20	20	100
July–Sept. 2010	19	20	95
Oct.–Dec. 2010	20	21	95
Jan.–March 2011	21	21	95
April–June 2011	20	20	100
July–Sept. 2011	17	17	100
Oct.–Dec. 2011	17	17	100
Jan.–March 2012	13	13	100
April–June 2012	12	12	100
July–Sept. 2012**	3	3	100
Oct.–Dec. 2012	3	3	100
Jan.–March 2013	3	3	100
April–June 2013	3	3	100
July–Sept. 2013	1	1	100
<b>Overall</b>			<b>98%</b>

\* The first collection period spanned two quarters, while all other collection was done quarterly. As such, caution is recommended when comparing data from this reporting period with other quarters.

\*\* From July 2012 to September 2013, no more than three grantees were operational each quarter. This decrease in the number of grantees reporting during these periods is likely responsible for smaller reported values during these periods. This should be taken into account for all future tables and figures.

**Table 2. ARRA CCNA Competitive Grants and Funding Levels by Organization Type: July 2009–September 2013**

Table 2 shows the number of grants and the amount of funds received by organization type. Most grants (81%) were received by units of local governments, as opposed to state agencies. However, most funding (66%) was appropriated to state agencies.

Organization Type	Number of Grantees	Percent of Grants	Total Grant Funds (Dollars)	Percent of Grant Dollars
Unit of Local Government	17	81%	\$10,213,820	34%
State Agency	4	19%	19,486,180	66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$29,700,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3. ARRA CCNA Competitive Grants by Funding Category: July 2009–September 2013**

Table 3 shows the number of grants and funding level by category/initiative. The majority of grantees requested funding for the purpose of combating criminal narcotics activity along the Southern Border. This funding category consequently was allocated the largest amount of grant funds (72%). The lowest

amount of funding (3%) was allocated for facilitating justice information sharing, collaboration, and problem solving. Only one grantee received a grant under this initiative.

Funding Category	Number of Grantees	Total Grant Funds (Dollars)	Percent of Grant Dollars
Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity along the Southern Border	15	\$21,354,310	72%
Enhancing Southern Border Jails, Community Corrections, and Detention Operations	5	7,544,990	25%
Facilitating Justice Information Sharing, Collaboration, and Problem Solving	1	800,700	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>\$29,700,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Grantees were required to report performance measurement data in the PMT quarterly. Not all grantees reported on the same performance measures. Instead, grantees responded to questions specific to the objective set forth in their grant application. This allowed grantees to enter performance data only for activities relevant to their award type. In this report, each objective and associated performance measures will be examined individually.

### I. Combatting Criminal Narcotics Activity Along the Southern Border

Grantees receiving funds to focus on this objective used grant funds to decrease the flow of narcotics and illegal dollars across the United States–Mexico border. Funds were used to finance operational expenditures and additional resources to address drug-related crime. Tables 4 and 5 and Figures 1 and 2 contain data only from the 15 grantees who received awards under this objective.

**Table 4. Number of Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted or Dismantled: July 2009–September 2013**

Table 4 shows the number of drug trafficking organizations that were disrupted or dismantled by grantees. Since July 2009, a total of 1,644 drug trafficking organizations have been disrupted or dismantled. On average, 103 organizations were disrupted or dismantled each quarter.

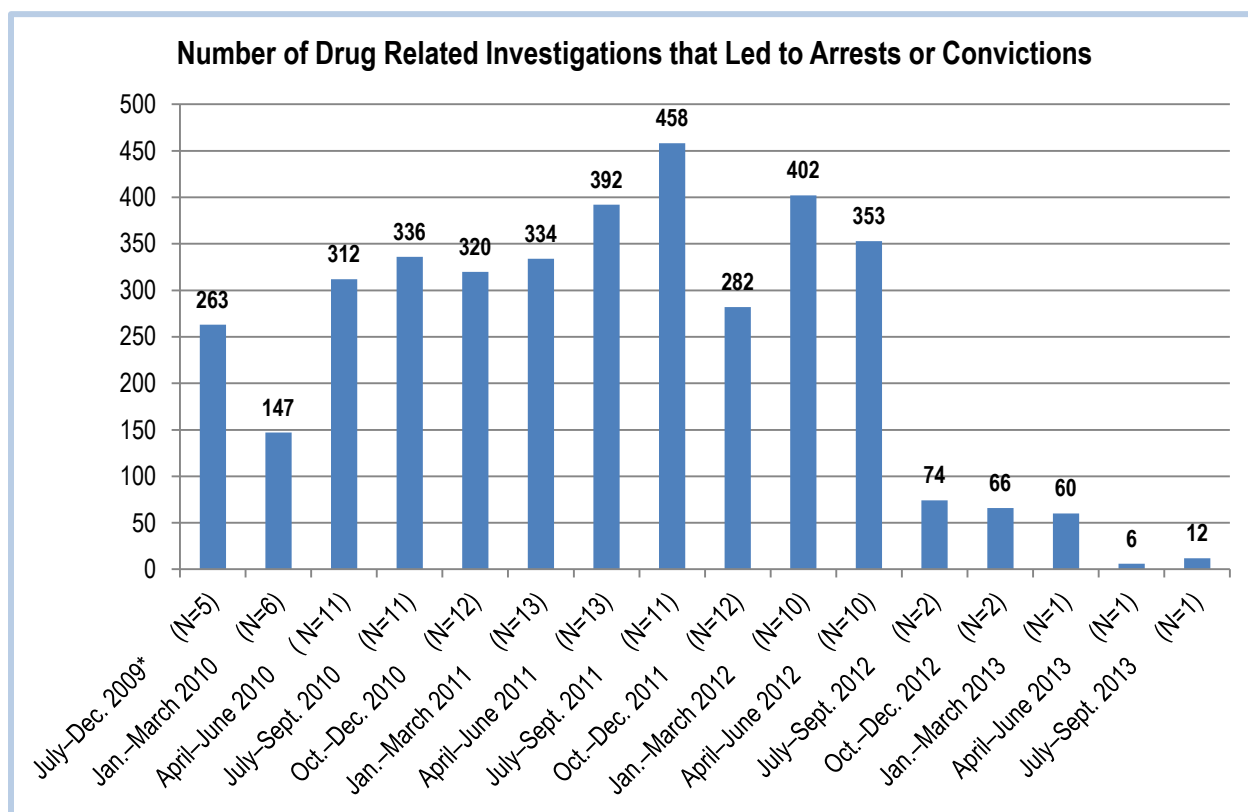
Reporting Period	Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted	Drug Trafficking Organizations Dismantled	Total Number of Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted or Dismantled
July–Dec. 2009* (N=6)	27	16	43
Jan.–March 2010 (N=7)	21	13	34
April–June 2010 (N=9)	71	18	89
July–Sept. 2010 (N=11)	137	27	164
Oct.–Dec. 2010 (N=11)	145	20	165
Jan.–March 2011 (N=12)	189	45	234
April–June 2011 (N=13)	146	21	167
July–Sept. 2011 (N=9)	128	12	140
Oct.–Dec. 2011 (N=11)	87	72	159
Jan.–March 2012 (N=10)	209	6	215
April–June 2012 (N=10)	176	6	182

Reporting Period	Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted	Drug Trafficking Organizations Dismantled	Total Number of Drug Trafficking Organizations Disrupted or Dismantled
July–Sept. 2012 (N=2)	35	2	37
Oct.–Dec. 2012 (N=2)	5	1	6
Jan.–March 2013 (N=1)	3	0	3
April–June 2013 (N=1)	4	0	4
July–Sept. 2013 (N=1)	2	0	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>1,644</b>

\* The first collection period spanned two quarters, while all other collection was done quarterly. As such, caution is recommended when comparing data from this reporting period with other quarters.

### Figure 1. Number of Drug-Related Investigations that Led to an Arrest or Conviction: July 2009–September 2013

Figure 1 shows the number of drug related investigations which led to arrests or convictions. Between July 2009 and September 2013, a total of 3,817 drug-related investigations led to arrests or convictions. On average, 239 drug related investigations led to arrests or convictions each quarter.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> The lower value reported in the October–December 2011 reporting period can be accounted for by one grantee, who reported a lower amount in this period than in the preceding and following periods. This is likely due to normal fluctuations in the number of arrests.

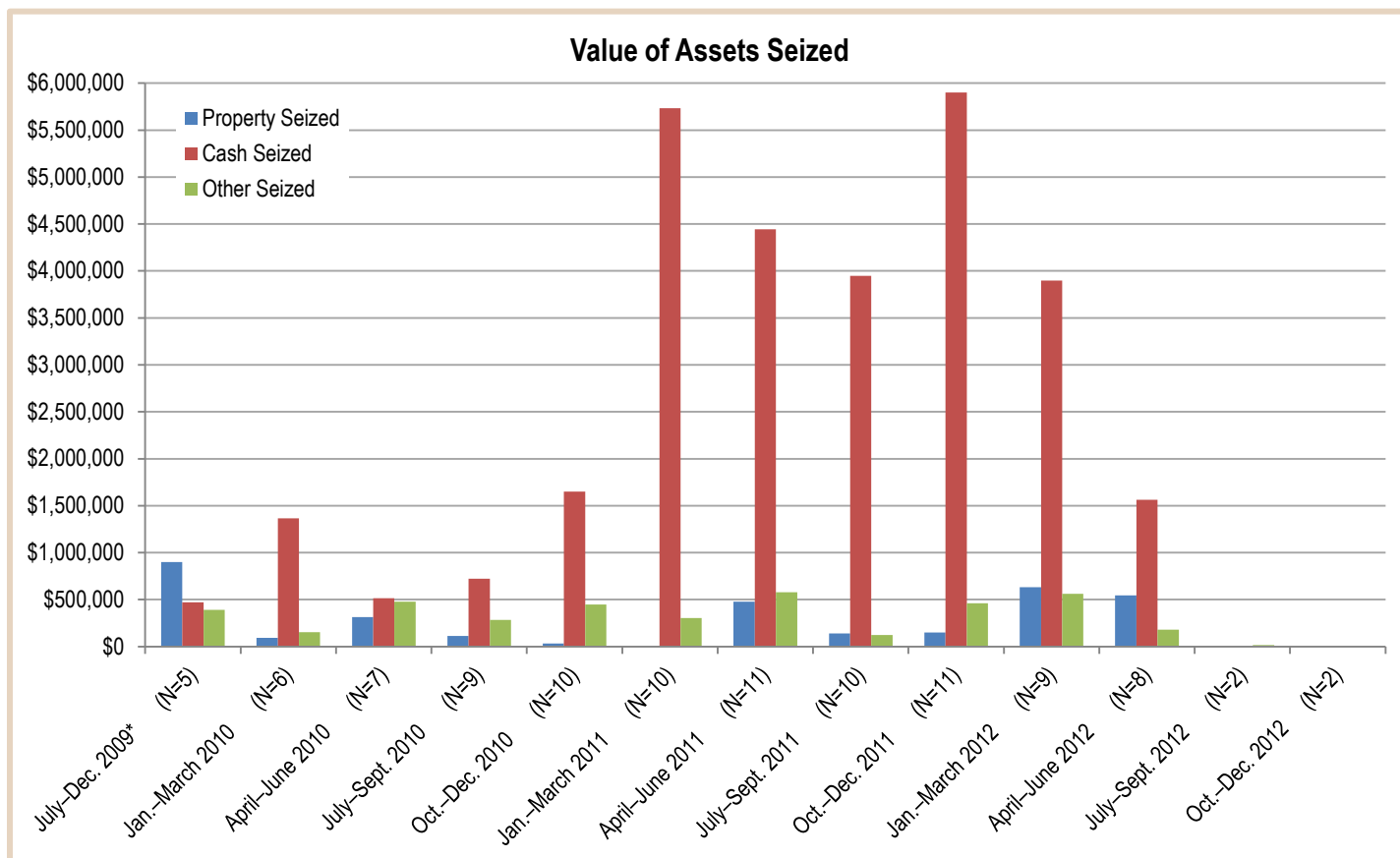
**Table 5. Drug Amounts Seized in Kilograms: July 2009–September 2013**

Since July 2009, over 3 million kilograms (kg) of drugs have been seized through September 2013. On average, 192,556 kg of drugs were seized per quarter. Marijuana was the most common type of drug seized, representing over 99% of the kilograms seized.

Type	Total Kilograms (kg)
Marijuana	3,072,373.24
Cocaine (Powder)	4,230.49
Methamphetamine	2,081.34
Crack Cocaine	1,912.97
Heroin	285.09
Ecstasy (MDMA)	13.51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,080,896.64</b>

**Figure 2. Value of Assets Seized: July 2009–December 2012\***

To date, more than \$37.6 million in assets have been seized. The majority of reported seizures (80%) were of cash, with a value of over \$30.2 million. Grantees also seized approximately \$3.4 million in real property and more than \$3.9 million in other items such as jewelry and cars.<sup>4</sup> Fluctuations in the amounts seized across quarters are due to several grantees reporting large single seizures.



\*Grantees in the last four reporting periods did not report seizing any assets. Consequently, these periods are not shown in this figure.

<sup>4</sup> Real property refers to real estate, such as land and buildings.

## II. Enhancing Southern Border Jails, Community Corrections, and Detention Operations

Grantees who received awards under this section of ARRA CCNA used funding to improve corrections related functions with the aim of decreasing and preventing criminal narcotics activity. Grantees used funds to promote collaboration within the correctional system, hire correctional personnel, and invest in ways to reduce recidivism rates in drug offenders. Table 6 contains data only from the five grantees who applied under this objective.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 6. Average Percent Change in Community Correctional Officer Caseload: July 2009–June 2012**

Table 6 shows the average percent change in community correctional officer caseload across grantees. In every reporting period, except for the January–March 2010 reporting period, reductions were made to the correctional officer caseload.

Reporting Period	Average Percent Change in Correctional Officer Case Load Across Grantees*
July–Dec. 2009** (N=4)	0%
Jan.–March 2010 (N=5)	+3
April–June 2010 (N=5)	-6
July–Sept. 2010 (N=5)	-6
Oct.–Dec. 2010 (N=4)	-8
Jan.–March 2011 (N=4)	-11
April–June 2011 (N=4)	-12
July–Sept. 2011 (N=3)	-13
Oct.–Dec. 2011 (N=2)	-18
Jan.–March 2012 (N=1)	-27
April–June 2012*** (N=1)	-25
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>-12%</b>

\*To calculate this value, the percent change in caseload was first calculated individually for each grantee in each quarter. This value was calculated by subtracting the caseload of the quarter in question from the caseload reported by the grantee in the first quarter in which they provided a value for this measure. The difference was then divided by the latter value to produce the percent change in caseload for the quarter. These values were then averaged across grantees to produce an average percent change in community correctional officer caseload.

\*\*The first collection period spanned two quarters, while all other collection was done quarterly. As such, caution is recommended when comparing data from this reporting period with other quarters.

\*\*\*No values were reported for the last five reporting periods, from July 2012 to September 2013.

## III. Facilitating Justice Information Sharing, Collaboration, and Problem Solving

Grantees who received funds for this objective used them to establish and maintain partnerships between various law enforcement agencies. Grantees were encouraged to strengthen multijurisdictional intelligence gathering and information-sharing activities in an effort to decrease and prevent criminal activities along the Southern border. Table 7 and Figure 3 contain data only from the one grantee who applied under this objective.

<sup>5</sup> Only two questions are asked under this objective. One of the measures was not reported on due to a low response rate.



**Table 7. Amount of Electronic Information Exchanged: January 2012–June 2013**

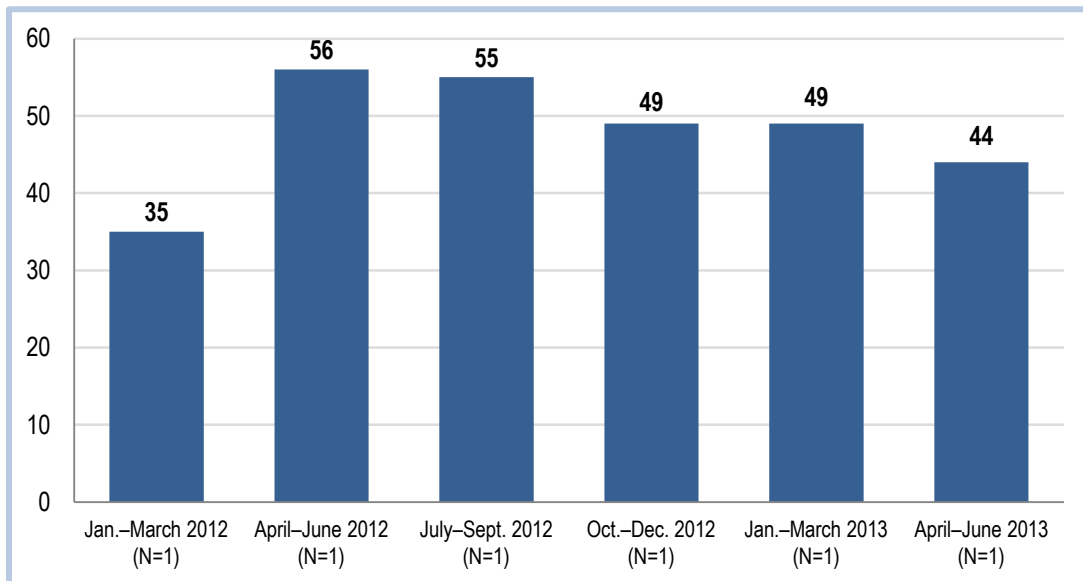
Table 7 shows the amount of electronic information exchanged based on new database inquiries and submissions. In total, there were 16,800 new database inquiries and over 17.5 million new submissions.

Reporting Period*	New Database Inquiries	New Database Submissions
Jan.–March 2012 (N=1)	125	2,500,000
April–June 2012 (N=1)	1,221	2,765,000
July–Sept. 2012 (N=1)	1,222	2,446,797
Oct.–Dec. 2012 (N=1)	2,305	2,745,624
Jan.–March 2013 (N=1)	5,397	3,621,285
April–June 2013 (N=1)	6,530	3,517,013
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,800</b>	<b>17,595,719</b>

\*No values were reported for the first nine reporting periods or the last reporting period. Consequently, these periods are not listed.

**Figure 3. Tips or Leads Referred to Other Agencies: January 2012–June 2013**

Figure 3 shows the number of tips or leads referred to other agencies by grantees. On average, 48 tips or leads were referred to other agencies in each quarter. In total, 288 leads were referred to other agencies.



**ACCOMPLISHMENTS<sup>6</sup>**

The ARRA CCNA grant program offers important flexibility with funding that allows justice agencies to address local issues. Activities range widely among grantees. The following passages are taken directly from the achievement narratives provided by grantees. These passages represent only a small sample of the accomplishment grantees were able to achieve using ARRA CCNA funds, with each representing one of the three initiatives.

<sup>6</sup> Accomplishment passages are primarily direct quotes from grantees. Minor adjustments have been made to correct spelling and to clarify meaning.

- *Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity Along the Southern Border:* “The San Diego Sheriff’s Department continues its proactive approach to addressing border-related crime through a comprehensive ‘all threats’, layered and integrated local crime initiative. The Border Crime Suppression Team (BCST) continues to serve as one of the catalysts for the sharing of resources and organizing joint border operations and activities. BCST’s efforts have made San Diego County a safer place and contributed greatly to our Nation’s border security. As evidenced by their documented results and activities, the BCST has the ability to effectively fight border crime and its ‘spillover effects.’ Significant accomplishments this quarter included participation in International Controlled Deliveries of narcotics with various Federal agencies. Contraband seized by BCST consisted of illegal narcotics, firearms, and currency, indicating that narcotic trafficking, via air, tunnels, maritime, and land based, continues to be a major border security threat in the San Diego County area. BCST participated in 72 felony/misdemeanor arrests, 7 undocumented person arrests with U.S. Border Patrol counterparts and the seizures of 4 vehicles, 3.4 pounds of methamphetamine, 5295 pounds of marijuana, 8.5 pounds of cocaine, and approximately \$15,526.00 in U.S. currency. Consistent with San Diego County’s collaborative and comprehensive approach to border-related threats, the Crime Lab and the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office continued to fulfill their critical respective roles of analyzing the forensic evidence, and prosecuting the perpetrators of border-related crimes.” (San Diego County, 2009-SS-B9-0037)
- *Enhancing Southern Border Jails, Community Corrections, and Detention Operations:* “Receipt of the grant preserved the entire Absconder Unit. This unit continues to investigate, seek out, arrest and bring to justice absconders who have fled probation supervision. The Absconder Unit continues to collaborate with the U.S. Marshall’s Office, F.B.I., I.C.E., Border Patrol, Pima County Sheriff’s Office, Tucson Police Department and the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The DIRECT (Drug Involvement Reversal through Education Control and Treatment) Unit continues to provide supervision for high risk individuals currently failing on standard probation supervision. The DIRECT Unit collaborates with treatment agencies chosen through the Court’s procurement policy. Additionally, they collaborate with law enforcement agencies and social service agencies as needed in the supervision of probation cases. On June 30, 2010, there were 70 probationers on DIRECT supervision. Eleven others were served, for a total of 81 probationers receiving DIRECT services during this reporting period. The DIRECT Unit has not significantly reduced overall caseload size. It has, however, reduced the number of high-risk probationers currently supervised in the general medium-risk population. Cognitive skills classes for DIRECT probationers continue. Nineteen probationers completed the first series of classes. Four are currently enrolled. Eighteen others have been screened and will begin the next series of classes.” (Arizona Superior Court in Pima County, 2009-SS-B9-0056)
- *Facilitating Justice Information Sharing, Collaboration, and Problem Solving:* “San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office has hired a project management consultant to evaluate existing intelligence management systems. The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office has also developed agreements for the exchange of data with outside agencies.” (County of San Mateo, 2009-SS-B9-0029)

## CONCLUSION

As a result of ARRA legislation, 21 awards totaling \$29.7 million were made to help grantees combat criminal narcotics activity along the Southern Border. Grantees were able to hire and retain law enforcement personnel, disrupt multiple drug trafficking organizations, and improve their information sharing practices.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

- Overall, there was a 98% PMT completion rate among ARRA CCNA competitive grantees.
- Most grants were awarded to local governments, but most funding was allocated to state agencies.
- Most grantees received awards to perform tasks related to the Combating Criminal Narcotics Activity along the Southern Border objective.
- Since July 2009, a total of 1,644 drug trafficking organizations were disrupted or dismantled.
- From July 2009 to September 2013, a total of 3,817 drug-related investigations led to arrests or convictions.
- Since July 2009, over 3 million kilograms of drugs were seized. Marijuana was the most prominent type of drug seized, representing over 99% of the kilograms seized.
- Over \$37.6 million of assets were seized, with cash seizures accounting for 80% of this amount.
- Across quarters, the average reduction rate in community correctional officer caseloads increased.
- In total, there were 16,800 new database inquiries and over 17.5 million new database submissions.
- In total, 288 leads were referred to other agencies by grantees.