

**GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS
1993-2008**

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GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION
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FEBRUARY 1, 2009

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Charlaine Sybrant	Youth Member
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THE GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION
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INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Crime Commission has been a catalyst in the accomplishment of many of the major criminal justice initiatives of the past 16 years. By collaborating with Governors Hunt and Easley, the General Assembly, state and federal leadership, and especially practitioners in our communities, the Commission has positively changed the North Carolina juvenile and criminal justice systems, victims' services, and greatly contributed to community safety and security. This report highlights some of the Commission's most notable accomplishments.

- Safe Schools
- Establishing the Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN)
- Community Policing
- Juvenile Justice Reform
- Addressing the Issue of Suspended and Expelled Youth
- Advocating for Victims' Rights
- Drug Trafficking Interdiction
- Addressing Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)
- Confronting Gangs
- Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION

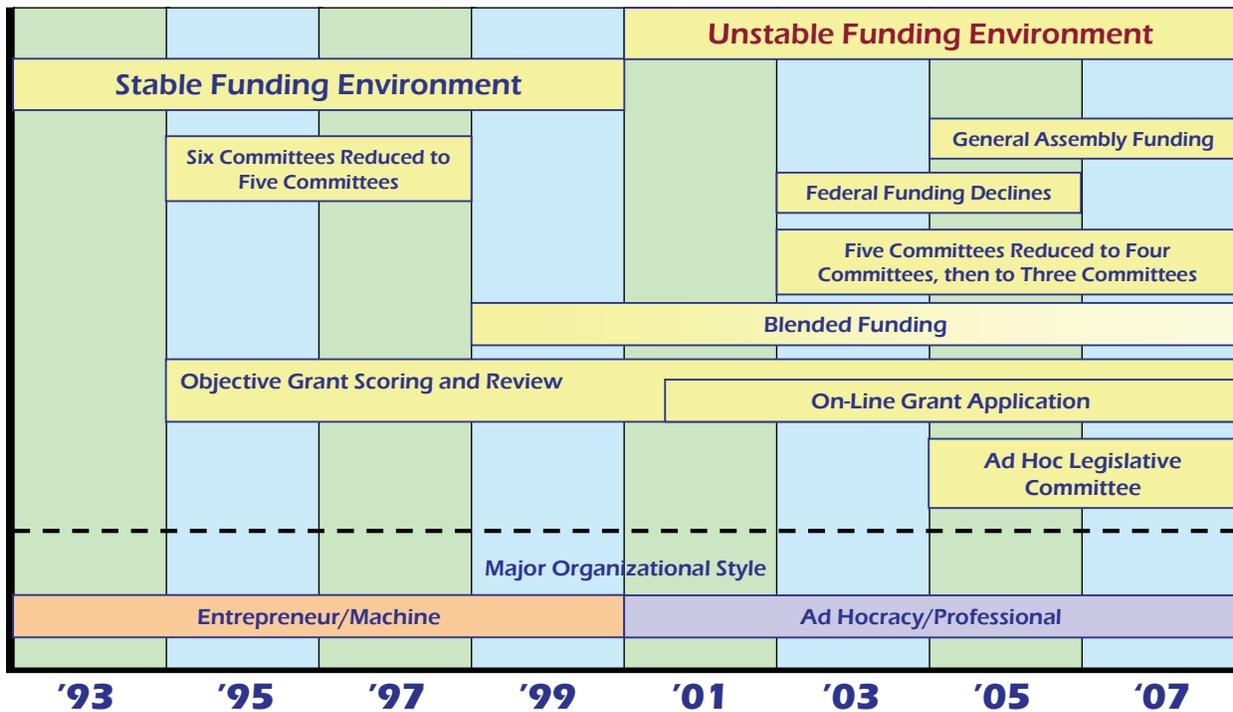
The Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) began as a direct result of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. This federal legislation created the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and channeled federal monies to the states for the improvement of criminal justice systems, on the provision that each state would establish a formal state planning agency. North Carolina then created the Law and Order Committee. This original manifestation of the Crime Commission was set up within the Division of Community Assistance and the Department of Economic and Natural



Resources to eliminate conflict of interest in the granting of funds. The Law and Order Committee was changed to the Law and Order Commission in 1975 when it was given larger regulatory power to give and take grants away.

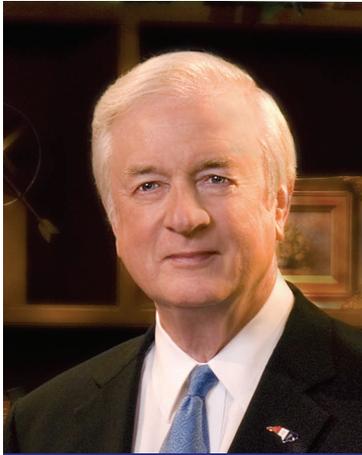
In 1977, the Law and Order Commission was restructured by Governor Hunt into the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. This brought selected law enforcement agencies and entities, such as the State Highway Patrol, National Guard and Victims and Justice Services, within one department. With the new department, the Governor’s Crime Commission was mandated by statute (§CH 143B-477) and assembled. This statute created six GCC planning subcommittees, Crime Prevention and Public Information, Law Enforcement Planning, Judicial Planning, Corrections Planning, Juvenile Justice, and Juvenile Code Revision. While the committee structure has evolved, the GCC still functions as the criminal justice system planning agency for the state.

Chronology of Major GCC Events



The structure of the GCC and its funding sources have shifted since 1993. The organizational style and focus of the GCC have adapted to meet the needs of the changing environment of criminal justice in North Carolina.

Since 1993 there have been some significant influencing factors and events that have shaped the current structure and functioning of the Commission. Most of these had to do with funding (see the chart above). From about 1993 to 2001 federal funding remained relatively stable in that block grant monies from the Office of Justice Planning had some predictability. After 2002, federal funding began to decline. The Commission had to target funding and consolidate committees. The six planning sub-committees which existed prior to 1990 were changed by the mid 1990s to the Drug Control and System Improvement, Information Systems and Technology, Juvenile Justice Intervention, Juvenile Justice Prevention, and Victims committees to reflect the needs of the time.



Governor James B. Hunt

Committee structure and purposes varied over time depending on issues and criminal justice system needs. In the early 1990's the predecessor of the Criminal Justice Improvement Committee (CJI), the Drug Control and System Improvement (DCSI) Committee, split with the creation of the Information Systems and Technology (IT) Committee. The significance of the IT Committee was that it made automation systems, mobile data, and universal communication among criminal justice stakeholders a priority for policy and funding. Internally, the IT committee was a platform for introducing a grant scoring matrix which helped Commissioners be as objective as possible while selecting grants. They had a tool to numerically objectify a very subjective process. With it, they could understand how effective a project may prove to be and discuss the merits of project selections with fellow commissioners. The matrix was then adopted by the other standing committees. In 2003, the DCSI and IT committees were combined into the present CJI committee mainly to reflect the reduction of Justice Assistance Incentive Block Grant and Byrne/Justice Assistance Grant funding, which eventually led to a 67 percent reduction of funds for CJI projects. The reductions led to smaller dollar value projects to support more department level operational needs with less latitude for experimentation on new ideas.

The two Juvenile Justice (JJ) committees, Intervention and Prevention, were merged in 2000. This merger reflected a change in the JJ Committee granting policy toward providing more services provision for juveniles involved in the JJ system along the continuum from intake through aftercare. Because of funding requirements, the JJ Committee is divided into the Child Abuse and Neglect (CA&N) and Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC) subcommittees. Funding from Health and Human Services enabled projects that improved processes for child abuse and neglect cases, and in order to qualify for Title II funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a DMC function was formally established and staffed.

The Victims Committee in the early 1990s sought to improve the criminal justice system's capacity to better serve victims of crime through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds. By utilizing VOCA, the committee sought to improve the delivery of victims' services. Both goals required increasing input by experts and practitioners who participated in the Victims Committee meetings. Leadership combined VOCA and VAWA functions under one umbrella in the mid 1990's to better address programming needs for all crime victims by creating the current Crime Victims Services Committee.



Governor Michael F. Easley

Funding for good ideas to promote community safety and security has always been meager. Even before 2001 when funding was stable, the Commission was only to fund about a quarter of the proposals submitted. When funding started its dramatic decline about 2001 there was heightened pressure to find innovative ways to 'do more with less.' One such idea was with the blending of funds from committee to committee. At one time, the JJ Committee had gotten as much as \$1.2 million in Justice Assis-

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tance Grant monies from the CJI Committee. This, with the emphasis on strengthening juvenile justice systems and prevention, allowed great leeway for the JJ Committee to fund mentoring, structured day, after school and multi-jurisdictional programs for juvenile treatment programs. The blending idea continued throughout the second half of the study period.

Top-down strategic leadership from the Governor's Office and the General Assembly was significant during the tenure of each governor. Governor Hunt set clear priorities in the early and mid 1990's. First it was safe schools, then it was confronting street crime through community policing. The Crime Commission used this strategic vision to make dramatic improvements in school safety mainly via School Resource Officers (SROs). Governor Hunt also called for a special session of the General Assembly to deal with crime issues. The Commission responded by funding projects that improved community safety and security, primarily with community policing efforts, and by strengthening the criminal justice system, promoting projects to enhance voice interoperability between criminal justice entities especially law enforcement. With the change of administrations in 2001, strategic direction and priorities changed. The new emphasis was on education, particularly on alternative learning programs. The Commission began working in earnest on projects to improve out-of-school programming along the continuum from preschool to juvenile day reporting centers for older youth. With this emphasis and the significant reductions in funding, the Commission struggled to promote criminal justice issues. Probably, the best example of strategic direction and mutual collaboration from the General Assembly was on addressing the growing gang presence in North Carolina. The Commission heralded the problem with a seminal gang study in 1999 and its follow-up in 2004. Subsequently, the General Assembly enacted legislation in 2006-2007 to fund gang intervention and suppression projects. The Commission, in turn, monitored the distribution of the monies and reported back to the General Assembly on what the projects were achieving, which resulted in another round of state funding for gang projects.



The Governor's Crime Commission, September 2008

Overall, the committees of the Commission complemented each other under Governors Hunt and Easley. Where funding requirements allowed, ideas for funding went to the committee best suited to start the grant - especially with the decision to 'blend' funds in 1999. The CJI committee served a purpose as a 'catch all for gaps in services,' according to the lead planner. It focused on relatively small grants, from \$10,000 - \$15,000, to fund critical (operational) projects which made significant differences in services provided. The JJ Committee saw that, wherever possible, funding decisions in the Crime Victims Services (CVS) and CJI committees considered juvenile issues and needs, especially where improvements to the larger criminal justice system were concerned. Likewise, the CVS Committee advocated for victims and collaborated with the other committees to promote more collaboration between the major criminal justice entities, especially with prosecutors, law enforcement, and courts. Together the committees have been a major force in strengthening services and the criminal justice system in North Carolina while advocating through policy, legislation, and programming, for children and youth, all victims of crime, and the major entities, courts, correction and law enforcement, of the entire criminal justice system.

SAFE SCHOOLS

When Governor Hunt envisioned the Safe Schools initiative, he asked the Governor's Crime Commission to help lead the effort in making North Carolina's schools secure places for learning. The Commission immediately began work on several initiatives in 1991. The most noteworthy of these were the model for safe schools based on the School Resource Officer concept and the creation of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence, which was established in 1993. The results of these initiatives have made North Carolina's approach to safe schools viable, effective, and a national example. Most notably this initiative has led to:



- *School Resource Officer Proliferation* – Currently there are 813 SROs across the state.
- *Safer Schools* – School crime rates have been steadily declining.

By being proactive and emphasizing prevention, Governor Hunt followed through with his promise to do whatever is necessary to make our schools safe so students can learn and teachers can teach.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION NETWORK

During the 1994 special crime session, called by Governor Hunt, the North Carolina General Assembly created the Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN) Study Committee and appropriated monies for the study of a statewide criminal justice network. The Commission has

been a major supporter and facilitator of the CJIN effort since inception by funding 798 related projects and programs for more than \$59.1 million. CJIN improves public safety and promotes data exchange through these components:

- Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders (VIPER)
- The North Carolina Automated Warrant Repository System (NCAWARE)
- The Statewide Automated Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS)
- The Mobile Data Network (CJIN-MDN)
- eCITATION
- XML based Facial Images for Law Enforcement and Emergency Responders (X-FILES)
- The North Carolina Juvenile On-Line Network (NC-JOIN)
- The Statewide Magistrate System
- End user technology
- CJIN network security
- CJIN data sharing standards



COMMUNITY POLICING

The Commission has been a leader in community policing funding and policy. Since 1993, the Criminal Justice Improvement Committee has funded 37 programs with \$3.1 million in grants. The Commission directed funding to programs aimed at addressing the high risk factors facing juveniles involved with the juvenile justice system with four basic goals and objectives.

- Proactive problem solving
- Preventing and reducing crime at the neighborhood level
- Community support
- Providing safe, drug- and violence-free learning environments



VICTIMS' RIGHTS

- *Victims' Bill of Rights* - In 1996, North Carolina passed the *Crime Victims' Rights Act* to codify victims' rights and assign appropriate agencies new responsibilities for victims' concerns.
- *NC Statewide Automated Victim Assistance and Notification (NC SAVAN)* – NC SAVAN integrates offender custody and court case event information to provide 24/7 automated telephone and e-mail notifications.
- *Enhanced Victims' Services*
 - *Offender Search Capability* – Approximately 1.7 million searches were conducted using the NC SAVAN service during FY 2007-2008.
 - *Automated Messaging* - NC SAVAN provided 2.8 million automated phone/e-mail notifications to registered individuals between FY 2003-2004 and FY 2007-2008.
- *Program Enhancements/Web Access* - In 2005, the GCC funded the NC SAVAN/JX pilot project to provide law enforcement with web access to state and national historical incarcerated offender records.
- *Domestic Violence Commission* - Governor Hunt created the Commission on Domestic Violence by executive order in 1999. He then charged it to develop a strategic plan on domestic violence for the state, promote public awareness and education, serve as an information clearinghouse, and put together a legislative agenda to prevent domestic violence.
- *Domestic Violence Services* - During his fourth term, Governor Hunt requested that the GCC and the Domestic Violence Commission work together to provide domestic violence services statewide. Services are now available in 93 counties.



JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Since 1992, the Governor's Crime Commission has played a leading role in the transformation of the juvenile justice system in North Carolina. The Commission advocated for needed changes in the juvenile code, analyzed the changing nature of the juvenile crime problem, and directed increasing amounts of federal block grant funds into the juvenile justice system. These efforts were responsible for the passage of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1999, which fundamentally altered the system of juvenile justice in our state.

- *Blueprint for Reform* - In 1997 the Governor's Crime Commission published a report, *Agenda in Pursuit of Justice: The 1997 Legislative Program of the Governor's Crime*

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Commission, which established a blueprint for the reform of the North Carolina juvenile justice system. Subsequent law created North Carolina's present juvenile justice system, including the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and a significant revision of the Juvenile Code.

- *Juvenile Crime Prevention* - Beginning in 1992, the GCC used federal block grant funds to build effective juvenile crime prevention programs across North Carolina. These programs include, but are not limited to after-school programs, child advocacy centers, alternative school programs, evidence based prevention programs and multi-disciplinary child abuse investigative teams.
- *Model Programming* - The Commission developed model programming on gang suppression, after school programs, School Resource Officers, Disproportionate Minority Contact, and community planning among others, many of which were the first of their kind and have received national recognition.
- *Graduated Sanctions and Firsts in Innovative Programming* – The Commission created a system of graduated sanctions across North Carolina that has become a building block of the new juvenile system.



After school programs are an integral part of juvenile delinquency prevention programming.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF SUSPENDED AND EXPELLED YOUTH



Reidsville's Teen Center provides programs for youth in an effort to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation.

Governor Michael Easley charged the Governor's Crime Commission to address the issue of providing sound educational services for those youth who are either suspended or expelled from their home school, a decision augmented by a study done on alternative learning programs by the commission's Criminal Justice Analysis Center. The Structured Day program is an exemplary program in this area.

Structured Day Programs - Structured day programs are bridging the education and support gap between suspended and expelled youth and reintegration back to their public

school setting. A major programming success has been Durham's *A New Day* program, which is patterned after the nationally recognized Bethesda therapeutic model. With it, 72 percent of the students who graduated from the program did not reoffend, most returned to regular school.

DRUG TRAFFICKING INTERDICTION

One of the most useful ways to confront drug trafficking is via multi-jurisdictional task force programs which integrate federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to enhance interagency coordination and intelligence sharing and facilitate multi-jurisdictional investigations. Since 1993 the Criminal Justice Improvement Committee has funded 1,146 programs with more than \$79.5 million in funds. In one year the Roanoke-Chowan Narcotics Task Force, for example, was able to:

- Seize drugs with a street value of \$23,060.
- Participate in four marijuana eradication operations.
- Conduct surveillance and undercover operations on 33 cases.
- Investigate 62 tips which led to 50 investigations of drug trafficking.
- Participate in nine interagency counterdrug efforts with neighboring counties and state and federal officials.
- Execute four felony warrants and win two convictions.



DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT (DMC)

The Commission is actively working to correct minority disproportionality in our criminal justice systems especially where it concerns youth. Under the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act*, focus was broadened from confinement to contact as research has shown that minority youth are overrepresented at more than just the correctional level.

In 2002, the GCC hired a full-time coordinator to staff the DMC subcommittee and maintain the state's momentum in developing strategies to reduce minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. North Carolina's overall approach to addressing DMC consists of the following:

- *Demonstration sites* - Four demonstration sites are nearing readiness for replication.
- *Uniform Data Collection* – The Commission is collaborating with the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in developing a uniform data collection system which allows for accurate collection of data disaggregated by race. This data is being collected at decision points, as in schools or the courts, which would allow for an accurate measurement of possible disparities in decision-making.

- *Enhancing Awareness* – The DMC subcommittee is increasing the awareness of disproportionate minority contact through conference presentations, print materials and technical assistance.

CONFRONTING GANGS

The Commission has taken a leadership position on communicating and confronting the North Carolina gang issue. The Criminal Justice Analysis Center, the research section of the Commission, began studying the issue of gangs in 1999 with a statewide survey of law enforcement agencies, school resource officers and juvenile court counselors. This statewide systemic survey was replicated in 2004 and again in 2007. As a result of this research and the Commission's proactive role in addressing this issue, the General Assembly awarded the Commission \$1.5 million in FY 2006-2007 to fund grant programs that dealt with suppression, intervention and prevention of gangs and gang-related crime. Given the success of this initiative, the General Assembly increased its appropriation the following year to \$4.8 million with an additional \$10 million being awarded in FY2008-2009 for gang intervention and prevention program development. More than 50 programs were created or expanded as a result of this state funding. Furthermore, the Criminal Justice Improvement Committee funded 31 gang prevention programs with \$1.4 million in federal funds.



'Dangers Involved with Gangs' (DIG), sponsored through the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's 'Gang of One' program, helps fifth grade students resist the pressure to join a gang.

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Based on the work of the Child Abuse and Neglect subcommittee, gaps in services were identified, which led to the following projects:

- *State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) Polygraph Unit* - To provide training to SBI polygraph examiners in detecting child sex offenders.
- *AOC Appellate Coordinator* - To improve the quality of legal advocacy in appeals of Guardian Ad Litem cases.
- *Child Medical Evaluation Program* - These are regional training centers at certain hospitals to provide practitioners with training on the evaluation, documentation and communication of suspected child maltreatment.
- *North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys Training and Support* - This project provided support and training to prosecutors, law enforcement officers, social workers and other professionals to effectively identify, investigate and prosecute cases of child abuse and neglect.

The NC Governor's Crime Commission is uniquely poised to make significant improvements in North Carolina criminal justice systems and community safety and security. The most pressing strategic initiatives include: more cost effective sanctioning of adult offenders, improved mental health and substance abuse services for victims as well as offenders, more structured educational opportunities for suspended and expelled youth, and comprehensive criminal justice data integration. The Commission's history of successful policy formation and programming plus its healthy and dynamic strategic processes are the foundations for this work.

While the Governor's Crime Commission has provided ongoing leadership in the development of programs across our state that address timely issues like these, we continue to be challenged and strive to accomplish more.

The recommendations included in the Commission's 2009 legislative and policy agenda further the Commission's prior work and require future action. These actions may include the development of new legislation, the adoption of new policies or procedures, modification of existing policies, greater collaboration among state agencies and other key partners, or the need to increase funding.

Many of these recommendations require action by the General Assembly, while others require action by state agencies and other partners including the Governor's Crime Commission itself.

PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Appropriate funding to support alternative learning and structured day programs state-wide for suspended and expelled youth.
- Double the current appropriation to Division of Community Corrections' alternative programs to increase current alternatives to incarceration and study possible revision of structured sentencing grid to allow for more effective sentencing and sanctioning of adult offenders.
- Increase the state appropriation for Child Advocacy Centers and make them part of the recurring budget.
- Appropriate funding to support cross-training of social service and court service personnel on issues related to youth who have been designated as a dependant child and also committed a delinquent offense, and appropriate funding for the development of enhanced data collection systems that track such "dual jurisdiction" youth.
- Include as a permanent, recurring line item in the state budget funding of the GangNet and Justice Xchange expansion proposal.
- Appropriate funding to develop training for Local Management Entities on trauma and abuse of domestic and sexual violence victims.
- Amend GS Session Law 2004-129 to exclude law enforcement and public safety agencies from the authority of State Information Technology Services with respect to Senate Bill 991.

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- Appropriate funding for the development of a formal structure for collaboration across agencies to develop enhanced alternatives to juvenile detention, and enact legislation that addresses needed improvements to the detention reform system.
- Amend GS 50B-9 so that it designates the Domestic Violence Commission as the agency that shall administer the Domestic Violence Center Fund, and transfer the Commission from the Department of Administration to the Department of Crime Control & Public Safety.
- Create legislation that provides for a statutorily protected status for Crime Stoppers programs.
- Support the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) initiative administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Increase access to quality mental health services in rural counties.
- Appoint a legislative study committee to identify methods of improving the impact that batterer intervention programs have on offender accountability.
- Appropriate funding for the Statewide Automated Victim Assistance and Notification (SAVAN) system.
- Create a study committee to review provisions of the Crime Victims' Rights Act.

The Governor's Crime Commission has contributed to many of the major criminal justice initiatives of the past 16 years. In the coming years, it will continue to work to constantly improve juvenile and criminal justice systems, victims' services, and community safety and security. Working with the Governor, the General Assembly, state and federal agencies, and law enforcement agencies across the state, the Commission will build upon the accomplishments of previous years to continually improve criminal justice, victims and juvenile programs across North Carolina.